

The Books of Titus, Philemon, and Jude, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 6: Final Instructions

Titus 3:12-15

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

What is at stake doctrinally in this closing passage is the proper place of good works in the Christian life, a theme that has run through the whole letter and reaches its final statement here. Paul wants believers to “devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful” (v. 14). After establishing in chapter three that salvation is by God’s mercy and not by works of righteousness, Paul is careful to insist, again, that the saved are to be fruitful in good works. The teacher should help students hold the order correctly: good works are the fruit and goal of salvation, never its purchase price, and a fruitless professed faith is a contradiction.

The passage also models the ordinary, cooperative, relational nature of gospel ministry. Travel plans, the supplying of workers, warm greetings, and mutual love among believers are not filler; they show how the truth of the gospel becomes the practical fabric of church life. The teacher can use these details to lift students above a merely private spirituality into the shared, supportive, fruit-bearing life of the body of Christ.

The formational aim is to send students out as fruitful participants rather than spectators. As this completes the study of Titus, it is also a fitting moment to gather up the letter’s central refrain: a people saved by grace are a people zealous for good works, attentive to urgent needs, bound together in love, and sustained by grace. Help students name the fruit God is calling them to bear and one real need they can help meet.

Question 1

Student Question:

Paul makes specific plans, sending Artemas or Tychicus and calling Titus to join him for the winter (v. 12). What does it reveal about the spread of the gospel that it advances through ordinary cooperation, planning, and the sending of faithful workers, rather than only through dramatic events?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Begin by noticing how the gospel actually advances in verse 12: through planning, cooperation, and the sending of faithful workers. Paul will send a replacement so Titus can come to him; the work in Crete will continue under new hands. This is unglamorous and essential. The kingdom moves forward on the shoulders of ordinary, coordinated faithfulness.

Help students value the team. Paul rarely worked alone; the New Testament is full of co-workers, Artemas, Tychicus, Zenas, Apollos, and many more. The gospel is not a solo enterprise but a shared labor in which different people play different parts. This is a healthy corrective to a culture that idolizes the lone hero.

Apply it to the present. Most gospel work in any congregation happens through quiet cooperation: people teaching, serving, organizing, sending, supporting. Encourage students to see their ordinary contributions as real participation in the spread of the gospel, not as background to the “real” ministry of a few.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The gospel advancing through cooperation and faithful workers, not solo heroics
- The New Testament pattern of teams and co-workers (Romans 16)
- Ordinary planning and logistics as genuine service to Christ
- Every member’s contribution as real participation in ministry

Discussion Prompts

- Why does God advance His work through ordinary cooperation?
- How does valuing the team correct our tendency to idolize lone heroes?
- What ordinary contribution might be your real part in the gospel’s spread?

Question 2

Student Question:

Paul moves people around to where they are needed, calling Titus from Crete to Nicopolis (v. 12). Are you holding your own plans loosely enough to go where God might send you, or to stay where He has placed you? Where is the Lord asking you to be more available to His purposes than to your own preferences?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question takes Paul’s redeployment of Titus (v. 12) and applies it to the student’s own availability. Titus is asked to leave a place and a work he had invested in and go where Paul needs him. Following Christ has always involved holding our plans with an open hand.

Help students see that availability cuts both ways: sometimes God calls us to go, sometimes to stay. The issue is not restlessness but surrender, being more committed to God’s purposes than to our own preferences and comfort. Invite honest reflection on which they are clutching.

Move toward one concrete posture of availability. Perhaps it is a willingness to serve where there is need rather than only where there is appeal, or to say yes to a calling they have been

avoiding, or to bloom faithfully where they have been planted. Ask each student to name one way they will hold their plans more loosely before God.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Holding our plans loosely under God's direction (James 4:13–15)
- Availability expressed both in going and in staying
- Surrender of preference and comfort to God's purposes
- Faithfulness where God has placed us

Discussion Prompts

- Are you holding your plans loosely enough to go, or to stay, as God leads?
- Where are your preferences competing with God's purposes?
- What is one way to be more available to Him this season?

Question 3

Student Question:

Paul asks Titus to “speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing” (v. 13). What does this instruction teach about the church's responsibility to support and supply those who carry the gospel, and why is this kind of practical partnership a genuine part of ministry?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Focus on the church's responsibility to supply gospel workers in verse 13: “see that they lack nothing.” Zenas and Apollos were traveling, likely on gospel business, and the local church was to send them well supplied. Practical support is presented as a normal, expected part of ministry, not an optional extra.

Connect this to the wider New Testament pattern. Third John commends those who support traveling workers “for the sake of the name” and says we ought to support such people so that we become “fellow workers for the truth” (3 John 7–8). Philippians 4 celebrates the church's partnership in giving. Supporting the work is genuine participation in it.

Help students see the dignity of this kind of service. Not everyone is called to go, but those who supply, host, fund, and equip the ones who go share in the fruit. The teacher should dismantle any notion that practical, material support is second-class ministry; in Scripture it is true partnership in the gospel.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The church's responsibility to supply and support gospel workers (3 John 5–8)
- Material partnership as genuine participation in ministry (Philippians 4:14–19)

- The dignity of supporting roles in the body of Christ
- Sending and going as complementary, not competing, callings

Discussion Prompts

- Why is supplying workers a real part of gospel ministry?
- How does giving make us “fellow workers for the truth”?
- How can our congregation better support those it sends?

Question 4

Student Question:

Paul wants traveling workers to “lack nothing” (v. 13), which means someone had to give. When was the last time supporting God’s work actually cost you something, time, money, comfort? What would it look like to move from admiring gospel work to materially partnering in it?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question presses the cost behind “lack nothing” (v. 13). For workers to lack nothing, someone had to give something. Help students move from admiring gospel work in the abstract to counting the personal cost of materially partnering in it.

Invite honest reflection on sacrifice. When did supporting God’s work last cost them real time, money, or comfort? Many believers give from surplus and convenience; Scripture commends giving that actually costs (2 Corinthians 8:1–5, the Macedonians’ sacrificial generosity). The question is meant to be searching, not shaming.

Move toward one concrete step. Perhaps it is a specific gift, a commitment of time, opening a home, or taking on a need that will cost something. Ask each student to name one way they could move from spectator to partner in gospel work this season.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Sacrificial giving as a mark of gospel partnership (2 Corinthians 8:1–5)
- The difference between giving from surplus and giving that costs
- Moving from admiring ministry to investing in it
- Stewardship of resources for the spread of the gospel

Discussion Prompts

- When did supporting God’s work last actually cost you something?
- What is the difference between convenient giving and costly giving?
- What is one way to partner more sacrificially this season?

Question 5

Student Question:

Paul writes that believers must “learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful” (v. 14). What does it mean that devotion to good works is something we must “learn,” and how does this verse define the purpose and fruit of the Christian life?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Center the discussion on verse 14, the refrain of the whole letter: “let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful.” Note the word “learn.” Devotion to good works does not come automatically; it is cultivated, taught, practiced. The church is a school of good works.

Clarify the place of these works once more. Coming right after the great mercy statement of verse 5, this verse cannot mean we earn salvation by works. It means the saved are to be fruitful. Good works are the evidence and goal of a grace-saved life, the natural overflow of people who have been freely washed and renewed. The order is grace first, then fruitful works.

Draw out the purpose: “to help cases of urgent need.” Good works are not vague religiosity but concrete love that meets real human need. This grounds Christian devotion in practical service to people in trouble. Help students see fruitfulness not as busyness but as love made useful.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Devotion to good works as something learned and cultivated, not automatic
- Good works as the fruit and goal of grace, not its price (Ephesians 2:8–10)
- Concrete love meeting urgent human need as true fruitfulness
- The church as a school for forming fruitful disciples

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean that devotion to good works must be learned?
- How does this verse keep good works in their proper place after grace?
- How does meeting urgent needs define real fruitfulness?

Question 6**Student Question:**

Paul warns against being “unfruitful” (v. 14). Jesus, too, looked for fruit and was grieved by its absence. Where in your life do you sense the Lord looking for fruit that is not yet there? What is one barren area that, with His help, could begin to bear fruit this season?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question takes Paul's warning against being "unfruitful" (v. 14) and makes it personal. Jesus repeatedly looked for fruit, the fig tree, the vine and branches, and was grieved when He found none. Help students sit honestly with the question of their own fruitfulness rather than deflecting it.

Guide the reflection toward specific areas rather than a global verdict. A life may be fruitful in some areas and barren in others, generous with money but stingy with time, faithful in private devotion but fruitless in love for neighbors. Invite students to locate the one barren area the Spirit is highlighting.

Point to the source of fruit. John 15 makes clear that fruit comes from abiding in Christ, not from striving in our own strength. The remedy for barrenness is not guilt but deeper connection to the Vine. Encourage one concrete step of abiding and one specific way of beginning to bear fruit in the barren area.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Fruitfulness as the expected mark of a true disciple (John 15:1-8; Matthew 7:17-20)
- Honest assessment of barren areas without despair
- Fruit as the result of abiding in Christ, not striving alone
- The Lord's loving expectation of fruit in His people

Discussion Prompts

- Where do you sense the Lord looking for fruit not yet there?
- What barren area could begin to bear fruit this season?
- How does abiding in Christ produce fruit that striving cannot?

Question 7

Student Question:

Paul says good works are meant to "help cases of urgent need" (v. 14). How does this connect the inward grace of the gospel to outward, practical love for people in real trouble, and why is meeting urgent needs a fitting expression of a church saved by mercy?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Draw out the link this verse makes between inward grace and outward usefulness. The good works are "so as to help cases of urgent need." The gospel that saves us inwardly is meant to flow outward into practical love for people in real trouble. Grace received becomes grace extended.

Help students see why this fits a church saved by mercy. People who have themselves been met in their deepest need by God's mercy are precisely the people who should be quick to meet

others in their urgent needs. Mercy received naturally produces mercy shown (Matthew 10:8, freely you received, freely give).

Apply it to the congregation's calling. A church is not merely a place for inward edification; it is a community whose grace overflows into tangible help, food, money, presence, practical aid, for those in crisis. The teacher should cast a vision of the church as a people known for meeting urgent needs in Jesus' name.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Grace received overflowing into grace extended (Matthew 10:8)
- The connection between inward salvation and outward practical love
- Meeting urgent needs as a fitting response to received mercy
- The church as a community of tangible help, not only inward edification

Discussion Prompts

- How does inward grace naturally flow into outward help?
- Why are mercy-saved people especially suited to show mercy?
- What urgent needs could our congregation be known for meeting?

Question 8

Student Question:

Paul assumes that loving believers will naturally notice and meet urgent needs around them. How attentive are you to the urgent needs of the people right around you, in your congregation, your neighborhood, your family? What keeps you from noticing, and how might Christ open your eyes this week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question addresses attentiveness. Paul assumes that loving believers will notice urgent needs around them, but in practice we are often too busy, distracted, or self-absorbed to see them. Help students consider how attentive they actually are to the needs right beside them.

Name the obstacles honestly. Hurry, screens, self-preoccupation, and the assumption that someone else will handle it all blind us to needs we could meet. The good Samaritan saw the man in the ditch that others had walked past. Seeing is the first act of love.

Move toward awakened attention. Encourage students to ask God to open their eyes this week to one specific need in their congregation, neighborhood, or family, and to respond to it. The aim is not to take on everything but to notice and meet one thing.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Attentiveness as the first act of practical love (Luke 10:25–37)
- The obstacles of hurry, distraction, and self-absorption
- Seeing needs others walk past
- Responding to one specific need rather than being overwhelmed by all

Discussion Prompts

- How attentive are you to the urgent needs right around you?
- What keeps you from noticing the needs of others?
- What one need could you ask God to help you see and meet this week?

Question 9

Student Question:

Paul closes, “All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all” (v. 15). How does this ending reflect the unity and mutual love of the New Testament church, and what does it teach us about the bonds that are meant to hold Christ’s people together across distance and difference?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Reflect on the warmth of Paul’s closing in verse 15: greetings exchanged, “those who love us in the faith,” and grace pronounced over all. These are not throwaway lines; they reveal the relational fabric of the early church, believers bound together in genuine love across distance.

Highlight the phrase “those who love us in the faith.” The bond among Christians is not merely natural affinity but love rooted in shared faith in Christ. This love crosses the lines that usually divide people, geography, background, status, because it flows from a common Lord. Connect this to John 13:34–35, the love by which the world knows we are His.

Apply it to the present church. The unity and mutual love Paul assumes here is meant to mark every congregation and to bind congregations to one another. The teacher should encourage students to nurture these bonds actively, through greeting, encouragement, and love that reaches across difference and distance.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The relational bonds of love in the New Testament church (Romans 16:1–16)
- Love rooted in shared faith, crossing natural divisions (John 13:34–35)
- The unity of Christ’s people across distance and difference
- Greeting and encouragement as real expressions of Christian love

Discussion Prompts

- What does “those who love us in the faith” reveal about Christian unity?

- How does love rooted in faith cross the lines that usually divide people?
- How can we actively nurture these bonds in our congregation?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back across the whole letter to Titus, which you now complete. Paul has moved from the God who cannot lie, through godly leaders, sound doctrine, saving grace, the washing of regeneration, and now ordinary fruitful faithfulness. Name one specific way you sense Jesus forming you through this letter. What is the single truth from Titus that you most need to carry forward?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This capstone closes the study of Titus, so widen the lens to the whole letter. Invite students to trace the journey: the God who cannot lie and the hope settled before the ages; godly leaders to guard the church; the silencing of error; sound doctrine for every age and station; grace that saves and trains; the washing of regeneration; and finally a fruitful, loving, ordinary faithfulness.

Help them see the letter's unity. From first to last, Titus has insisted that truth and life belong together, that grace produces godliness, and that a people saved by mercy become a people zealous for good works. The ending in ordinary faithfulness is exactly where such a letter should land.

Close by asking each student for one truth from the whole letter to carry forward, and one way to live it. The goal is not merely to have finished Titus but to have been formed by it, sent out gentle, fruitful, and grateful.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The unity of Titus: truth and life, grace and godliness, together
- A people saved by mercy becoming a people zealous for good works
- Ordinary faithfulness as the fitting destination of gospel truth
- Carrying one specific, applied truth from the whole letter forward

Discussion Prompts

- What one truth from Titus do you most need to carry forward?
- How has this letter formed you, not just informed you?
- How is Christ sending you out gentle, fruitful, and grateful?