

# PASTORAL EPISTLES

## GOAL

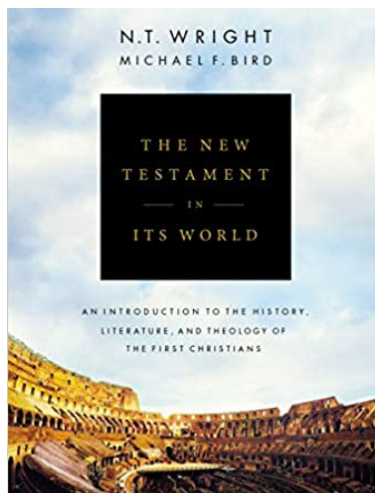
## WHAT IS THE POINT?!

The letters that we call 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus are often collectively called the Pastoral Epistles. It is somewhat a fancy way of saying these are letters written to real pastors in the early Church. N.T. Wright mentions that a healthy alternative of describing these letters would be by calling them "The Mentoring Epistles". Why is that? It is because Paul, the author of these letters, sought to encourage, strengthen, and rebuke believers in these churches, as well as help build the theological vision for his mentees, Timothy and Titus.

We should understand that, while Scripture was written TO them, it is also written FOR us. These letters were written to help these pastors and their churches but because these are the inspired and authoritative Word of God, as Christians, we must learn from them and apply God's truth to our lives.

What is the point of this study? Why must we hear sermons and then study the passages in group? It is so that we can effectively and holistically be equipped for ministry and every good work that God has called us to. Over the next couple of months, we will be engaging the Pastoral Epistles for the sake of our church and the glory of God!

## BACKGROUND



## HELPING TO UNDERSTAND CONTEXT

Throughout this series, our curriculum will consult N.T. Wright's *The New Testament In Its World*, among other resources. In order for our groups to study and understand the text of the Pastoral Epistles, utilizing such resources are beneficial for discipleship and growth. It is my prayer that you and your group will find the information this resource provides as helpful and healthy.



## OPENING

## PASSING ON THE TRUTH

Each Life Group is different. Your group may start with praying for the countries that Legacy Missions has brought to our attention, or with small talk before jumping into the lesson. Maybe still, your group may share highs and lows from the last week. However you begin, make sure that you are engaging the Life Group culture/dynamic that provides an encouraging and supportive environment. Before you get into the study of the Scriptures, make sure to ask and engage at least one of the following questions.

- Name a mentor that you have had in life? Who is that person and what did they teach you? What is a significant moment with your mentor that you will never forget?
- Have you mentored anyone? How was that process for you? What did you want your mentee to know or remember?
- What is something you think every church should know and have passed on?

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## SCRIPTURE

# TITUS 2:2-8

OVER THE COURSE OF THE SERIES, WE WILL READ MULTIPLE VERSES OF SCRIPTURE. THIS IS THE MAIN TEXT FROM SUNDAY'S SERMON.

**2** OLDER MEN ARE TO BE SOBER-MINDED, DIGNIFIED, SELF-CONTROLLED, SOUND IN FAITH, IN LOVE, AND IN STEADFASTNESS. **3** OLDER WOMEN LIKEWISE ARE TO BE REVERENT IN BEHAVIOR, NOT SLANDERERS OR SLAVES TO MUCH WINE. THEY ARE TO TEACH WHAT IS GOOD, **4** AND SO TRAIN THE YOUNG WOMEN TO LOVE THEIR HUSBANDS AND CHILDREN, **5** TO BE SELF-CONTROLLED, PURE, WORKING AT HOME, KIND, AND SUBMISSIVE TO THEIR OWN HUSBANDS, THAT THE WORD OF GOD MAY NOT BE REVILED. **6** LIKEWISE, URGE THE YOUNGER MEN TO BE SELF-CONTROLLED. **7** SHOW YOURSELF IN ALL RESPECTS TO BE A MODEL OF GOOD WORKS, AND IN YOUR TEACHING SHOW INTEGRITY, DIGNITY, **8** AND SOUND SPEECH THAT CANNOT BE CONDEMNED, SO THAT AN OPPONENT MAY BE PUT TO SHAME, HAVING NOTHING EVIL TO SAY ABOUT US.

**C**ommentator D. Edmond Hiebert says - "Paul here [in Titus 2] stresses the importance of building up the inner life of believers as the best antidote against error."

Christian character formation is essential to spiritual maturity and avoiding sin (*error*). As a group, use Titus 2 to answer the following questions.

- Paul exhorts Titus to teach Christians to live in a way that was in harmony with sound (or healthy) doctrine. How would you explain what it means to live in harmony with sound doctrine? What context clues in this pericope (section of Scripture) shows us how to live? Would you say you are living in a way that accords with sound doctrine? Would your family, co-workers, or others agree with your assessment of yourself?

- Older men are told to be sober-minded, dignified, and self-controlled. Furthermore, they are to be sound in faith, love, and steadfastness (perseverance). Compared to the pagan lifestyle of the 1st Century, how might living a sober, dignified, and self-controlled lifestyle be aligned with sound doctrine?

How does our current culture reflects a similar mindset to the 1st Century? Where might you need to seek a more sober, dignified, and self-controlled lifestyle to honor God? How can this group help you with that?

- Older women are told to be mature in behavior and character as well. The older women are to teach or train younger women to love their families and to seek maturing faith. What did that look like in the 1st Century? How does that happen today? If you are an older woman, is there a younger woman you would like to disciple? If you are younger and need an older mentor, can you reach out to her this week to begin that relationship? How can this group help you with that?

- The young men, as well as the young women and older men, were told to cultivate the virtue of self-control. Why might self-control be important for a 1st Century Christian? If you have experience of not living a self-controlled life, what danger did that put you in (whether physical, emotional, or spiritual)?

- Is there anything else that stood out to you in this passage that you'd like to discuss?

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## CLOSING

**H**opefully you have seen that we are responsible to train up those who are spiritually younger than us and live so that our families might be blessed, God is honored, and the gospel gains a good reputation.

Furthermore, we cannot expect ourselves to just behave like Jesus out of nowhere. We must seek to be transformed by God's Spirit. This takes time and it takes putting Scripture into practice by the way we live. Our groups and church are the perfect place to begin practicing living according to the standards of Scripture.

N.T. Wright states - *"Paul is anxious that everyone who professes Christian faith should allow the gospel to transform the whole of his or her life, so that the outward signs of the faith express a living reality that comes from the deepest parts of the personality. On top of that, he is also anxious that each Christian, and especially every teacher of the faith, should know how to build up the community in mutual love and support, rather than, by the wrong sort of teaching or behaviour, tearing it apart."*

In light of the text, and Wright's quote, as you close, pray that Life Group members:

- would seek to live a life that is indicative of a growing and maturing faith in Jesus Christ.
- would seek ways to live a self-controlled life, even when it means going against culture and desires.
- would seek ways to build up the community of Legacy through love and support.



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