

— Dr. David Silver —

The Pastoral Epistles Layman's Guide

1 Timothy, 2 Timothy,
Titus



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1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus

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Read the books of 1Tim, 2Tim. and Titus in the New Testament. Then study each chapter separately and in order referring to the guide as needed and asking questions as exemplified in the guide to help you understand the text. It is meant to be a help to individuals, small groups and Sunday school classes.

Pastoral Epistles Layman's Guide

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This book is dedicated to all who are searching for the truth

Acknowledgments

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It seems to me a lot of Christians are neglecting studying the bible book by book but rather they are focusing on topical studies, character studies, self-help books, etc. God gave us the bible in books for a reason. He wants us to delve deeply into each book of the bible, study and apply the material so transformation in our lives occurs. He wants us to be changed by the power of the Holy Spirit as we understand His Word and respond to it. There is no short cut to this and it requires discipline and commitment. In a lifetime, we will not be able to plumb the depths of God's Word, but we are to do the best we can now. We will likely have time in eternity to continue this quest, but for now we are to go about it fervently. The good news is we do not need to reinvent the wheel. There have been many that have gone before us studying, writing books and commentaries to help us on this journey. My layperson's guides are not commentaries, but an attempt to capture and make accessible a more refined understanding of the biblical text based on some of the better commentaries currently available. I am grateful for the OT Commentary Survey by Tremper Longman III and the NT Commentary Survey by D.A. Carson. These surveys of commentaries have made it easier for me to narrow down the resources I use. As a physician, I am trained to take a vast amount of medical literature and use it to help the layperson in front of me with their particular medical problems. As a seminary student (who may never finish my degree) I am attempting something similar in the spiritual realm to help individuals or groups to grow spiritually. I pray God uses these guides for the furtherance of His kingdom and His glory.

The main resources used for this guide are:

1. Philip H. Towner, 1-2 Timothy & Titus, The IVP NT Commentary Series.
2. Donald Guthrie, The Pastoral Epistles, Tyndale NT Commentaries.
3. George Knight, The Pastoral Epistles, The New International Greek Testament Commentary.

Though I do not use many direct quotes or footnotes from these resources, they helped frame my approach to the books and gave me specific ideas to the flow of the epistles.

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Summary statement of 1 Timothy: Paul directs Timothy to correct false teachers so the gospel can go forth with the church being unhindered, honoring each other and growing in godliness.

1 Timothy chapter 1

The apostle Paul is writing toward the end of his life to his son in the faith Timothy. Timothy, who came to the Lord during Paul's second missionary journey, was left by Paul in Ephesus to lead the church. He was to resist false teachers who apparently were elders in the church. Timothy was to follow Paul's example of living according to the gospel. By addressing his concerns to Timothy, Paul was also relaying principles to the church for its protection and strengthening. The timing of the writing of this book is likely after the events in the book of Acts (~61-63 A.D.).

The structure of chapter 1 is as follows: vv. 1-2 are a standard NT epistle opening, vv.3-7 and vv.19-20 warn about false teachers, vv.8-10 instruct about the law. Vv. 12-17 are the thanksgiving section. In Pauline epistles, the prayer/thanksgiving section, after the opening, reveals the main themes and table of contents of the letter. Only 2 of the thirteen Pauline epistles do not have a prayer/thanksgiving section: Galatians and Titus. It is missing in Galatians because Paul is upset with them. See Titus section for the reason there. Vv.11-18 instruct about the gospel. What is the gospel? How have the false teachers swerved from it?

The trustworthy saying in v.15 is the gospel in a nutshell: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. His death on the cross and resurrection provide salvation for sinners. All those who believe and receive him are forgiven and justified by faith. Though Paul was a chief of sinners due to his persecution of the church, he was shown mercy and grace to be an example of Christ's perfect patience. No wonder he praises God with the benediction in v.17.

The false teachers were apparently focusing on myths and genealogies (they may have been telling stories about characters in Genesis like Noah or Abraham). This promoted speculations rather than leading people to faith in Christ. These teachers wandered away into vain discussions about the law, not realizing that the law shows us our sin and points to the need for Christ. The vices listed in vv.9-10 remind us of the Ten Commandments. Timothy was to point these

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teachers away from different doctrine (v.3) toward sound doctrine (v.10) in accordance with the gospel. Hymenaeus and Alexander were excommunicated by Paul in an attempt to restore them.

How are we to live according to the gospel now and avoid false teaching? There are a number of gospel courses¹ that can help us with this. The main idea is we need to repent of any area of our lives that does not line up with gospel principles (v.11). We need to believe more and more deeply the truth that God saves sinners through Christ². If Paul was the chief of sinners, what does that make us?

1 Timothy chapter 2

How does Paul want to advance the mission of the church? First of all, he urges prayers, supplications, intercessions and thanksgivings be made for all people. The word “all” occurs five times in the first six verses of this chapter. Since Paul qualifies his use of “all”, it would be best to think of “all kinds” as the translation of the word. If we pray for those in authority it will help the spread of the gospel since we will be freed to live peaceful and quiet lives. There is a universal call of the gospel to all kinds of people, though universalism cannot be true.

The gospel is the news that the one true mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus, gave himself as a ransom for all kinds of people. It is a testimony which God uses to bring people to faith and he used to appoint Paul as an apostle, preacher and teacher. This gospel then leads God's church to pray and to act in accordance with it. Men should pray without anger or quarreling, which is undoubtedly a rebuke to the false teachers. Women should adorn themselves with modesty, self-control and good works, not outward show. It appears some women had been deceived by the false teachers and were usurping leadership and taking authority over men to the shame of the church. This trend did not even occur in the culture, so it is a bad witness indeed. Paul uses Genesis 3 as a reminder of the danger of gender role reversal, and as a reminder that the “seed of the woman” can deliver still. Though Eve was deceived, the Messiah would come through child-bearing and bring salvation.

¹ The Sonship course, Discipling by Grace, the Love Course, Parenting by Grace, etc.

² See my gospel tract online (www.transformationbibleministries.org). This is a concise summary of systematic theology, the themes of which are an outline of the gospel.

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The mission of the church is advanced when God's people act in accordance with the gospel. Men are to pray in harmony as an overflow of their lives. Women are to exemplify their faith by good deeds and that quiet inner spirit that is more beautiful than any outward adornment. When the church is unencumbered in this way the gospel is freed to go forth in Spirit and in truth to the glory of God, who uses his gospel to bear fruit throughout his world.

1 Timothy chapter 3

How is one to behave in the household of God (v.14)? How are we to grow in the mystery of godliness (v.16)? Paul has been exhorting Timothy to guard against the false teachers, many of whom were undoubtedly elders. In this chapter Paul gives guidelines for qualifications of elders and deacons to establish the church and hopefully prevent false doctrine.

It is a noble task to be an elder, or overseer. One must meet certain criteria to qualify: above reproach, faithful in marriage, sober-minded and sober in general, gentle, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, peaceable and content. He must know how to properly manage his own household, which includes keeping the children under control. He should be seasoned in the faith and have a good reputation with outsiders. In the same way deacons are to be faithful, manage their households well, and they are to maintain purity in action and speech. They are to be tested first, and if found blameless they can serve. There is blessing to serving well in this office also. Seeking high standards for its leaders helps to avoid hindering the mission of the church outlined above.

These qualities outlined are to be an example to all those in the church. We are all called to be dignified, act in a godly manner and promulgate the truths of the gospel, though not all are called to serve in an office in this way. The church of the living God is a pillar and buttress of the truth (v.15). Ultimately, we are to imitate Christ as the church testifies to the truth. The mystery of godliness (v.16) is the church following Christ, with godly leaders, and the work of Christ ever before us.

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The hymn in v.16 can be broken down into three parts: the conception of the mystery (lines 1-2), the communication of the mystery (lines 3-4), and the conclusion of the mystery (lines 5-6)³. In the first part the incarnation of Christ is referred to in the phrase 'manifested in the flesh'. In the second part, Christ is proclaimed to the world. In the third part, Christ's ascension gives birth to those who believe so that his church is formed.

By giving qualifications for those seeking office, Paul shows the standard for God's people in the church. The closing hymn in v.16 indicates how Christ spurs on his church to new lives of godliness based on his work.

1 Timothy chapter 4

What are God's people to be devoted to? How are we to be trained in godliness? The Spirit prophesied that some would depart from the faith. Some devoted themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons (v.1). The false teachers were insincere liars with seared consciences (v.2), bearing the mark of Satan. They forbade marriage and required abstinence from certain foods (v.3), which was a form of asceticism. But Paul argues that everything God made is good and is to be received with thanksgiving (vv.3-4). Those who believe are especially freed to enjoy God's creation since they accept his blessings and sanctify all things through the means of grace, the word of God and prayer (v.5).

Rather, Timothy is to be trained in the words of faith and good doctrine for godliness (v.6-7). Our hope and devotion is set on God, not deceptive teaching or silly myths. Timothy is to set an example in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity. He is to devote himself to the public reading of Scripture, exhortation and true teaching (vv.12-13). He is to keep a close watch on his teaching, to practice and immerse himself in these things, with the ultimate blessing of salvation awaiting him and his hearers.

Therefore, God's people are to devote themselves, like Timothy, to living a godly life according to the Scriptures, making continual progress until our salvation is realized fully. We are to recognize false teaching and avoid being side-tracked by lies or any teaching which pulls

³ Towner, 98-99.

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us away from the centrality of Christ or his gospel. We must discern between what the Spirit says in his word and what deceitful spirits teach. Therefore, we must devote ourselves to studying and observing the word of God (Ezra 7:10).

We are to receive God's blessings with thanksgiving, and walk in the freedom we have in Christ. We are also to set an example in every area of life. Our conduct is to be pure and our faith lived out in love. We are not to neglect the gifts God has given us, but we are to use them mightily unto the Lord. Using our gifts will help us to excel in God's calling for us and to find our place as lay ministers in the church. We are to persist in these things and endure until the Lords calls us home.

1 Timothy chapter 5

Honor is a key idea in 1Tim. 5: 1-6: 2. First, widows are to be honored (v.3). Then elders who rule well (especially those who teach and preach) are worthy of double honor (v.17). Lastly, masters are to receive all honor (1Tim.6: 1). How does the theme of honor connect the passage? In this section, the idea of honor is not just respect, but also material reward and benefit. Also, believers are to take care of their family so the church is not burdened- especially when it comes to widows. Who is 'truly' a widow (see vv. 3, 5 and 16)? By Paul's criteria here a widow has to be at least sixty years old, left all alone (no family to care for her), prayerful (v.5), previously faithful in marriage, having a reputation and devotion for good works (such as child-rearing, hospitality, foot washing, caring for the afflicted). Younger widows should consider marrying, having children and managing their households instead of being idlers, gossips or busy-bodies.

How are teaching elders to be honored? They deserve their wages, so they are to be paid for their service. A charge against an elder is not to be accepted unless there are two or three witnesses. If they persist in sin, they are to be rebuked publicly (no doubt hinting at the false teachers who are unwilling to repent). Timothy is not to be hasty in laying hands on elder candidates or to be corrupted by them. Rather, he is to watch for sinful patterns and good works in the lives of others because over time these things become more evident.

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Lastly, what are the implications of masters receiving all honors? In 1Tim.6:1-2, slaves are to perform even better if their masters are believers so the name of God and 'the teaching' is not reviled. The reputation of the gospel is not to be maligned by outsiders because of sloth, disrespect, or a bad attitude. A believing slave should serve a believing master even better because they are brothers and he will benefit by their good service (v.2).

How are we to honor one another? We are to treat each other as family in the church. That is the meaning of the exhortations in 1Tim.5: 1-2. In the same way, believers today are to serve in their families, churches, communities and workplaces with all their hearts to the glory of God, and to the benefit of those around us. In this way, outsiders will be drawn into the family of believers and not repelled by a lower standard demonstrated within the church.

1Timothy chapter 6

What is godliness and how does it manifest in the life of the believer? The term appears once in chapter 2, twice in chapter 4, and four times in chapter 6. As the book progresses there is a crescendo emphasizing what is expected of the believer within the church. It is not the message of the false teachers, which causes controversies, quarrels, envy, dissention, slander, evil suspicions, and friction. If a false teacher communicates a different doctrine that does not agree with the sound words of Christ or that which accords with godliness, he knows nothing (vv. 3-4). Godliness is not a means to financial gain, but coupled with contentment it has great gain. We are to be content with food and clothing (this may include shelter). We cannot take anything to heaven with us (v.7), but we can send spiritual treasure on ahead (v.19). Those who desire to be rich (v.9) or love money (v.10) fall into temptation and a snare, and other harmful desires are stirred up leading to ruin. This has caused some to wander or swerve from the faith (vv. 10, 21).

But Timothy, as an example to all believers, is to flee from this deceptive path. Rather he is to pursue godliness, righteousness, faith, love, steadfastness and gentleness. He is to fight the good fight (this harkens back to 1: 18). Timothy made a good confession (v. 11) as well as Christ (13). He was to hold on to eternal life and stay pure until Christ's appearing. He was to guard the deposit (v.20).

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The doxology in 6: 15-16 forms an inclusio with the doxology in 1: 17. Paul praises God for his character since it is foundational to the gospel he preaches. He ends by asking Timothy to charge the rich to set their hopes on this God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment (17). They are to be rich in good works, generous, ready to share so they may take hold of eternal life. So godliness avoids the false teaching and abounds by faith in imitating the Savior Jesus Christ. We are to live out our faith by the power of the Holy Spirit. We are to rest content in God and his gospel, knowing that our future is secure. While we are here, we are to set our hopes on God, praise him for all his attributes, and live in such a way that promotes the well-being of the church and its witness.

2 Timothy

Summary statement: Paul exhorts Timothy to be faithful in ministry, to endure suffering for the gospel and to live out his faith as an example since Paul, the apostle, is departing.

2 Timothy chapter 1

This is the last epistle Paul writes in the New Testament. He is obviously pouring his heart out to Timothy. In chapter one, we have a standard greeting in vv.1-2. The thanksgiving section is in vv.3-14⁴. Paul gives positive and negative examples of how people treated him in vv.15-18.

Paul is writing to his apprentice Timothy, charging him in many ways. Knowing that he may be returning to the Lord soon, Paul is preparing Timothy for the rigors of ongoing ministry. What exhortations does he share with Timothy and how would they apply to us? This question can be asked in every chapter or section as Paul's exhortations are pervasive in this epistle.

In verse 6, Paul reminds Timothy to fan into flame the gift of God. He seems to be referring to the Holy Spirit, who empowers Timothy for ministry as noted in verse 7. What does it mean to fan into flame the gift of God?

⁴ In Pauline Epistles, look for major themes and the table of contents of the letter in the prayer/thanksgiving section.

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In verse 8, Paul tells Timothy not to be ashamed of him as a prisoner, or of the gospel message which he preaches. Rather he urges him to share in the suffering for the gospel. Paul goes on to share many parenthetical statements which encapsulate the gospel in vv.9-10. Then he refers to the gospel in various phrases: God will guard 'what has been entrusted to him' (v.12), 'the pattern of sound words' (v.13), and the 'good deposit entrusted to Timothy' (v.14). So, in summary, Paul is encouraging Timothy to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit by sharing the gospel as a basis for ministry and to be willing to suffer the consequences as Paul has.

2 Timothy chapter 2

What does Paul exhort Timothy to do in this chapter? He is to be strengthened by grace in v.1. How does an understanding of grace shape believers differently compared to non-grace (legalism/license)? He is to entrust the gospel to faithful people who are qualified to teach others (v.2). He is reminded to share in the suffering with the attitude of a soldier in v.3. Like an athlete, he is to compete according to the rules (v.5). In those days, it was required for athletes to train for at least ten months in order to compete in the games. Likewise, Timothy is to endure hardships that go along with sharing the gospel. The hard working farmer was to reap the benefits of the crops. In the same way, Timothy and faithful believers will reap a reward for their efforts.

Timothy is reminded by Paul to stay Christ-focused in his understanding of the gospel. In v.8 he is instructed to remember Jesus Christ. Paul has set an example of suffering (v.9). He is willing to endure everything for the elect, that they too obtain salvation (v.10). Another trustworthy saying in vv.11-13 shows the benefits of persevering (living with him and reigning with him) and warns against apostasy (if we deny him, he also will deny us).

Timothy is to rightly handle the Word of God (v.15), presenting himself as one approved. This includes avoiding quarreling about words and irreverent babble (vv.14, 16), as well as foolish, ignorant controversies (v.23). Some, like Hymenaeus and Philetus, had swerved from the truth, saying the resurrection has already happened (v.18). Those who claim to know God are to depart from iniquity (v. 19). Believers are to be cleansed from what is dishonorable.

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Lastly, Timothy is to flee youthful passions (v.22) and to pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace. The Lord's servant must be able to teach, correcting opponents with gentleness and patiently enduring evil (vv.24-25). He is to be kind to everyone, including the false teachers, hoping God leads them to repentance, since they have been captured by Satan to do his will.

How do these things impact the believer now? We are also to be strengthened in grace, discipling others to grow in the faith. We are to train by studying and applying the bible to our lives. We are to endure suffering. We are to grow in our sanctification so we are ready for every good work. We are to refute error by knowing the gospel well and testifying to the truth.

2 Timothy chapter 3- chapters 3 and 4 can be combined into one session

In chapter 3 there is a comparison between the false teacher's way of life and Paul's. How do they compare and contrast (see the chart in Appendix A)? There are eighteen characteristics of the false teachers put into a vice list. Selfishness seems to be the major link of this list. They are also portrayed as deceitful, just as the extra-biblical figures of Jannes and Jambres were. Paul, however had his love directed at God, Christ, the gospel and His Word. It made all the difference. Paul was willing to suffer and be persecuted by doing what was right.

How are we as God's people to be characterized? We may not be apostles of the New Testament, nor Old Testament prophets, but we can be men and women of God. Do we have an appearance of godliness, but deny its power? As Christians, we may have some of these areas to work on, but what is our foundation? We are to imitate the apostle Paul in following the gospel, which is his teaching. That will change our conduct, purpose, and the direction of our love. Just as Timothy was directed back to the Scripture, so we are as well. The inspired Word of God is profitable for teaching, correction, and training in righteousness so we may be competent and equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy chapter 4

What is Paul asking of Timothy in this final chapter? Paul charges Timothy to preach the word, to reprove, rebuke and exhort with complete patience and teaching. Notice the language

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similarity in 4: 2 to 3: 16. He is asking Timothy to fulfill his ministry and to endure difficulty. Paul's time to depart has come and he wants to pass the baton on to this protégé. Paul has fought the good fight (as mentioned twice in 1 Tim.), finished the race and kept the faith. Paul would like to see Timothy one more time soon, before winter so he can travel.

What are the benefits for Timothy and the believer for persevering until the end? We will stand before the judge Christ Jesus (v.1) one day. We are servants of his kingdom and he shall appear again (v.1). There is a crown of righteousness in store for all who have loved his appearing (v.8). In this life, the Lord will stand by us and strengthen us so the message of the gospel can be fully proclaimed (v.17). The Lord will also rescue us and safely bring us into his heavenly kingdom (v.18). May the Lord and his grace be with our spirits (v.22).

Titus- This entire book can be done in 1 session.

Summary Statement: Titus is commanded by Paul to oppose false teachers and to order the church so that it grows in godliness and good works.

Titus chapter 1

There is only two of Paul's letters where there is no prayer/thanksgiving section, and Titus is one of them (the other is Galatians). Why does he skip it here? Perhaps it is because he hits the major themes of the letter in the first three verses in the introduction/salutation. Paul's apostleship is for the sake of the faith of God's elect, and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness⁵ (v1), in hope of eternal life. The doctrine of election in the first verse is important in understanding how different gospel doctrines are woven together. The source of salvation had to be God since man is fallen and unable to save himself. There is an obvious contrast between God who never lies (v2) and the Cretans who always lie⁶ (v.12). God promised this eternal life before the ages began and at the proper time manifested it in his word through preaching with which Paul had been entrusted (v.3).

⁵ Godliness throughout the Pastorals defines the Christian experience as a balanced and holistic life in which correct knowledge of God affects every part of life- Towner 219.

⁶ See Psalm 116: 11.

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Titus was left in Crete by Paul to put the church in order and to appoint elders (v.5). The elders, as examples to the flock, are to be above reproach (vv.6-7), faithfully leading their families well. Their character and lives should align with the truth as they hold on to the trustworthy word (v.9). They are to teach sound doctrine and refute any contradiction to it. **How does good doctrine encourage godliness and good works?**

The false teachers are the opposite. See how they are described in vv.10-16. Those of the circumcision party are insubordinate and deceivers (v.10). They teach for shameful gain what they ought not to teach (v.11). Titus is to rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith (v.13). Their minds and consciences are defiled (v.15). They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for any good work (v.16). These attributes describe the concept of total depravity⁷.

Titus chapter 2

In 1: 9 the elder was to hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught (by the apostle) so he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine. Now, Paul reminds Titus to teach what accords with sound doctrine. This affects all groups in the church: older men, older women, young women, younger men, and slaves. This pure doctrine leads to godliness and then godliness adorns the doctrine (v.10). How was the doctrine specifically to be applied in the church?

Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love and in steadfastness (v.2). This means there is seriousness and a depth of maturity to their walk. Having learned from their mistakes, older men are not to abandon the church, nor to be distant or uninvolved, but rather to be role models. They are to endure faithfully to the end of their lives and help the next generation to grow in godliness through teaching the word, serving and leading the community.

⁷ Total depravity can be defined as a state of corruption due to original sin where every part of man's nature is affected and natural man is thereby unable to know or obey God. This concept is also hinted at in Titus 1: 10, 12, 15-16; 3: 3.

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Older women are to live reverently, to teach what is good and therefore to train the younger women to love their husbands and children. Younger women are to be pure, self-controlled, working at home and submissive to their own husbands.

Younger men are to be self-controlled. Titus himself is to be a model of good works and to teach with integrity and sound speech. Slaves are to be well-pleasing, submissive to their own masters, showing all good faith.

This doctrine, the grace⁸ of God which appeared in the past, which is bringing salvation in the present, trains us to live godly lives as we wait for the future appearing of Christ Jesus, our great God and Savior. This Savior redeemed us to purify us for himself as a people⁹ zealous for good works.

Titus chapter 3

How are God's people to devote themselves to good works? They need to be reminded to be submissive and obedient to rulers and authorities and therefore to be ready for every good work (v.1). We are to avoid slander, quarreling, foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, quarrels about the law and divisive people after they are warned. Instead, we are to be gentle, courteous, and we are to remember the grace of God towards us in the gospel. We are to help cases in urgent need and we are to be fruitful¹⁰.

Appendix A

How does Paul's way of life differ from the false teachers? See 2 Timothy chapters 3-4.

False teacher/ungodly characteristics	Paul/godly characteristics
lovers of self	aim in life- please God and love God
lovers of money	wise for salvation through faith in Christ
proud	dependent on God's near presence
arrogant	being poured out as a drink offering
abusive	patience

⁸ God's grace is irresistible and unconditional, just like his election.

⁹ This hints at the doctrine of limited atonement or particular redemption.

¹⁰ In Titus, the idea of perseverance of the saints seems to manifest in being devoted to good works throughout life (3: 14). Since God elected the believer, his grace is shown in producing a fruitful life.

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disobedient to parents	rebuke
ungrateful	anticipate the Lord's rescue
unholy	holy conduct
heartless	look forward to the crown of righteousness
unappeasable	reprove
slandorous	exhort
without self-control	be ready
brutal	persecuted
not loving good	competent and equipped for good works
treacherous	suffering
reckless	finish the race
swollen with conceit	to him be the glory
lovers of pleasure	love his appearing
not lovers of God	love God
appearance of godliness but denying its power	godly life
creep into households and capture weak women	useful for ministry
oppose the truth	teach the truth
corrupted in mind	sober- minded
disqualified regarding the faith	follow true faith
folly plain to all	keep the faith
evil people	trained in righteousness
imposters	doing work of an evangelist
go from bad to worse	endure persecutions
deceived and being deceived	continue in learning the truth
will not endure sound teaching	follow godly teaching
itchy ears	preach the Word
accumulate teachers to suit their own passions	avoid the ungodly
turn away from truth and wander off into myths	steadfast in Word
in love with the present world	look forward to his heavenly kingdom