

Paul's Later Letters

Fully Establishing the Churches According to Christ's Design

Paul's Later Letters

This is a very important letter in laying out sort of the process of the second phase of establishing churches: “setting in order what remains”

Most of these processes are not understood by both our Western churches as well as 1st generation Global South churches:

- Apostolic team leaders are needed to lead this second phase of the process.
- The primary focus is developing a well trained eldership.
- The heart of sound doctrine is a mature family of God with mature households; older family members and households must mature the younger, especially older women helping younger women develop their own homes.
- Realize that all our denominational doctrinal statements and denominational theological education systems are actually not what Paul means by sound doctrine.
- Deep respect for cultural, governmental authorities is needed; we must be careful to keep the focus on good deeds in the community: engaging in good occupations and meeting pressing needs.

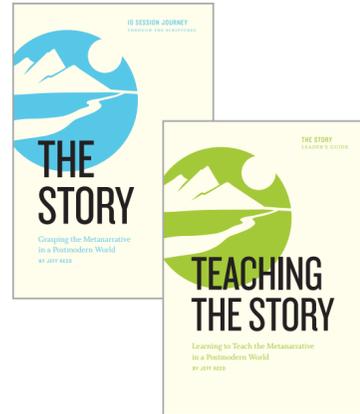
Paul's Later Letters

Issue: Significance of the Book of Titus in Paul's Later Letters

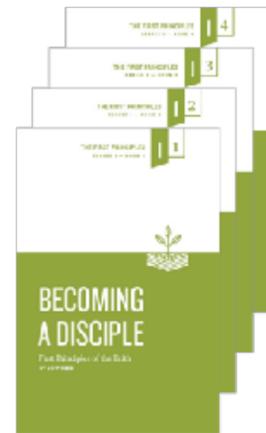
Questions:

1. In what way does Paul's letter to Titus build on and illustrate what Paul laid down in 1 Timothy?
2. How is Paul's concept of the social structure of the church being an extended household (a family of families) strengthened and illustrated by Paul leaving Titus on the island of Crete to finish establishing the network of churches there?
3. How does Titus accentuate the concept of the church being a family of families? What new dimensions are added to this topos of the church as a family of families?
4. What are the outcomes of a church fully set in order and functioning as a mature family? What should be the anticipated impact of such churches in the community?

New Perspective on Paul



Kerygma
Early Acts
Apostles' Teaching
6 months
Paul: 3 years "night and day"



Didache
Body of Acts
Theology of Paul
1½ years

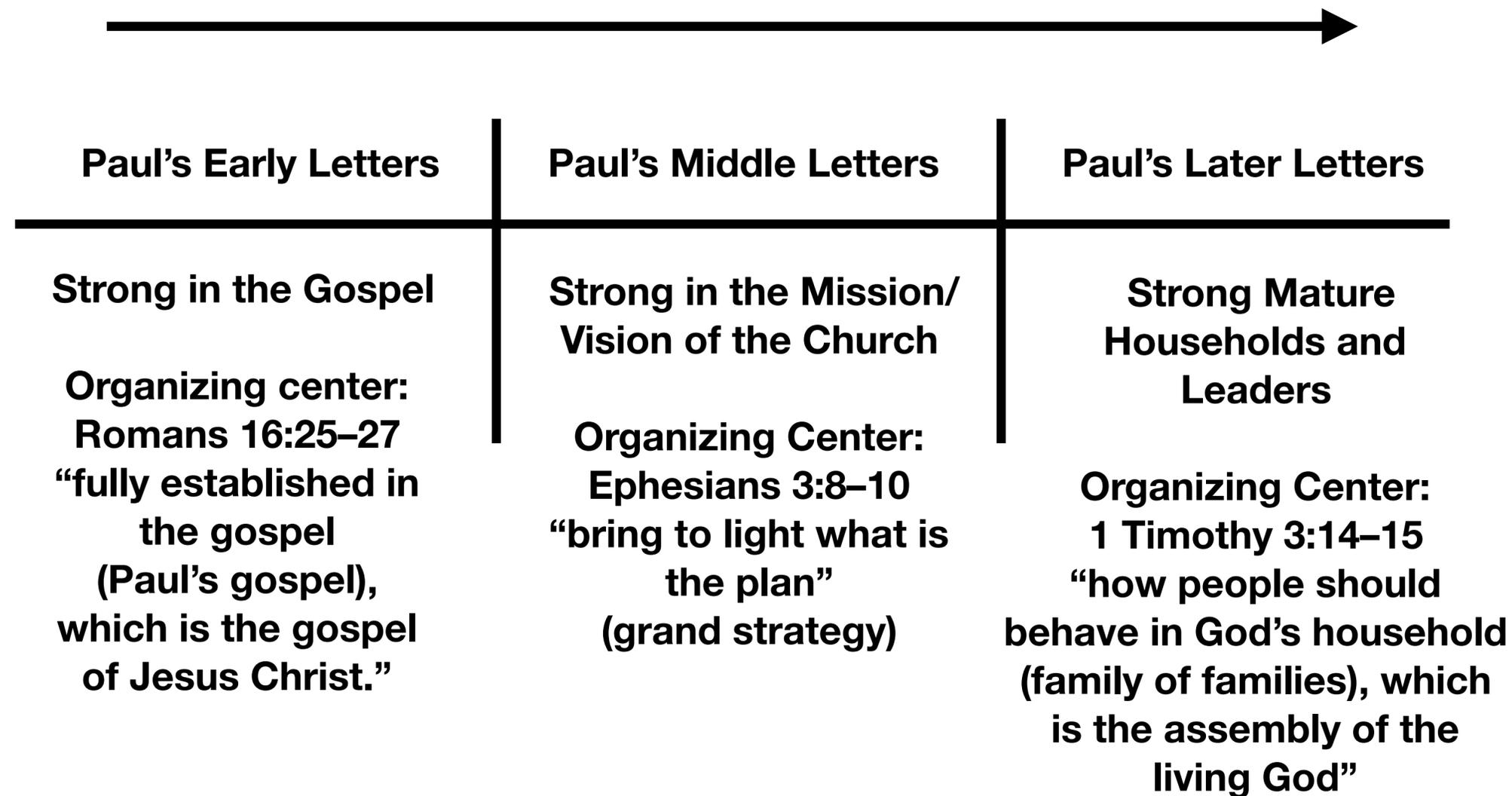


Full Kerygma
After Acts
Apostles' Gospels
1 year



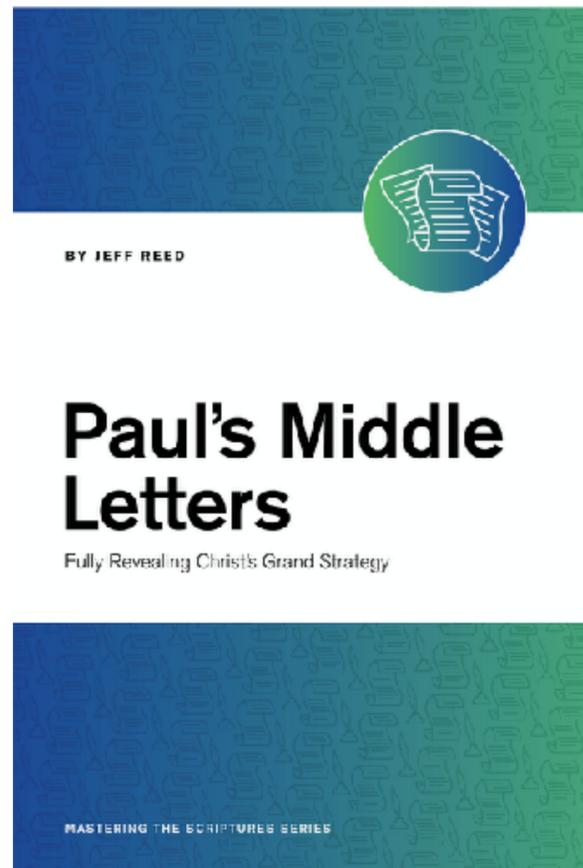
Paul's Early, Middle, and Later Letters

The Process of Building Strong Churches

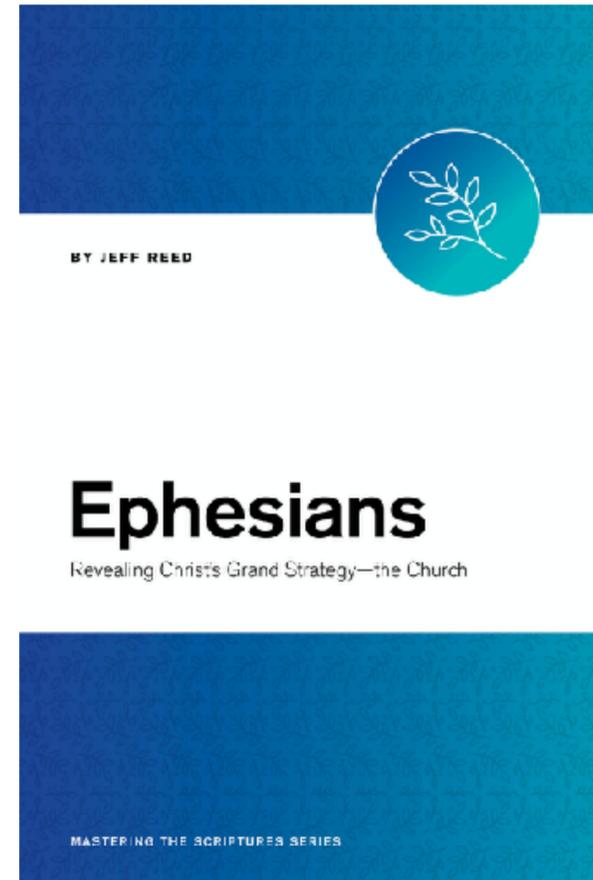


Paul's Early Letters	Paul's Middle Letters	Paul's Later Letters
Strong in the Gospel Organizing center: Romans 16:25–27 “fully established in the gospel (Paul's gospel), which is the gospel of Jesus Christ.”	Strong in the Mission/ Vision of the Church Organizing Center: Ephesians 3:8–10 “bring to light what is the plan” (grand strategy)	Strong Mature Households and Leaders Organizing Center: 1 Timothy 3:14–15 “how people should behave in God's household (family of families), which is the assembly of the living God”

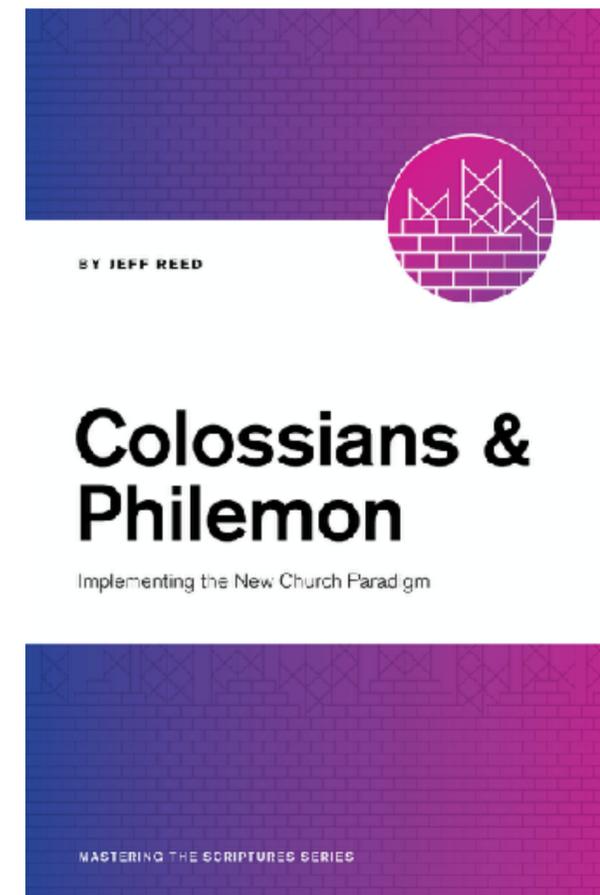
Paul's Middle Letters



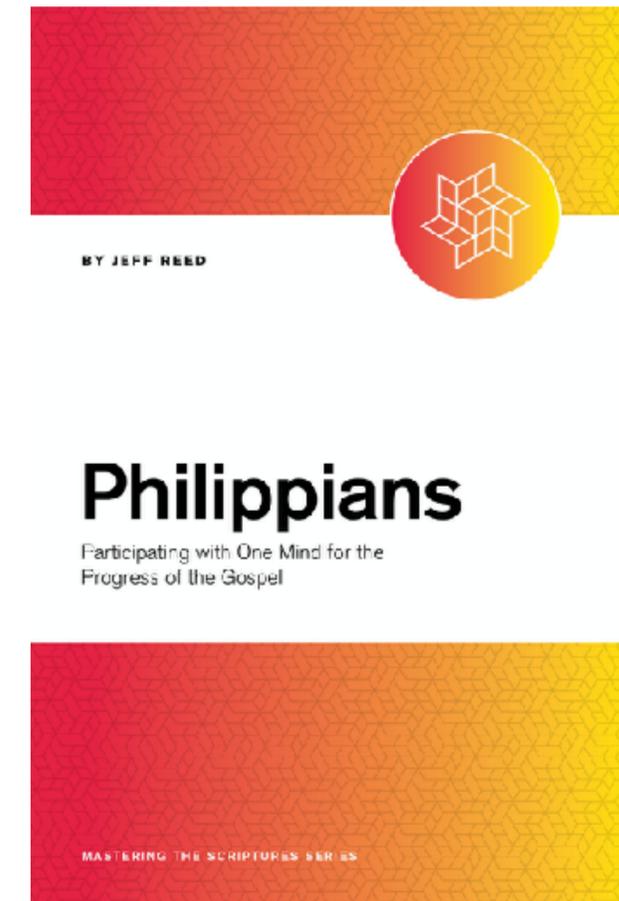
Feb. 60 to March 62



Autumn 60



Autumn 61



Spring 62

Paul's Later Letters

Now we turn to Paul's later letters, which brings us to the third and final phase of Paul's process of establishing strong, mature, multiplying churches, with solid leadership and high community impact with the gospel.

1 Timothy—written to Timothy when at Ephesus, Autumn, AD 62

Titus—written to Titus who was in Crete, Summer of 66

2 Timothy—written to Timothy, Spring of 67 (shortly before his death)

Middle and Later Letters

1 Timothy and Titus are similar in relationship to Ephesians and Colossians.

Ephesians — framework

Colossians — put into action in a cluster of churches

1 Timothy — framework

Titus — put into action in a small network

Ephesians is sort of the framework for Christ's grand strategy. And Colossians, written in a very similar manner and content, is an example of establishing a cluster of churches in the grand strategy revealed in Ephesians.

1 Timothy is sort of the framework for fully setting in order the churches according to Christ's design as a household of God: a "family of families." (Timothy was at Ephesus fully establishing them.) And Titus is an example of establishing a small network of churches.

Paul's Later Letters



Book 1: Paul's Later Letters: Fully Establishing the Churches
According to Christ's Design

Book 2: 1 Timothy: Ordering the Churches as Households of God

Book 3: Titus: Setting in Order What Remains in the Churches

Book 4: 2 Timothy: Investing in Intergenerational Apostolic
Leadership

Paul's Later Letters



Book 1: Paul's Later Letters: Fully Establishing the Churches According to Christ's Design

Session 1: The Household: Organizing Center of the Later Letters

Session 2: 1 Timothy: The Church as an Extended Household

Session 3: Titus: Setting in Order What Remains in the Churches

Session 4: 2 Timothy: Investing in Intergenerational Leaders

Session 5: Completing Paul's Process of Establishing Church Networks

New Perspective on Paul

Old Perspective on Paul

Paul's letters contain miscellaneous, often unrelated topics that would be useful for future believers, especially in dealing with sin, salvation, and living the Christian life. These topics are a significant part of today's ever growing systematic theologies.

New Perspective on Paul

Paul's letters form a coherent, interlocking shape, foundational for churches in any generation to fully understand Christ's grand strategy of the Church being central to His unfolding kingdom and to living in full alignment of that grand strategy.

Paul's Later Letters

Topoi (common topics in one place) is a very important form of Greek rhetoric that enables you to structure an argument including several topics around one memorable schematic, or rubric, or literally in one place.

The organizing center (a topoi) of Paul's Later Letters is 1 Timothy 3:14–15

¹⁴ I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you so that, ¹⁵ if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth.

1 Timothy Key Topoi-Based Topic Paragraphs

As we master this first of Paul's later letters and understand the household topoi, we will gain great insight into completing the process of establishing churches and church networks and to building intergenerational leadership. Here is what we saw in 1 Timothy as we looked at some of the topics swirling around his topoi of the church as a household of households (family of families).

Key "Topoi-Based Topic Paragraphs" of 1 Timothy:

1. The Importance of solid apostolic leaders guarding sound doctrine

Paul begins his later letters by focusing on the importance of apostolic leaders who guard the sound doctrine entrusted to them, which comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith (and affirmed by a council of elders), and includes a mixture of apostolic, prophetic, and teaching gifts.

1 Timothy Key Topoi-Based Topic Paragraphs

2. Sound doctrine entrusted to apostolic leaders

Sound doctrine, which is rooted in the gospel, has been entrusted to these leaders. They must possess the ability to confront different doctrines, which will be a constant battle, which many younger emerging apostolic leaders will easily be entrapped by.

3. Sound doctrine and community-wide understanding of authority

One of the first things in setting in order the churches (1 Timothy 3:14–16) is for the churches to understand basic community-wide authority structures: in the context of governmental authority, men are not to become involved in angry causes toward the government, but to be at peace; women in the churches are to submit to men who are primarily responsible for guarding and teaching this sound doctrine—both which are key to maintaining sound doctrine. So the churches are to be well ordered and not be in turmoil externally or internally.

1 Timothy Key Topoi-Based Topic Paragraphs

4. Setting order in the churches as an extended household

Paul expected Timothy to develop a household style leadership: recognizing elders, deacons, and leading women who assist, who will manage and teach the household of God, which requires that they manage their own households well. All of this clearly establishes the social structure of the churches as an extended household (a family of families).

5. Apostolic leaders engaging entire false doctrine systems

Paul warns Timothy of the coming constant barrage of entire doctrinal systems that will demand his own personal, lifelong discipline in the Scriptures. It's a kind of discipline that demands constant progress in his ability to handle the doctrines emerging in his context. His progress must be evident to all the churches as they are part of that teaching and dismantling of false doctrine systems.

1 Timothy Key Topoi-Based Topic Paragraphs

6. Functioning as an extended household in matters of both honoring and authority
Paul gives Timothy guidelines focused on the church as an extended household, instructing him as he continues to “set the churches in order” and keep them stable: establishing a basic extended household culture of the younger honoring the older; establishing a real extended household structure of honoring (caring for) widows who cannot be cared for by their own households; and honoring (paying for) elders who are carrying out extensive ministry. He must establish this social structure, recognizing that he must not show partiality, holding to these instructions as Christ’s design.

In addition, just as hands were laid on Timothy as an apostolic leader, he must lay hands on elders worthy of double honor very carefully. And they must see that those who have masters (slaves) do not use the grounds that they are both members of the church, to disrespect them. (Remember Paul’s Colossians–Philemon argument and model.)

1 Timothy Key Topoi-Based Topic Paragraphs

7. Household order as sound words to be taught with authority

Teach this “household order” with authority, not letting those who ignore these sound words get a foothold; take care to instruct those who are rich not to lead people a different direction but to focus on these things and invest in them; take care yourself, Timothy, to guard what has been entrusted to you.

Titus Key Topoi-Based Topic Paragraphs



Book 3: Titus: Setting in Order What Remains in the Churches

Session 1: Setting in Order What Remains

Session 2: Top Priority of Senior Elders

Session 3: Ordering the Churches as a Family of Families: Adorning the Gospel

Session 4: Engaging in Good Occupations and Meeting Pressing Needs

Session 5: Phases in the Process of Establishing Churches

Titus Key Topoi-Based Topic Paragraphs

Now we turn our focus to Titus to seek greater understanding of the “household topoi” and to gain an even fuller insight into completing the process of establishing churches and church networks and to building intergenerational leadership. Let’s read through a few core passages of Titus.

¹ Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ.... ⁴ To Titus, my loyal child in the faith we share.... ⁵ I left you behind in Crete for this reason, so that you should put in order what remained to be done Titus 1:1, 4a, 5

There’s a lot of insight here. We will explore at it more in session 5 and in session 1 and 2 of book 3 in this series, devoted completely to Titus. But for now...

Paul is a servant and an apostle; Titus is his child, but in a common faith. Obviously Titus is mature in the faith (training senior elders to handle complicated things, 1:9–10) but also still youthful in stepping fully into Paul’s apostolic function of fully establishing churches, as seen in Paul’s admonition in 2:15: “Declare these things; exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one look down on you.” NRSV

Titus Key Topoi-Based Topic Paragraphs

Look at 1:5 more closely

⁵ “I left you behind in Crete for this reason, so that you should put in order what remained to be done”

3 key words:

“put in order”: to set right, to correct, to put in order (LN), finish setting in order (GED of NT),

“what remained”: be in need, not possess (LN), fall short, be inferior, be short (ANLEX), remaining (NIDTTE)

“appoint”: to put in charge (LN), to make someone something (TDNTA), to bring into a certain state, to be established or institute (LS)

Titus Key Topoi-Based Topic Paragraphs

Compare with 1 Timothy 3:14: There Paul talked about his instructions applying to more than just Ephesus, where Timothy was (again, like Ephesians). But in Titus (just like Colossians), Paul sets this ordering of churches in real live action in a small network of churches on the island of Crete.

When Paul says “to appoint,” he is assuming that Titus is to find, develop, and get elders installed and placed in charge of the churches. He is not simply to find and appoint them but also to identify and complete what is necessary for them to assume that role, which includes holding on to the truth and skills necessary to keep the churches in the sphere of sound doctrine.

Titus Key Topoi-Based Topic Paragraphs

⁵ I left you behind in Crete for this reason, so that you should put in order what remained to be done, and should appoint elders in every town, as I directed you: ⁶ someone who is.... ⁹ He must have a firm grasp of the word that is trustworthy in accordance with the teaching, so that he may be able both to preach with sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict it.

¹⁰ There are also many rebellious people, idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision; ¹¹ they must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for sordid gain what it is not right to teach. ¹² It was one of them, their very own prophet, who said, “Cretans are always liars, vicious brutes, lazy gluttons.” ¹³ That testimony is true.

Titus 1:5–6, 9–13a

This is hilarious! He quotes one of their prophets! Clearly Titus is responsible for identifying, shaping, and in some way, seeing that these key leaders are brought to a certain state of development and put in charge.

Very strong statement!

Titus Key Topoi-Based Topic Paragraphs

As we master this second of Paul's Later Letters and understand the household topoi, we will gain great insight into completing the process of establishing churches and church networks and to building intergenerational leadership. Here we see some more of the topics swirling around his topoi of the church as a household of households (family of families).

Key "Topoi-Based Topic Paragraphs" of Titus:

1. The importance of next generation apostolic leaders stepping up to the function of fully establishing churches.

Paul begins this letter by addressing the entrance of Titus to the full function of establishing churches, which demands he now function with the authority of a young, fully commissioned apostolic leader.

Titus Key Topoi-Based Topic Paragraphs

2. The primary importance of appointing well-trained elders in every city.

Paul begins this letter by emphasizing, as first order of business, the developing and recognizing of well trained elders in every city. That assumes that Titus needs to be involved in the training of that senior network-wide eldership—an eldership that can guard the teaching at the same level of Titus, with a clear focus of keeping the churches well established in sound doctrine.

Titus Key Topoi-Based Topic Paragraphs

¹ But as for you, teach what is consistent with sound doctrine. ² Tell the older men to be....
³ Likewise, tell the older women to be.... ⁴ so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ to be self-controlled, chaste, good managers of the household, kind, being submissive to their husbands, so that the word of God may not be discredited.
⁶ Likewise, urge the younger men to be.... ⁹ Tell slaves to be.... ¹⁰ so that in everything they may be an ornament to the doctrine of God our Savior.... ¹⁵ Declare these things; exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one look down on you.

Titus 2

Titus Key Topoi-Based Topic Paragraphs

Notice several things at this point. (Note: I will go into the individual traits in depth when we deal with Titus in Book 3 of this last collection.)

These things are “consistent” with sound doctrine (standing out as clearly obvious). Sound doctrine is in view all through this letter, in fact in all 3 letters.

“consistent”: to be clearly seen (LSJ); to be conspicuous (obvious) among a number

When these kinds of “lives” are observed in us as a family of families, our enemies have nothing bad to say, the Word is not discredited, and we make the gospel attractive.

All these instructions (how to live as a family of families) are considered sound doctrine. Titus is to teach them with all authority, even though he is young and, like Timothy, just beginning to exercise this kind of authority amongst the churches.

Titus Key Topoi-Based Topic Paragraphs

3. Sound doctrine includes how we are to live in a family of families.

Paul makes it clear that the sound doctrine Titus is to teach with all authority as an emerging apostolic leader includes, as part of its essence, how we are to live in community together as a family of families and that living in this way confirms the Word of God to be true, builds intergenerational families, and makes the gospel attractive.

Titus Key Topoi-Based Topic Paragraphs

³ Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, ² to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show every courtesy to everyone.... ⁸ I desire that you insist on these things, so that those who have come to believe in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works; these things are excellent and profitable to everyone. ⁹ But avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. ¹⁰ After a first and second admonition, have nothing more to do with anyone who causes divisions, ¹¹ since you know that such a person is perverted and sinful, being self-condemned.... ¹⁴ And let people learn to devote themselves to good works in order to meet urgent needs, so that they may not be unproductive.

Titus 3:1, 2, 8–11, 14

Titus Key Topoi-Based Topic Paragraphs

There are several key ideas in this section that complete Paul's instructions of what it means for Titus to complete the establishing process of the churches in the small network on the Island of Crete.

He returns to the element laid out in 1 Timothy of obeying your government by avoiding the cultural quarrels and responding in wrath; instead the churches should focus on good deeds.

3:1–2

He then tells them, in essence, to avoid unsound doctrine (wrangling about abstract doctrinal debates), but instead, focus on good works built on the sound doctrine of chapter 2. Those who insist on continuing this constant doctrinal controversy, reject them after a second warning.

3:9–10

The final appeal is sort of the final, expected outcome of a healthy family of families: engaging in good works and meeting urgent needs so they are productive.

3:14

Titus Key Topoi-Based Topic Paragraphs

There are several key ideas in this section that complete Paul's instructions of what it means for Titus to complete the establishing process of the churches in the small network on the Island of Crete.

The final appeal is sort of the final, expected outcome of a healthy family of families; engaging in good occupations and meeting needs

¹⁴ And let people learn to devote themselves to good works in order to meet urgent needs, so that they may not be unproductive. Titus 3:14

good works: workmanship (DBL), business, works of industry (LSJ)

Titus Key Topoi-Based Topic Paragraphs

Good works in Titus

“They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.” 1:16

“Likewise, urge the younger men....⁷ Show yourself in all respects a model of good works,” 2:7

“He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.” 2:14

“Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work” 3:1

“I desire that you insist on these things, so that those who have come to believe in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works....⁹ But avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels” 3:8, 9

Titus Key Topoi-Based Topic Paragraphs

Kittle (TDNT)

“They both denote action or active zeal in contrast to idleness (ἄεργία [ἄργία]), or useful activity in contrast to useless busy-ness (περιεργάζεσθαι, 2 Th. 3:11; cf. περίεργος, Ac. 19:19; 1 Tm. 5:13; also the charge against Socrates, Plat. Ap., 19b), or any kind of active work. The words may be used of agriculture and agricultural economy, but also of the pursuit of various trades, of all kinds of occupations, of commercial undertakings, of trade, shipping and fishing (Rev. 18:17), of the chase, and of art, sculpture and poetry. They may also be applied to working in various materials (metal, wood, stone, clay), or the fashioning or erection of various objects such as vessels or buildings, or all kinds of technical or cultural works, including the winning of natural products, For these varied possibilities there are several examples in the Gk. Bible. The terms also denote work in the social or ethical sense either as a burden laid on man or as a necessary means of life and support. They are applied no less to the domestic tasks of woman than to the public work of men. They refer to works of peace and services in the public welfare,

G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, & G. Friedrich (Eds.), Theological dictionary of the New Testament (electronic ed., Vol. 2, p. 635). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Titus Key Topoi-Based Topic Paragraphs

I love this quote. It is the exact sense of Paul's use of the concept in these later letters.

We are to be engaged in good occupations, rather than idleness and causing trouble and divisions, inside the churches or outside in the culture—good occupations that benefit our families and seek the welfare of the city and community at large. This is the same as the Greeks' connection of community, individual household texts, good works, and seeking the welfare of the city. But it only can be realized through Christ and His grand strategy, built on the gospel and His church. But the watching world wants it.

Paul must have good occupations in mind through his whole letter, as he finishes with a challenge to meet pressing needs, another kind of good works, inside and outside the churches. This encompasses the concept of *lifework* in community, including good occupations, all integrated into the impact of our lives in community.

Titus Key Topoi-Based Topic Paragraphs

4. Abstract, unsound doctrine, must be dealt with severely

Paul clearly states that those who promote an abstract doctrine (abstracted from true life as a family of families) that leads to endless controversies must not be allowed to fester inside the churches. And those who will not embrace sound doctrine, as he predicts in his letter, must be removed from the churches after the second warning if they continue.

5. Engaging in good occupations and meeting pressing needs.

Engaging in good occupations and meeting pressing needs around us are intrinsic parts of Paul's concept of sound doctrine. But they are also an outcome, because engaging in good occupations and meeting pressing needs both adorn the gospel; therefore, they are central to the progress of the gospel, in and beyond their own communities.

Titus Household Topoi Today

Now let's look at these key Titus "topi-based topic paragraphs" through the lens of our churches today:

1. The importance of next generation apostolic leaders stepping up to the function of fully establishing churches.

Our churches must understand the importance of young, emerging apostolic leaders needing to carry out the function of fully establishing churches in their generation and trust them, even as they begin this task, as they emerge from their youth ("my youth is over").

2. The primary importance of appointing a well-trained eldership in every city.

Our churches must realize that the first order of business in building strong networks like the Early Church is developing and recognizing well trained elders: an eldership who can guard the teaching at the same level of Titus, with a clear focus on keeping our churches well established in sound doctrine. This requires us to have young, emerging apostolic leaders for each new generation.

Titus Household Topoi Today

3. Sound doctrine includes how we are to live as a family of families

In our churches today, we must believe that the sound doctrine that Titus was to teach with all authority, as an emerging apostolic leader, included how we are to live in community together as a family of families, and that living in this way confirms that the Word of God is true, builds our intergenerational families, and makes the gospel attractive in our communities.

4. Abstract, unsound doctrine, must be dealt with severely

We must understand, today, that those who promote an abstract doctrine (abstracted from true life as a family of families) that leads to endless controversies, must not be allowed to fester inside our churches. And those who will not embrace sound doctrine must be removed from the churches after the second warning, if they continue.

Titus Household Topoi Today

5. Engaging in good occupations and meeting pressing needs

Engaging in good occupations and meeting pressing needs around us are intrinsic parts of Paul's concept of sound doctrine, but they are also outcomes, because engaging in good occupations and meeting pressing needs both adorn the gospel and therefore are central to the progress of the gospel, in and beyond our own communities.

Paul's Later Letters

Sound doctrine vs. abstract doctrine in Western churches today

Abstract doctrine: denominational or secondary tradition, abstract doctrine statements; built on endless arguments, controversies, and divisions

Sound doctrine: the kerygma and didache, daily simple statements; at the heart of Christ's churches structured as a family of families, committed to strong community and family life; focused on engaging in good occupations and meeting pressing needs

An indictment on our entire Western denominational and theological education system

My China education: China, the other kind, reformed rejection and the common faith

Essentials of Sound Doctrine course: how we got there and how to get back

Paul's Later Letters

Issue: Significance of Titus for Us Today

Questions:

1. In what way does Paul's letter to Titus further our understanding of the full process of establishing churches today? How does it frame in the last phase of that process?
2. How is Paul's concept of the social structure of the church being an extended household (a family of families) strengthened and illustrated more fully by Paul leaving Titus on the island of Crete to finish establishing the network of churches there?
3. How does this letter to Titus accentuate the concept of the church as a family of families? What new dimensions are added to this topos of the church as a family of families, for us today?
4. What are the outcomes of churches fully set in order and functioning as mature families? What should that look like for our churches today as we live in communities and in contemporary cultures?