

A woman with vibrant red hair is shown from the back, looking down. She is wearing a blue, textured shirt. The background is a soft, light blue gradient.

Titus

a devotion on biblical leadership

A CENTRAL WOMEN STUDY



day one

Welcome to the Central Women study on the Book of Titus

This study is written specifically for you, our Central Women leaders. We appreciate your willingness to partner with us in our mission to lead women to discover and fully own faith in Jesus. This is why we are intentional about raising up leaders and not just volunteers.

However, being a leader comes with great responsibility and challenges. The biggest challenge is accepting the title of leader. According to Tyler Reagin, a leader is simply one who stewards their influence.

Friends, whether you realize it or not, you are stewarding your influence by using your gifts and talents to serve in Central Women. You are a leader!

What sets us apart, as believers, is how well we steward that influence.

If only there was a biblical handbook for how to lead well. Oh wait! There is. It's called the book of Titus. It may only be three chapters long but the content it holds inside is crucial for the health of the church and our ministry.

The Book of Titus is actually a letter Paul wrote to Titus, a gentile whom he called a son, equal in faith, who accompanied him around AD 63 as he spread the gospel. Paul, with full confidence in Titus, left him on the island of Crete to pastor the new believers who had previously been known to be unruly and filled with sin.

Like many new believers, they fell prey to false teachings and were being led astray from the truth. Because of this Paul wrote to encourage Titus, reminding him a healthy church is contingent on appointing good, solid leadership, whose foundation is formed directly from the Word of God. It is our hope, through this study, we become more effective leaders who are living examples of the hands and feet of Jesus.

reflect

Read all of Titus in one sitting.

When you consider church leadership mentioned in Titus, who in your life comes to mind?

Have you considered that you are the church leader Paul is describing? Central, Central Women and the Kingdom of God need you.

Take a moment and reflect on the truth that you have been appointed as a good, solid leader whose foundation is formed directly from the Word of God.





day two

Read: Titus Chapter 1

Focus: Titus: 1:1-3

Key verse: Titus 1:2b

"Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness in the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, and which now at his appointed season he has brought to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior,"

Titus 1:1-3

We're going to jump right in today. These three verses may seem like they are an intro to Titus, but they are packed with powerful truths, and wisdom for how we live our lives.

Verse two throws out a little phrase that we might skip over, smashed between a couple commas: "...which God, who does not lie, promised..."

Right away we are reminded of God's character. God is truth, He does not lie.

Paul is giving Titus some insight on how to pastor the people of Crete, but isn't this also true for us today? We need the reminder that God is truth. His promises are spread throughout the Bible, and the promises He whispers to us are true.

If we are to be Jesus' hands and feet (which you are if you're leading in ministry!) then, we ought to not only know and trust God's character, but we also should reflect it.

In 1 Corinthians 11:1 (ESV) Paul tells us: "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ."

Now we know that God Himself is truth and does not lie. What does that mean for our lives? Choosing to live a life of truth isn't easy. Our culture today has even coached us in justifying small, white lies. We lie so we don't hurt other people's feelings. We omit truths to avoid awkward or uncomfortable conversations. Or, we lie to protect ourselves, from our own sins being exposed.

What would it look like to be completely honest in all we do?

What does God think about those who lie?

"The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy."
Proverbs 12:22

"Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live
honorably in every way." Hebrews 13:18

"Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but he who makes his ways
crooked will be found out." Proverbs 10:9

"So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin."
James 4:17

"You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another."
Leviticus 19:11

God has an opinion on this. Your character matters to Him.

reflect

Spend some time considering...

God does not lie. He IS truth. Lies, dishonesty, and darkness can't be around Him. This is part of the reason God left Eden after the apple incident! If our bodies are a temple, where God's spirit resides, (read John 14:15-21), can the Spirit reside in us if we lie? What are your thoughts?

What would it look like if we were completely honest in all we do? What adjustments do you need to make in your life to start living this way?

Ephesians 4:15 says, "Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ." Is there someone you need to speak truth in love to? Is there a situation in your life where you have resorted to small white lies, in order to protect someone, or yourself? What would it look like to speak truth in love into this situation?

Spend some time thanking God for who He is and for the glimpses of His character we get to see in the Bible.



"...which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time." Titus 1:26



day three

Read: Titus Chapter 1

Focus: Titus: 1:4-6

Key verse: Titus 1:5

*To Titus, my true son in our common faith:
Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ
Jesus our Savior.

The reason I left you in Crete was that you might
put in order what was left unfinished and
appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.
An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife,
a man whose children believe and are not open
to the charge of being wild and disobedient.

Titus 1:4-6

I've had many friends come and go. Not only as I have grown up over the years, but also in ministry. When you are young and friends move away it can be devastating. I suppose it can feel the same way when you are older and friends move away as well.

But what I have come to realize in my years serving the Church, when friends, who are living out being the hands and feet of Jesus, come and go, it doesn't hurt quite so much.

God calls us to live for Him. Sometimes that is near or far. Sometimes that's in a context of serving in the children's ministry at church, or in the PTO at your children's school. Sometimes it's as a barista at Starbucks or as an executive at a bank.

When He calls us, we go. And before we know it, the relationships we used to have look very different. The time we had to focus on those relationships changes dramatically, and the new relationships God asks us to invest in are time consuming.

I've had my fair share of relationships that I can't keep up with. As my priorities change, feelings get hurt, I find myself between a rock and a hard place. Or, more like, in between a season of friendships that were beautiful and the new relationships God wants me to be a part of. And you know... there isn't enough time in the day for all of it.

What's a girl to do?

Thankfully, Titus 1:5 gives us a glimpse into God's vision for relationships. It doesn't make these changing relationships easy to navigate, but it does offer me the freedom to know that God is moving in all of our lives, and if I am to serve Him, I go where He leads.

Titus 1:5 reads, "The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you."

Paul and Titus worked together. Titus was next in line as a mentee to Paul, who became a friend and trusted brother. Paul spent years developing and pouring into many men, so that they may share the gospel. Paul's life alone is a beautiful image of brotherly love and intentional discipleship.



After working together for a period of time, Paul knew Titus was ready to head off on his own. Paul mentored him, modeled for him, equipped him, and then set him free to do the work. Titus has a job to do, and Paul set him up to do it. This is what intentional discipleship is all about.

Was it easy for Titus when Paul left? Who knows. Given the land, the travel and the context of the world at that time, chances are they would never see each other again. Maybe Titus was excited to finally be on his own. Or, maybe he grieved the change in their close relationship. Either way, it was time. There was work to be done, and God needed both men, in different cities, to accomplish it.

This verse, however basic it may seem, reminds us that we, ourselves have a lot of work to do. You might not be in charge of straightening out an entire island. But you do have work to do for the Kingdom.

Follow the lead of Paul and Titus. Find someone to walk alongside you, either as a mentor or a mentee, (or one of each!). As we see here, ministry work doesn't happen independently. Sure, it may seem like Paul is sending Titus out on his own... but he's not. If you want to skip ahead, check out his final instructions in Titus 3:13.

Secondly, after you follow the lead of Paul and Titus. Do me a favor. Celebrate your friends who are growing in their faith, saying yes to Jesus, and doing the work of the Kingdom. It might change your relationship, you might not be as close as you used to be, you might grieve what feels like a loss to you, but do whatever you can to be her biggest cheerleader.

It starts with us. There is a lot of work to be done ladies in offices, parks, schools, countries, churches and more. Let's be grateful for the time God has given us to work together, and let's cheer each other on when it's time to go to where God leads us next.

“The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you...”

Titus 1:5



reflect

Spend some time considering...

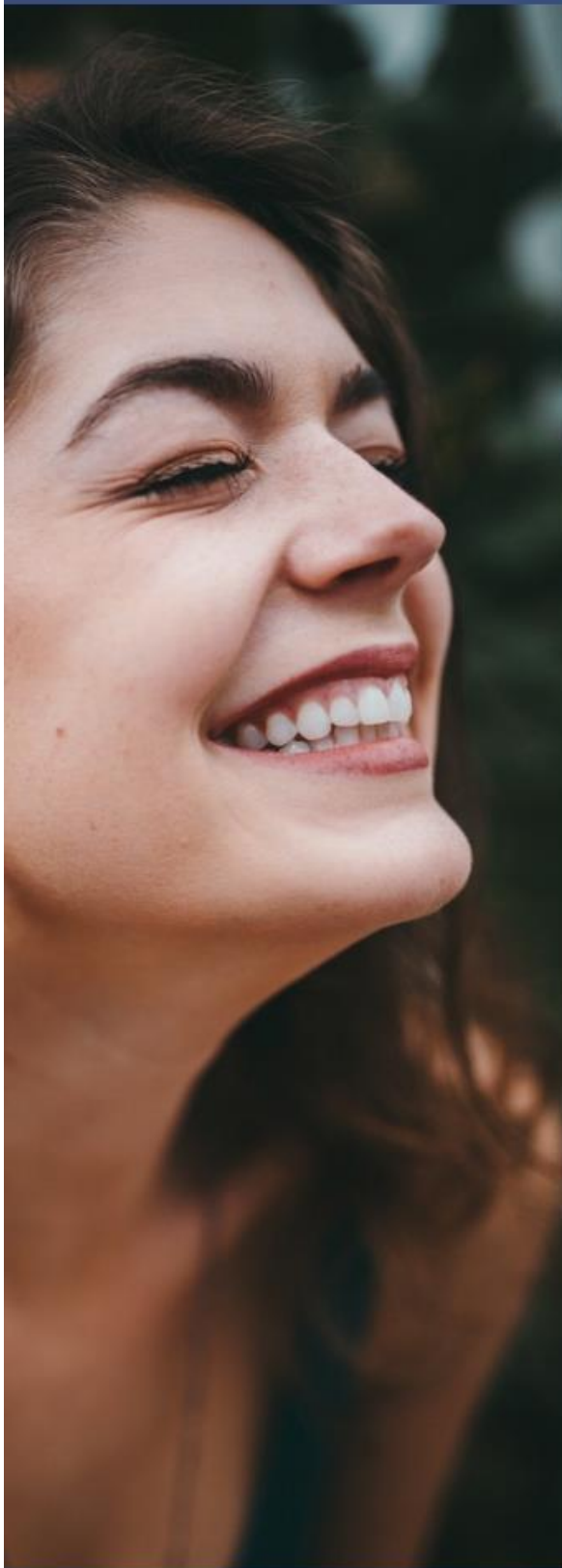
What relationships have ended in your life that could be chalked up to God leading you (or the other person) in a different direction for His work?

When have you celebrated a changing relationship because you saw God moving?

Take a moment to reach out to that friend. Encourage her and let her know you are cheering her on.

Who is your Paul right now? Who is your Titus right now?

Spend some time talking to God about His plan for these relationships. Ask Him to reveal what's next, who's next, and what He needs you to do for the Kingdom.



day four

Read: Titus Chapter 1

Focus: Titus 1:7-9

Key verse: Titus 1:8

"Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He 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".

Titus 1:7-9

Do you ever feel unqualified as a leader? You are not alone. In fact, whenever I am asked to lead in any capacity I immediately list all the reasons why I am not qualified. The truth is I tend to overcomplicate things and give into fear.

You see, I shy away from the things I am not good at because I put the expectation of being the end result of hard work on myself without, you know, doing the work. So how does one grow and mature in Christ? It's simple, by doing the work!

Have you ever noticed professional athletes still workout and practice every day? They are the best of the best, yet they still practice the same foundational skills taught to beginners. As believers, we should be doing the same.

We can only be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain by putting into action what is expected of us as leaders. It's going to take practice. It's going to take trial and error.

Paul tells us as leaders we are entrusted with God's work and that work requires us to be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. It's not an option.

If you notice most of what is required of us are character traits, not skills. Claiming not to have the gift of hospitality does not excuse us from welcoming others. In fact, Romans 12:13 says, "Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality."

How we live gives others a glimpse of our character. As leaders, we are showing others how to live out God's word by example. In doing so we are able to encourage others, allowing them to distinguish between sound doctrines, and refute those who oppose it.



reflect

Spend some time considering...
You have been entrusted with God's work.

Athletes train for hours a day, doctors read and research new medicines and techniques daily, teachers study the work they are getting ready to teach, so they are prepared for any question they are asked.

Are you out of practice when it comes to your spiritual health? Take an honest assessment of your spiritual health. How much time do you spend with God each day? How much time do you spend in worship? (Prayer, praise, or studying His word?)

Wherever you are at right now, make a commitment to increase your time with Him.

Who can you invite into this dedicated time? (This is a great opportunity to intentionally mentor or disciple a woman seeking to grow in her faith.)

"Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined."

Titus 1:8





day five

Read: Titus Chapter 1

Focus: Titus 1:10-16

Key Verse: Titus 1:16a

"For there are many rebellious people, full of meaningless talk and deception, especially those of the circumcision group. 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. One of Crete's own prophets has said it: "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons." This saying is true.

Therefore rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the merely human commands of those who reject the truth. 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. They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good."

Titus 1:10-16

Have you ever read a story on Facebook or somewhere in the news, thought it was so good so you just had to share it with others? So you share it, not really knowing or researching the truth of the article. Then someone comments or informs you of the validity of it. If you are nodding your head then you are in good company. I am guilty of this too! This has rightfully made us, as a culture, suspicious by nature of any news and sometimes even of authority figures in general.

I hate to break it to you but this is not a "new thing". In fact such suspicions were prevalent during Paul's time, especially in Crete, even among church leaders. Crete at this time was the known place for human immorality. We find ourselves in Paul's letter to Titus, where he has already established in the previous verses what it means to be a leader in the church. Now we see Paul warning Titus of the dangers and responsibility that come with being a leader in the church. In Titus 1:10-16 Paul lays out the types of people that are popping up inside and outside the church and what to do about it, "rebellious people, full of meaningless talk and deception...teaching things they ought not to teach...Therefore rebuke them sharply so that they will be sound in faith...To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted...nothing is pure. They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him."

There are two main dangers here to Christian community that we as leaders need to be aware of. First, people who claim the gospel is Jesus plus more. As in, Jesus is good but there is also this whole list of "things" you have to do as well. Second, people who go around doing anything they want because of forgiveness found in Jesus. As in, I go to church on Sunday but during the week no one could tell I am a follower of Christ. So what do we do with this? How do we become better leaders because of this?

Paul has clearly already spelled out what we need to be aware of and what we need to do in response. Speak God's truth and rebuke anyone who falls into these character traits of deception. I think it is also important to make sure that we as leaders do not fall into these categories. We need to take a sharp, detailed look into our own lives and evaluate them. Our very human nature makes it easy for us to fall prey to these things, just like reposting a "good" article or story we see on Facebook without validating the truth of it. Do our actions exemplify that we are not only followers of Christ but leaders as well?

This pertains to inside the church just as much as outside of the church. When we teach others are we staying true to the word of God or are we injecting our own truths into it? Take some time for a little self-reflection. This is a chance to not only be armed to speak truth into others' lives so they can grow in Christ, but also our own.

reflect

Spend some time considering...

As leaders, the things we share, post, talk about and teach represent the Kingdom.

Have you ever shared an article or post on social media, or with people when you didn't have the whole story and you were questioned about what you shared? How did you respond to challenging comments?

Have you ever shared a story or a situation about someone that wasn't your story to tell? (aka gossip)

In America, we have the right to opinions, and too often, Americans share their opinions, even when it's not helpful. How do you handle your opinions? Do you share everything? Do you share based on the crowd you are in? What do you think of the phrase: "You are entitled to an opinion, but it doesn't mean you need to share it with everyone"?

What efforts can you put in place in your life today to help you navigate what to share, and when? Consider also what it would look like to have stop-gaps in your life, as a checks & balances to know what to say and when.

"They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good."
Titus 1:16





day six

Read: Titus Chapter 2

Focus: Titus 2:1-10

Key verse: Titus 2:3b

"You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine. Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive."

Titus 2:1-10

I walked into a MOMs group 14 years ago not knowing a single soul but I was desperate. My marriage felt hopeless, and motherhood was going to be the end of me. I came from a broken home, raised by a single father. Marriage and motherhood were never modeled for me. I needed help.

Every week women showered me with love and truth. I learned different tools and skills to apply to my marriage and parenting. More importantly, these women shared Jesus with me. I am convinced this is what Paul means when he says, "teach what is good."

You see, Paul was a great example of how to live this out. He mentored Titus. He took him under his wing, taught him sound doctrine in words and in action, then he put him in charge of pastoring the people of Crete, reminding him to lead by example.

Hebrews 13:7 tells us, "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith."

Take a minute to think about who has been Jesus to you. Who spoke truth to you when you needed it the most? Who do you turn to when you need direction, advice, or wisdom and why?

Friends, as leaders, we have the same responsibility. Women are watching us – looking to us to be an example of how to live like Christ. This is why Paul tells us to, "show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us."

There is something powerful when the body of Christ lives out the teachings of Jesus. Let us never grow weary of learning and leading.



reflect

Spend some time considering...

God knew we needed support, mentors, women who have gone before us, who have laid a foundation, for us. However, there is always someone younger than you. Either younger by age, or younger in their faith. You benefited from this. Now, let's it's your turn to go before the next generation.

Who have you sought out to mentor and develop?

If you haven't ever done this, consider what is holding you back? List your reasons.

Now read Titus 2:3-5 again.

Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

Notice how Paul doesn't include the words or phrase.. "when you are ready teach..." or "when you have it all together urge..." No. There is no arriving before you begin. Paul just says "teach" and "urge," so it's time to start now.

How are you modeling being reverent?

How are you modeling loving others?

How are you modeling being self-controlled and pure?

God has given you all the skills you need to disciple women. You're ready, right now. And just watch how God continues to teach you and grow you as you intentionally invest in others.

"...teach what is good." Titus 2:3b



day seven

Read: Titus Chapter 2

Focus: Titus 2:11-15

Key Verse: Titus 2:15a

"For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

These, then, are the things you should teach.

Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you."

Titus 2:11-15

As a mom of three young children it is a daily occurrence for me to explain to my children why they should treat each other with love, and kindness; as well as why it is good to obey me as their mother. I like to think that becoming a mom has given me a greater appreciation for God.

Sometimes I think God looks down on us just shaking his head at some of the things that we do, wondering "Is that really a good choice? Haven't I taught you better?" Just like my own kids though I get wrapped up in my own passions, wants, needs and emotions, forgetting the reasons behind why it is so important that I should strive to be set apart as a follower of Christ.

In Titus 2:11-15 we get a good reminder from Paul as to why it is important, not only as followers of Christ but as leaders, to act and teach accordingly. He states, "For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all. It teaches us to say "no" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live a self-controlled, upright and godly lives in the present age, while we wait for the blessed hope... Jesus Christ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness... to do what is good. These, then, are the things you should teach."

This is crystal clear on what should motivate our choices. God, the loving father that He is, desires us all to be in relationship with Him, and as such sent His only son, Jesus, to redeem us all. Since he has given us this gift of redemption it is up to us to make the choices in our daily lives that show that we are different, we are not of this world. It is so easy this day in age to make choices putting "me" first, instead of the Kingdom of God. We live in a world that touts "have it your way" or "do what makes you feel good" regardless of the consequences of those choices and actions, not only to ourselves but to others as well. God has clearly called us to more as followers of Christ and as leaders. We have been set apart and set up for a higher standard because of the very nature of the gift of Jesus.

Just like my own children I need this reminder as to why I need to be loving, kind, deny my own flesh and be obedient to things that Christ has called me to. Take some time, reflect. Have I been doing what is only good for me or have I been thinking about others? What can I change or do differently that shows I am set apart? Do I need to repent and ask forgiveness before I can move forward in a healthy way?



reflect

Spend some time considering...

"We have been set apart and set up for a higher standard because of the very nature of the gift of Jesus."

What does the phrase, "set apart" mean to you? What would others say if they watched the way you live, or had insight into the way you behave when people aren't watching? Would they say you live set apart for Kingdom work?

John MacArthur said, "Ethical integrity is one of the indispensable attributes of Christlike character. As vital as it is to be sound in doctrine and faithful in teaching the truth of Scripture, it is by no means less crucial for Christians to be upright in heart and consistent in our obedience to the moral and ethical principles of God's law."

Who has been a model for you of biblical integrity?

Do you need to repent, seek forgiveness or offer forgiveness? Spend sometime preparing your heart to do so, so that you can continue to live in a healthy way.

*"These then are the things
you should teach."*

Titus 2:15a





day eight

Read: Titus Chapter 3

Focus: Titus 3:1-7

Key verse: Titus 3:5a

"Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone.

At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life."

Titus 3:1-7

I will never forget this day. My husband won't let me live it down either. I was carrying a box in my house. It was big and chunky and I couldn't see much over the box. Inevitably, I walked right into the leg of a stool in my house. My forward motion stopped, I lost my balance and my toes crunched. Out of my mouth I exclaimed "Oh Sh.....!" Except, I actually said it.

Standing next to me was my two year old son. Oh boy, did he have a heyday with what he just witnessed. For months after whenever he saw something funny, sure enough, he would respond in kind. He responded with my exact words.

Years have passed and thankfully he learned many more words that were appropriate to express his emotions, but I will never forget the influence my words, my actions and even facial expressions have.

Paul is encouraging Titus to make sure to teach people how to behave, because people are watching.

Titus 3:3 says: "At one time, we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We live in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another."

It's true... each one of us can relate to that verse. We have been guilty of the same thing. My example above shows only one instance where I have been foolish. I could go on and on with stories of my foolish and disobedience, and even hatred of another.

Consider for a moment how many people witnessed your behavior when you behaved as Paul says in Titus 3:3.

But we are reminded as we read on that God sent His Son, our Savior, and He saved us. And clearly not because we are righteous (can I get an amen?) but because of His mercy and grace.

And we have been washed new, and have been given the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Truth, to live in us.

And now, we know better.

We stop being foolish, disobedient, enslaved to things of this world and earthly pleasures. And we stop hating.

What do we do instead?



We love.

We love with everything we've got. With every cell in our body. And when we love like this, hatred, envy and foolishness have no space to reside in us. When we literally overflow with love, Jesus shines through us. If we get this right, when others look to us, watch us, and read our social media posts... all they see is Jesus.

People are watching. And when they look at us, do we want them to see us? Or see Jesus?

reflect

Spend some time considering...

As a leader in ministry, people are watching. And not to "catch" you doing something wrong, but to see how they ought to live. The moment you say yes to leading, and don that Central Woman shirt, you are an example of Central, Central Women and the Kingdom. All of Titus is a guidebook of how we ought to live, so we don't lead others astray.

Consider any changes or adjustments you need to make in your life to allow Jesus to shine through you. Be honest. It could be less wine after the kids go to bed. It could be withholding your opinion to a post on social media, it could be offering forgiveness you've been unwilling to give. It could be making a change in the way you spend your money or your time. Write them down.



*"He saved us, not
because of righteous
things we had done, but
because of His mercy."
Titus 3:5a*



day nine

Read: Titus Chapter 3

Focus: Titus 3:8-11

Key verse: Titus 3:8

"This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them. You may be sure that such people are warped and sinful; they are self-condemned.

Titus 3: 8-11

Fishbowl. Not the first word that comes to mind when you are a follower of Christ. The dictionary defines fishbowl as, a place open to public view and criticism. Nowhere did this term come more to life for me than in my time spent living overseas. I cannot tell you how many times I felt like I was being watched when I stepped outside my door and into my neighborhood in the majority Muslim country we lived in. Was what I wearing appropriate? Who was I with? Were they honorable and good people? How did I treat other people? How did I act as a mother and wife outside my home? Was I a fair and good person? Could I be trusted? I was living in a fishbowl.

As we read through Titus chapter 3 we see Paul remind the leaders and believers in the church in Crete on how best to conduct themselves and to not be drawn into things that would be divisive. Paul states in Titus 3:8-11 "This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God maybe careful to devote themselves to doing what is good... but avoid foolish controversies and... arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless...You may be sure that such people are warped and sinful."

We, as followers of Christ and leaders, live in a fishbowl. It may not be as of intense fishbowl as what I lived in while overseas but it is still one none the less. As leaders we are always watched, observed and critiqued. I say this not to stress us out and to do good things to get the praise of man. I say this because God has placed you in this special role of influence in the lives of other believers. You have heard the saying "more is caught than taught" and this is so true. Our actions in how we deal with conflict inside and outside the church can either bring people closer in their walk with Christ or drive them further away.

How do you deal with conflict? Do you remain silently angry? Do you pretend it never happened? Are you drawn into the drama of it all? Do you blow up and say things you regret? Let us devote ourselves to doing what is good and just. Repent of the things that lead to a wall being built and remind ourselves our actions and conduct are a tool which can draw people closer to Jesus.



reflect

Spend some time considering...

How do you typically handle conflict?

Do you have areas in your life where conflict and divisiveness occur regularly? Could God have a plan for you in those conflicted areas? Spend some time asking God how He wants you to respond when you encounter divisiveness.

All leaders have spheres of influence. As leaders in ministry, our responsibility to acknowledge that the way we live in our fishbowl directly, even if subconsciously, influences the way others view ministry, and the Kingdom. Take an honest look at yourself, the way you lead, the influence you have. How is God using you? Where do you still have room to grow?

This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good.

Titus 3:8b





day ten

Read: Titus Chapter 3

Focus: Titus 3:12-15

Key verse: Titus 14a

*As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter there. Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need. Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives.

Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.

Titus 3:12-15

Remember back to Day Three? We talked about the importance of Paul and Titus' relationship. How after they spent time together, Paul developed, modeled and equipped Titus, and now it was Titus' turn to finish the work in Crete.

But Titus wasn't to be alone. Paul was sending two others to Crete, and in the meantime, Titus was to do all he could to help Zenas and Apollos.

Isn't it comforting to know that you aren't alone in God's work either? God, in His goodness has surrounded you with women who love the Lord and you!

Together, using our own gifts, we lead others to discover and fully own their faith in Jesus.

First Corinthians 12:12-27 tells us that we are all a part of the body of Christ, and each of us has a specific function.

This is a good thing. We are made different with unique gifts, intentionally and to be productive in the Kingdom.

As we live our lives, as we lead women, as we serve the body of Christ, as we participate in our communities and as we love others, we are devoting ourselves to God's work.

Just as Titus couldn't do ministry without Paul, and Zenas and Apollos couldn't do ministry without Titus, we can't do ministry without you. And now we know how.



We have studied the guidebook of what church leadership looks like. It's been modeled for us, and the torch has been passed.

You, my friend, hold the torch now. How you carry it will set the foundation for those who come after you.

Will you model a life bathed in love and words of truth? Will you encourage the young women in your life and be reverent in the way you live? Will you stay pure and live with integrity? Will you be hospitable and self-controlled? Will you be an example to those watching you and devote yourself to doing what is good?

You have been entrusted with the gospel of Christ and doing God's work.

It's a hefty ask. But it's the most important job in the world.

reflect

Spend some time considering...

As a leader in Central Women, you are a leader at Central, and you play a pivotal role in leading women to discover and fully own their faith in Jesus.

Have you considered the magnitude of your role as a leader in ministry?

What is something you learned from Titus about leadership?

How is God currently using you to impact the Kingdom?

What's next for you? Do you see God aligning areas of your life to bring a change or prepare you for what's next? What emotions do you have about this?

"Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good." Titus 3:14a