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The Mission

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## How to Study the Bible Lesson 9

So last week we began working with a paragraph and putting to use some of the things we've learned so far. And we looked at the prayer of Nehemiah in chapter 1 of Nehemiah and tonight we're going to continue working with a paragraph from the book of Titus. And hopefully you did your home work, because I'm going to let you be more involved in this process tonight, because like we learned a few lessons back, seeing is believing, but the way to really learn and retain what you learn is to actually do it. Or put to use what you see others do.

And so I'm going to get us started and then I'm going to ask some of you to get involved.

### **Titus 1:5-9**

#### **Qualified Elders**

**5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint**

**elders in every city as I commanded you— 6 if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, 8 but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, 9 holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.**

So last week does anybody remember what we looked for first? What's the first thing we need to do when we come to a paragraph or a scripture?

**We need to check the context, right?**

When was it written? By who was it written? Where was it written? To whom was it addressed? And then why was it written? For what purpose?

Verse 5 says, "**5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—**

The NASB reads like this.

**For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you."**

So who is the **"I" in verse 5.**

Well, we need to go back to find that answer? And since we're not very far into the book, we just need to go back to the beginning of this chapter which is also the beginning of the book. And when we look at to verse one it says,

**1 Paul,**

And so **"I"** is Paul.

And then we're told a little something about who Paul is.

We're told he is:

**a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ,**

And of course, we could ask and answer the question.

**What is a bondservant?**

Well, if you go to a Bible Dictionary you'll find the definition.

A bondservant is a slave; one who is subjected to the authority of another, or whose person and liberty are restrained.

And who did Paul say he was a bondservant of?

God.

And then just as important he tells us that he was an **Apostle.**

And we could do a study that would last for days on the Apostles, and what qualified a man to be an apostle. And we could study the

story of Paul, and how he became an apostle, and how some people questioned his qualifications as a an apostle, and we could go on and on.

But the main thing we need to know here, is that because he was an apostle, well, that's where he gets his authority to give Titus these instructions.

So the **“I”** is Paul and then Paul says,

**I left you**

Now, who is the you?

Well, if we read on from verse 1 through verse 4 we find out that the **“you”** is Titus.

And so Paul left Titus.

Now the next obvious two questions would be; who is Titus and where did Paul leave him?

Well, this first question; (Who is Titus?) is where a Bible Dictionary comes in handy. And when we do a little research on Titus, we find that Titus was with Paul and Barnabas at Antioch, and that he also accompanied Paul and Barnabus to the council at Jerusalem. That's in Galatians 2:1-3 and also mentioned in Acts 15:2.

We find also that his name never occurs in the book of Acts of the Apostles. We learn he was probably a Gentile, and primarily

ministered to Gentiles. We learn that Paul refused to have him circumcised, when the liberty of the gospel was at stake.

We read about him later when he's with Paul and Timothy at Ephesus; when he was sent by Paul to Corinth to pick up the contributions from the church to take to the poor saints at Jerusalem. He's mentioned again in 2 Corinthians chapter 7 when he rejoins the apostle Paul in Macedonia.

After this, he's not mentioned again until after Paul's first imprisonment, and there we find him engaged in the organization of the church in Crete, where the apostle had left him for this purpose.

So the "I" is Paul and the "you" is Titus and then ( Where did he leave him) is the place. And that answer is in verse 5 as well.

**5 For this reason, I left you in Crete,**

Now, where is Crete?

Well, Crete is an island that sits kind of in the center of a triangle of Europe, Asia, and Africa. It is in the eastern Mediterranean, southeast just a bit from the Greek mainland. Crete is 160 miles long and anywhere from 7 to 35 miles wide. It's right in the middle of the world, so it's a highly civilized place.

But like most highly civilized places, it had become very corrupt. In fact it, it tells us down in verse 12 that one of their own prophets "said that, 'Cretans are always liars, and evil beasts,

and lazy gluttons.” So there had been a severe decline it seems in the culture.

Now, the first time we see anything about Crete is at Pentecost. On the day of Pentecost, if you remember, the Spirit of God came and the church was begun, but the feast of Pentecost was celebrated annually by Jews from all over the world. And according to Acts 2:11, there were Jews there from Crete. And so we know there was a certain population of Jews living there in Crete, who worshipped the true God, who had come from Pentecost; and who had been converted to Christ. And more than likely these were the Christians who returned to start churches on the island.

Also if you go to the opposite end of the book of Acts, in Acts 27, you'll find that when Paul was on his ship traveling to Rome, he stopped at Crete. And it was probably this brief stop in Crete that he some influence on these people.

Now, by the time this letter had been written, the gospel had evidently extended throughout the whole island. And that's why there was the need to appoint elders in every city. And there was an obvious need to now organize the church and give it some leadership.

So we don't really know who founded the church. It could have been someone from Pentecost or Paul could have possibly

had an influence on it's beginning when he passed by. At any rate, Paul realized that there were some things that needed to be set in order in this church.

Now just prior to the writing of Titus we know that Paul went there. And this was a separate time form the time when he was traveling to Rome in Acts 27. It would have been sometime after the end of the book of Acts, sometime after his first imprisonment with which the book of Acts ends. And after Paul went there, is when he met Titus.

That's when he says in verse 5, **"I left you in Crete,"**.

That means they had been there together; and evidently Paul had done some work there among the churches, but had to leave. And so he leaves Titus there in Crete to take care of those things that were lacking or the things that remained top be done.

Now, how long Paul and Titus were there we don't know. But just getting around to all the cities on this island we're told would have been a monuments task. We're told from history that there were over a hundred cities on this little island. And if there was a church in every city, or a church even in most of the cities, then you can only imagine what a huge job it would have been to cover all of them.

So Paul had to leave and go to other ministries, and so he left Titus there.

Now, Titus we're told was a man of like passion with Paul, that's according to 2 Corinthians 8. He was a trusted partner and a fellow worker. He was a skilled and able leader and peacemaker and he had proven himself in ministering to the church at Corinth. And so Paul leaves this very able, capable man there. And for what reason?

Well, look back to **verse 5 - "That you might set in order what is lacking or what remains."** Now, that's the first reason. And then the second reason was, **"To appoint elders in every city as I directed you."**

**So now that we have the context, we need to make some observations.**

So, let's just start with the first word we come to. What is it? It's the word:

**For;**

**And what kind of word is the word "for"?**

It's a conjunction (And, but, although, these are all conjunctions)

What is a conjunction?

It's a word that joins something together with something else. Another word we could use is; because.

**So what two things are being joined together?**

"This reason" and "I left you in Crete".



We could also say it this way. I left you in Crete for **this reason.**

And so that makes the next question pretty obvious right?

**What's the reason?**

Well, sometimes we might have to go back for an answer, but in this case we just need to read on.

**5 For this reason, I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you.**

**So what's the reason?**

The reason was to set in order the church.

Now, that phrase “set in order”, in the Greek, the last part comes from the same word in which we get our word, orthodontist. And it means to make straight; just like a dentist aligns and straightens a person's teeth. Or like a doctor would set or repair a broken bone and make it straight again.

In other words, Titus was charged with the task of correcting or setting straight what was crooked in the church, which included doctrine and practices that had become defective.

Now, when you read the entire book, which you really need to do to get the real sense of this paragraph, you'll find that there were a lot things that needed to be set straight and appointing elders was just one of them.

Now, that term lacking, in some translations, is the word “remains” instead. **That you should set in order the things that remain.**

And what he means is that there were some things that had he (Paul) had left undone when he left Titus there. In other words, he didn't have time when he was there with Titus to get everything done that needed done. And so there were some things that remained to do.

And in chapter one, the thing that Paul focuses on is the qualifications of church leadership as well as their character and conduct and theology. In chapter two, he focuses primarily on the character and conduct of the congregation among themselves. And then in chapter three it's the character and conduct of both the leaders and the congregation before unbelievers. In other words, how they lived and conducted themselves outside the church where they would in one way or another influence unbelievers.

And so Paul's ultimate reason was not just to set in order the church as far as doctrine and leadership, but to also set it in order so that both the leaders and the members could be a light for others around them to see.

So what's another word we could use to describe what we just learned?

## **Purpose.**

And this was more or less the purpose of Paul's letter. To instruct Titus on how to set in order the things in the church at Crete, that Paul had not had time to accomplish before he left, in order that the church would become an effective witness for Christ.

So moving on, again verse 5 says;

**5 For this reason, I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you.**

So we've already talked about the primary reason which was to set things in order so that both the leaders and the members could be a shining light for the unbelievers around them to see Jesus and hopefully become Christians themselves.

And part of that "setting in order" included **appointing elders in every city.**

Now, we're already talked about how there were over a hundred cities and how there could have been that many churches. And so there would have been a need to also appoint at least that many times two or three elders.

And so the next question would be what?

What is an elder?

Well, the word elder in general refers to an older man. But with respect to the church it had come to be used as an official title for a leader in the church. And to be a leader in the church, that doesn't necessarily mean you'll be an older man. And just because you're an older man, that doesn't automatically qualify as a leader in the church.