

SLOW FOOD BIBLE STUDIES: 2 TIMOTHY AND TITUS

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Slow Food studies explore a single point of interest in each section rather than attempting a full analysis. The first person singular is normally used, in order to encourage personal application; for group study, it can be personalised. Cross-references chase up one or two ideas in the section. Studies may be combined as desired.

The 'Pastoral Letters' (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus) are the only New Testament letters, apart from Philemon, that are addressed to individuals. Their date and place of writing is uncertain (possibly Rome in the mid-60s AD). Pauline authorship has been disputed – for discussion see commentaries – but is assumed to be the case for the purposes of devotional study. Useful handbooks include John Stott *The Message of 2 Timothy* (1973); William Barclay *The Letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon* (revised ed 1975); Tom Wright *Paul for Everyone: The Pastoral Letters* (2003).

2 TIMOTHY (15 studies)

1:1-7 In what ways am I like Timothy? *Ps 126:5-6; Rom 8:16; 1 Cor 16:10-11.*

1:8-14 Why is the gospel nothing to be ashamed of? *Mk 8:35, 38; Jn 15:18; Heb 13:6.*

1:15-18 How easy is it to support other Christians in trouble? *Mt 26:56b; Heb 6:10; 10:32-34; 13:3.*

2:1-7 Am I a 'tough cookie' or a 'jammy dodger'? *Prov 21:5; 1 Cor 9:24-27; Eph 6:10.*

2:8-13 Why is it important that I don't renege on my Christian faith? *Isa 55:10-11; Mt 25:12, 23; Jn 17:24.*

2:14-19 Is my teaching (or the teaching I am receiving) faithful to the central thrust of God's word, or leading people into confusing or even dangerous territory? *Isa 26:7-13; Mt 5:19.*

2:20-26 How can I make sure I'm not 'running the devil's errands' (v26, *The Message*)?

Jn 15:2, 4; 2 Cor 5:20; 1 Tim 5:1b, 2b.

3:1-9 If I know teachers (or pupils) who seem to be morally upright but are misleading or abusing those in their charge, what can I do about it? *Ex 7:11; Gal 2:11-14; Tit 1:16.*

3:10-13 If I am determined to be faithful to Christ, what kinds of trouble can I expect?

Jn 15:19; Acts 13:8,45,50; 14:2,5,19,22; 2 Cor 11:13.

3:14-17 Does my study of the Bible do me any good? *Ps 119:11; Lk 6:46; Heb 4:12; Jas 1:22-25.*

4:1-5 Why won't people believe 'the old stuff about Jesus'? *Jer 29:8-9; Jn 6:63, 66; 1 Tim 4:1.*

4:6-8 What is there to look forward to beyond the end of term? *Isa 25:8-9; 1 Cor 2:9; Phil 1:23b; Heb 12:1-2.*

4:9-13 How can we show each other practical support? *Mt 25:36; Gal 6:2; 1 Jn 2:15.*

4:14-18 Is a servant of Christ ever left on the end of the line? *Ps 22:19-21; Isa 41:10; Dan 6:22.*

4:19-22 Do people matter as much to me as they did to Paul? *For Priscilla and Aquila see Acts 18:2-3, 18-19, 26; Rom 16:3-5a; 1 Cor 16:19.*

TITUS (15 studies)

1:1-4 What makes me think that I have 'eternal life' (v2)? *Ps 16:11; Jn 5:24; Jn 17:3.*

1:5-9 Put these desirable and undesirable attributes of a leader (or teacher) in two columns and check yourself against them. *Acts 20:28; 2 Tim 2:15; 1 Pet 5:2.*

1:10-14 To what extent should I 'rebuke' colleagues who I think are teaching unhelpful things? *Lk 3:19; Lk 9:51-56; Acts 18:26.*

1:15-16 What does Paul mean by 'to the pure all things are pure'? *Mk 7:15; 1 Cor 10:23-24; 2 Tim 2:19.*

2:2-6 How relevant to me would Titus' teaching, as recommended by Paul, have been? *Ps 71:17-18; Ps 92:14; Ps 119:9.*

2:6-8 Am I a good teacher? *Mk 1:22; Rom 2:19-21; 1 Tim 4:16.*

2:9-10 As an employee, are my work ethics acceptable? *Mt 24:45ff; 1 Cor 15:10; Col 3:22.*

2:11-14 'But for the grace of God, there go I.' How does God's grace in Christ reach into my life, and how grateful am I for it? *Eph 2:1-10.*

2:1, 5b, 8b, 10b, 15 To what extent do these considerations apply to 'run-of-the-mill' teaching just as much as they do to teaching in a Christian context? *1 Sam 12:23; 1 Pet 2:12; 4:10-11.*

3:1-2 Is my public conduct irreproachable? *Prov 14:35; Col 4:5-6; Jas 1:19-20.*

3:3 Is this what I was like before I became a Christian? Am I still a bit like this? *Ps 51:10; Rom 8:10; Phil 1:6.*

3:4-7 If I have opportunities to proclaim the gospel, do I do it justice? *Rom 3:23-29; Rom 5:1; 2 Cor 5:19, 21.*

3:8-11 'Good works', 'foolish controversies' or 'stirring up divisions' – what reputation does my brand of Christianity give me? *Rom 12:18; Gal 6:9-10; 2 Thess 3:11.*

3:12-15 In the final lines of the letter we see Paul making plans for himself and others. To what extent does normal human effort and planning further the will of God? *Acts 18:27 (Apollos); Eph 6:21-22 (Tychicus); Phil 2:12-13.*

Review

Either, What can I learn from Paul's stress on sound teaching in this letter?

Or, Construct a gospel sermon relevant to the most difficult pupils you have, based on 2:11-14 and 3:3-8.

Or, How realistic is Paul about human failings in Christians? Would I feel comfortable going to him for personal counselling or mentoring?