

## Week 3: Leaders & Deceivers

**Scripture: Titus 1:6-11, 16**

Sermon discussion from Sunday, May 14

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**Theme:** *Christian leaders (and we all should be them) should be authentic not deceptive*

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Sermon discussion from Sunday, May 14

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**BLAMELESS:** The word used for blameless in this passage does not mean that it is a person who is without fault, because none of us are blameless. What being blameless means is that this person has a good reputation and is striving to live a righteous life. No Christian leader is perfect and should never be exalted to such a high level. But the Bible does tell us that a leader should be held to a high standard in faith and character.

- How does this understanding of blameless reshape how you read this verse.
- What should a leader’s home life look like?
- Does this mean that a church leader has to have a perfect marriage and children?
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Read verses 7-9 and complete this chart on the character traits of an elder/overseer.

An Elder/Overseer <b>should</b> be	An Elder/Overseer <b>should not</b> be

- Why do you think Paul lists these characteristics for leaders? Why are they important traits?

- What effect would it have on a church if a leader failed at these qualities?
- How have you seen struggles in a church when a leader did not live up to these biblical standards?

**Titus 1: 10-11, 16:** *10 For there are many rebellious people, full of empty talk and deception, especially those from the circumcision party. 11 It is necessary to silence them; they are ruining entire households by teaching what they shouldn't in order to get money dishonestly... 16 They claim to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for any good work.*

**Circumcision Group:**  
These were people who said that gentile believers must follow certain Jewish rituals in order to be true followers of Jesus. This was a growing problem in the early church.

- What are the characteristics of “rebellious people”?
- Why are these types of people dangerous for the church?
- What difficulties can they cause in the church, especially if in leadership?
- How does Paul instruct Titus about how to treat these “rebellious people?”
- Paul is saying to silence them for the benefit of the church, but also for their own benefit. What trouble would happen if these people were free to spread their lies in the congregation?
- How could silencing these rebellious people be helpful for their own spiritual development.

**CHARACTER:** When addressing the leadership of a church, Paul does not focus on a leader’s skill set, but their character. There are many churches that are looking for leaders with a certain skill set, and are willing to sacrifice character and ethics. NT Wright suggests, “It’s no good being a great church organizer if you accomplish your goals by being a bully. A church leader should be someone who can face every type of situation that comes and respond with Christlike wisdom and self-control.”

- Why do you think Paul stresses character about skill set for church leaders?
- How can choosing a leader based on skill sets cause damage to a church?
- How can the right character make up for limited skills?

**Consider:** God has called us all to be leaders. Many of us have leadership positions in the church, teachers, council members, deacons, and more. We are all called to lead God’s people in some way. This means that the character expected for leaders should extend to all members of God’s family. We should all be devoted to good, “living a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God (Ephesians 4:1).”

- How has God called you into leadership in his church?
- How should your character reflect the calling you have received?

As you look over the list of leadership character traits, prayerfully consider how God, who has called you, can continue to transform you.

**Wrap-up:** Take a look back at the questions you created from lesson one to see if any of these questions have been addressed and answers in this week's study.

- Were any of the questions addressed in this week's lesson or sermon?
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**Conclusion:** How has your study this week guided you in your faith and inspired you toward being devoted to good? How can the small group encourage you to remain devoted to godliness?

**Close in Prayer:** Collect prayer requests from the groups and spend time praying for ways to encourage each other to be devoted to good.

## Week 3: Leaders & Deceivers

**Scripture: Titus 1:6-11, 16**

Sermon discussion from Sunday, May 14

*6 An elder must be blameless, the husband of one wife, with faithful children who are not accused of wildness or rebellion. 7 As an overseer of God's household, he must be blameless, not arrogant, not hot-tempered, not an excessive drinker, not a bully, not greedy for money, 8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, righteous, holy, self-controlled, 9 holding to the faithful message as taught, so that he will be able both to encourage with sound teaching and to refute those who contradict it.*

*10 For there are many rebellious people, full of empty talk and deception, especially those from the circumcision party. 11 It is necessary to silence them; they are ruining entire households by teaching what they shouldn't in order to get money dishonestly... 16 They claim to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for any good work.*

**Theme:** *Christian leaders (and we all should be them) should be authentic not deceptive*

**Week 3: Icebreaker:** How has your mother (or another significant woman in your life) positively impacted your spiritual development? Why is it important to have quality role models in life and faith?

**Opening Prayer:**

Heavenly Father, pour out your Spirit on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life. As we gather together, teach us how to devote ourselves to good works for pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful. Amen

**Summary Review:** In week 1 your group created a one sentence summary for Titus. Have someone share this summary with the group.

**Quick Overview:** Read Titus 1:6-11, 16 (above) once and quickly answer the following questions.

- Are there any repeated phrases or idea that stick out to you?
- What are some of the qualities Paul lists for church leaders, elders and overseers?
- What are some of the qualities a church leader must avoid?
- Paul lists qualities of good Christian leaders, then warns Titus of deceivers who are trying to worm their way into leadership positions. What are some of the qualities of these deceivers?
- How can these deceivers wreak havoc on the church?
- Do you have any questions or concerns regarding this section?



**Sermon Discussion Guide:** Take some time to review last Sunday's sermon, discussing them major themes of the sermon, questions you may have, and ways to apply the message into your lives.

- What was the major theme of this Sunday's message? What were key points in the message that connected with the overall theme?
- Our theme through Titus is *devoted to good*, how did this week's message tough on this overall theme? Were you encouraged to be devoted to good? How?
- Review the comments and questions you made in your first week, in regard to this week's passage in Titus. Were any of these questions answered? If so, how?
- What were some questions or concerns you had from this week's message? Was there anything said that you did not understand or disagreed with?
- How were you encouraged to apply the advice given to Titus into your own life and spiritual development?

**ELDER/OVERSEER.** Paul uses the word Elder and Overseer as a term for a spiritual leader in the church. (These terms might also be translated as shepherd or pastor). The word here plural, signifying that church leadership is not relegated to a single individual, but a group of people working together, with a variety of gifts, devoted to leading a congregation.

- What do you think of when you hear the words "elder" or "overseer?" is it a positive or negative image?
- Why do you think Paul uses these words? What might he be trying to convey?
- Paul's tendency was to plant churches and appoint a plurality of elders to oversee the churches. What does this tell you about the leadership in a local church?

**Titus 1:6** *6 An elder must be blameless, the husband of one wife, with faithful children who are not accused of wildness or rebellion.*

**WOMEN:** Let's address the elephant in the room, Women in ministry. Many have used verse like Titus 1:6 (and others like it) to suggest that Paul (and God) is barring women from pastoral leadership. Others would suggest that simply because Paul des not say women does not mean that woman cannot be included in the pastorate. This issue has caused division in churches and has propagated sexism and even abuse. Our church and our denomination support God's calling of both men and women into church leadership roles such at pastors, elders, and deacons. Yet, I also understand that members of our church and this small group may have varying opinions and in interpretations. Please be respectful of each other when addressing this issue.

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