



The Need for Godly Church Leadership: A Review
10 Principles of Authority
December 13, 2015

Text: Titus 1:1-16

- Written by the Apostle Paul to the young pastor Titus in the mid-60s AD, much like 1st and 2nd Timothy this letter was written to help a young pastor bring *Godly order* to young churches that were already dealing with false teaching and false teachers.
- There is also an emphasis on holiness and good works in Titus. One historian wrote, “Crete had no need of wild beasts, for its own inhabitants were sufficient!”
- *“The theme of Titus is the inseparable link between faith and practice, belief and behavior. This truth is the basis for its critique of false teaching as well as its instruction in Christian living and qualifications for church leaders.” ESV Study Bible*
- In 2010 I said, “This Epistle is important for CRCC right now!” Saints this is still true. Re-read Titus when you get a free hour or so. Titus is important because:
 1. It reinforces God’s call for order in the church and the home.
 2. It reaffirms God’s direction that Godly leaders be established in the church.
 3. It encourages those leaders to lovingly but surely stand for truth and against error.
 4. It reminds each believer to do good works, and reconnects us with the reasons why.
 5. It recasts the apostolic vision for the church.
- Here is the critical truth: *the primary struggle of man is one against the authority of God! Humanism is essentially rebellion against the authority of God! Sin is rebellion against the authority of God! Adam and Eve’s failure was usurpation of the authority of God! And nothing has changed today; we still struggle with the authority of God!*
- ***The Principle of Authority: “God, for His own purposes and glory, has chosen to dispense and delegate His authority through human agency in all areas of human life, until either we die and are translated into the Heavenly Kingdom, or until He returns.”***

Note: This teaching can also be found in The Playbook, p170-177

Ten Principles of Authority:

1. Authority is designed to establish **order** (v5)
 - Our God is a God of order. Consider the intricacies of creation, or the explicit instructions for the tabernacle Moses built, or the complexities of the human body.
 - Consider God’s detailed instructions for the Levitical priesthood or His designed order for marriage and home.
 - Consider some of His very orderly and detailed instructions for the church (e.g. 1 Cor 14:26-40)
 - Unless there is Godly authority in place to ensure God’s instructions for life are carried out, our human nature pulls us towards disorder, chaos and rebellion.
2. Authority begins at **home** (v6)
 - Being blameless or above reproach is a prerequisite for New Testament leadership. This implies the absence of accusations of wrongdoing against godly leaders and their immediate families. It also implies a life worthy of imitation and is a very tough standard! 😊
 - “The husband of one wife” simply means he doesn’t have two or more wives; he is a one-woman man!
 - The Leader’s Children: this is a very difficult passage. But here are some thoughts:

- a) There are some who see this passage a prerequisite that an overseer's children must be saved. The Greek word "pistos" is rendered "believers" instead of "faithful" in the ESV because this world almost always refers to saving faith in 1st and 2nd Timothy and Titus.
 - b) By contrast, we know no father or mother can absolutely insure their children's salvation, since salvation is of the Lord (Eph 1:4-5). The best they can do is "bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." (Eph 6:4)
 - c) At a minimum, a leader's children should be well-behaved and submissive to his leadership as to not bring disgrace upon the church.
3. Authority is established for the **glory** of God (v7a)
 - This issue here is one of passionate stewardship towards God! This principle applies to all areas of authority.
 - So the question is, "Am I managing all that God has given me to oversee in a way that honors Him?"
 4. Authority is also based in personal **integrity** (v7b-8)
 - An arrogant, drunk, violent, greedy man with a temper is not fit to lead in the church (or anywhere else).
 - However, a hospitable, holy, disciplined leader will honor God and those he leads!
 - Remember, "Character is the willingness to do what is right, as God defines right, regardless of personal cost." D.L. Moody said, "character is what a man is in the dark." Having integrity gives moral authority...the right to speak into someone's life. It is essential to biblical leadership.
 5. Authorities must "**hold** the line." (v9a)
 - This is tough in a world in which spiritual and moral tolerance is the rule and objective absolutes are frowned upon.
 - This is one of the most difficult parts of serving the Lord in this office. Will you stand alone? Will you be willing to be misunderstood? Will you boldly but lovingly anchor down on truth when the flesh, the world, and the devil comes at the church?
 6. Authority leads and **teaches**. (v9b)
 - Modeling, instructing, and rebuking...can you imagine a tougher assignment?
 - Why is this so critical? Because "many are insubordinate."
 - No leader I know wants to be involved in conflict. Yet, the leader MUST wade in for the sake of Christ, His truth, and His flock if necessary!
 7. Authority constantly wages war against **rebellion**. (v10)
 - The "circumcision party" likely were Jewish Christians who wanted to adhere to ritual elements of the Law to prove one's salvation.
 - The larger issue is rebellion. It is the synergy of Satan. This is why God says, "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king. (1 Sa 15:23 KJV)
 8. Authority is designed to **protect** God's people. (v11)
 - The reason "they must be silenced" goes back to what the leader must really be concerned about...God's precious people.
 - It is noteworthy that "whole families" are mentioned. This is a critical lesson. If the elder refuses to handle false teaching, WHOLE households can be taken out. A generational impact!
 9. Authority **rebukes** when necessary. (vv12-13)
 - Again, even when authority must perform unpleasant tasks, it's for good; "...that they may be sound in the faith!"
 - There is an entire theology on church discipline in the New Testament. The principle here is simply this: God disciplines the one He loves and chastises every son whom He receives! (Heb 13:6)
 10. Authority must be careful to avoid **legalism**. (vv14-16)
 - The circumcision party most likely wanted to incorporate rituals of purity and cleansing, which has already been fulfilled in Christ.

- These false teachers thought they knew God because they kept the commands of men. Godly authority however, must seek and keep the commands of God, and encourage others to do the same with both firmness and love.

Given all the false teaching, lack of love, deception and general chaos the church is in right now, can you think of a time where this sort of man is more needed? Oh, Lord, raise up godly servants to lead thy people!

To men who would serve and lead, I say these five things, based on the principles of Holy Scripture and what I've experienced in my nearly nineteen years of serving the local church in the office of elder and in the role of teacher:

1. **Consider Christ.** His leadership cost Him dearly. There will be pain and loss.
2. **Consider Christ's people.** You must be a model for them. It's not fair. It just is. Love them.
3. **Consider the Scriptures.** You must hold to them as you teach, refusing to compromise. This will cost you.
4. **Consider the enemies of Christ, both spiritual and human.** They will detest you and fight against you. Stay strong, stand firm.
5. **Consider the glory of eternal life!** In this light, the first four considerations are worth it! Strive to hear "well done!" One day soon, you will give an account and enter into the joy of the Lord!

CRCC...please pray for, support, lift up, and submit to good leaders!

Heb 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

And may those who lead do so humbly, for the glory of Christ.

Amen.