

Ordain Elders and Oppose Error

Stan, the young pastor of the Typical Baptist Church, learned something troubling. Ray, one of the Sunday School teachers, believed that a person could get to heaven by sincerely and faithfully following any religion. He taught his class that sincere Muslims, Hindus, and others all go to heaven. Ray said there are many legitimate paths to God and Jesus Christ is just one of those paths.

Unsure what to do, Stan consulted with a friend who had pastored for many years. The older pastor advised Stan to ignore the situation completely. “Stan, you are young and inexperienced,” he said. “Ray has been a leader at Typical Baptist Church for many years and most of his family are members there,” the older pastor continued. “Ray has many friends and lots of influence; if you confront him or oppose him, the church will run you off.”

What would you advise Stan to do? More importantly, **what does the Bible say about such a situation?** Read **Titus 1** to find out.

Titus 1:1 How did Paul describe himself?

Titus 1:2 What does this verse tell you about God?

The fact that God cannot lie (**Num. 23:19; Heb. 6:18**) means His Word (the Bible) can be **trusted**. If God says it, it is true!

Titus 1:3 How did God reveal His Word?

Titus 1:4 How did Paul describe Titus?

Titus 1:5 This verse tells the task Paul gave Titus: “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest _____ in _____ the things that are _____, and _____ in every city, as I had appointed thee.”

The churches on the island of Crete needed help. They needed further teaching so they could resist doctrinal error (“*the things that are wanting*”), and they needed godly leaders (“*ordain elders in every city*”). The Bible uses the terms “elder,” “bishop,” “overseer,” and “pastor” somewhat interchangeably in speaking of church leaders. Verse 5 tells the **need** for godly leaders, verses 6-9 give us the **qualifications** of godly leaders, and verses 10-16 tell us the **work** of godly leaders in confronting false teachers.

Titus 1:6-9a Here are the **qualifications** of godly leaders (compare this list to the one in **1 Tim. 3:1-7**). “If any be _____, the _____ of _____ wife, having _____ not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be _____, as the _____ of God; not _____, not soon _____, not given to _____, no _____, not given to filthy _____; But a lover of _____, a lover of good _____, _____, _____, _____; _____ the faithful _____ as he hath been taught.”

Titus 1:9b What must the godly leaders be able to do?

There was much work to be done by Titus and the leaders he would appoint. The remaining verses tell about that work.

Titus 1:10 What problem existed in the churches?

Unruly means they refused to obey authority. They talked about **vain** (empty, senseless) things, and they deceived people. Most of these false teachers were Jewish (“*they of the circumcision*”).

Titus 1:11 “Whose _____ must be _____.” What kind of trouble did these false teachers cause?

Titus 1:12-13 Paul quoted a familiar saying, that the people of Crete were liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons. Did he agree with this assessment?

What did he tell Titus to do?

Why was he to do this?

Titus 1:14 Paul didn’t want the people to listen to “Jewish _____, and _____ of men.” What do those things do?

Titus 1:15 The Jews focused on dietary rules, but the Christian (“*the pure*”) is free to eat anything (see **1 Tim. 4:4-5**). On the contrary, “*unto them that are defiled and unbelieving*” (lost people), “*is nothing pure.*” What is the state of their mind and conscience?

Titus 1:16 False teachers claim to know God, but do they?

What proves that they don’t know God?

Concluding Thoughts: Do you remember the young pastor described in the opening of this lesson? Based on what you’ve learned in **Titus 1**, what should that young pastor do?

Do you have godly church leaders who protect you from doctrinal error? If so, you need to thank God for them. Do that right now.

Do you pray regularly for your church leaders? They have a very serious and important task. Stop right now and pray for them.

What about you? Do you listen to vain talk, fables, and the commandments of men? If so, confess your sin and stop it at once.

Project: Put your church leaders on your daily prayer list. Pray for them and thank God for them. Avoid false doctrine. Learn the truth by doing the **Daily Bible Readings** each day.