

# week 1

## *Scripture to Read*

**Titus (read the entire letter)**

**Sermon text: Titus 1:1-4**

## *Summary of Titus 1:1-4*

Paul opens his letter to Titus by giving us some rich theological statements—chief among which are the “identity markers” in this passage. In other words, Paul sees himself as a servant, as an apostle, as a missionary, and as part of the family of faith.

## *Scripture for Memorization and Meditation*

*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, in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior... [Titus 1:1-3]*

## *Questions for Personal Study and/or group discussion*

- How does Paul describe himself in opening verse? How do terms such as “servant/slave” and “apostle” (think: “sent one”) work to form the identity of godly leaders? What kinds of impulses and desires work contrary to such an identity among Christians leaders?
- What does Paul say about the character of God in his greeting?
- Where does Paul find hope? What motivates him to preach?
- Do you find your hope in the faithfulness of God? In what do you find your hope? What dreams motivate you?
- In what sense can Paul be described as a “missionary”? What is the “mission”?
- Paul affectionately calls Timothy “my true child in a common faith.” How would you characterize the relationships you have with other Christians? Is there a real sense of family that you have with some? What stands in the way of brotherly love among fellow Christians? What can you do to remove those obstacles?

## *Thoughts worth thinking*

**A slave?** Paul often uses “servant” (or “slave,” Gk. *doulos*) as a designation for himself (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:10; Phil. 1:1) and other Christians (1 Cor. 7:22; Eph. 6:6; Col. 4:12; see also 2 Pet. 1:1, Jude 1; Rev. 2:20). The Roman institution of being a “bondservant” (Gk. *doulos*) was different from the institution of slavery in North America during the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries. Slaves generally were permitted to work for pay and to save enough to buy their freedom (see Matt. 25:15 where the “servants” [again Gk. *doulos*] were entrusted with immense amounts of money and responsibility). The NT assumes that trafficking in human beings is a sin (1 Tim. 1:10; Rev. 18:11–13), and Paul urges Christian slaves who can gain freedom to do so.

## *Tips for Parents with Young Children*

**Monday:** Explain to your children the life and conversion of Saul to Paul from Acts 7:54-8:3, 9:1-31. Make sure that they understand that Jesus can change anyone’s heart and forgive even the worst sins. Then, ask them if there is anyone who is not a Christian who they want to pray for, if there are any sins they have committed recently that they want Jesus to forgive, and pray with them.

Tuesday: Read to your children the account of Acts 14:8-20 and explain that some people worship other people instead of God, which is wrong. Also, explain that God is the one who sends the rain, makes our food grow, and gives us joy and fun in life (Acts 14:17). Take some time worshiping God together in song and praying for things that you are both thankful God has given you, including your children.

Wednesday: Review what your children learned in Wednesday Night Connection. Spend some time together praying for FPC, its leaders, and your friends at church.

Thursday: Explain to your children that the Church is a family of people who love God, and that they are blessed to have two families: their physical family and their spiritual family. Explain to them that God is the Father over the Church and that the people in the Church can love each other as friends. Tell them that Paul was a good pastor who was friends with a younger pastor named Titus, and that they too can be friends with older people who love God. Spend some time together praying for fellow Christians who are like family to you.

Friday: Explain to your children that the Bible is divided into two parts. The Old Testament (39 books) was written before Jesus came, and the New Testament (27 books) was written after He came to earth. Explain to them that God told the authors exactly what to write down, and that the books of the Bible are how God speaks to us. Tell them that Paul wrote some of the books of the Bible, including this letter his friend Titus. Help your children write an encouraging letter to a friend, as Paul did to Titus.

Saturday: Explain to your children that Christians can tell other people about Jesus so that they too can become Christians. Help the children identify the various people in their life that God uses to teach them about Jesus. Ask them if there are any friends they have who aren't Christians that they could speak to about Jesus. Pray to God, thanking him for the people in the children's life and asking him to change the heart of non-Christians your family knows. Pray that Phillip will have boldness in preaching the Word of God tomorrow. Also, pray for the Sunday School teachers and for the musicians and choir members who serve us each Sunday.

Sunday: Before you leave for church, explain to your children that their ministry at church is to welcome new children, help their Sunday School teacher, serve others, and worship God in the service. After church, discuss with your children what they learned and what you learned.