

A black and white photograph of a chair with a patterned cushion and a white pillow. The cushion features a line-art pattern of leaves and branches. The chair's backrest is visible, and a white pillow is resting on it. The lighting is soft, creating a calm and serene atmosphere.

TITUS & PHILEMON DEVOTIONAL

By Pastor Phil Emerson

NAME: _____

OUR DISCIPLESHIP FLOW

At Emmanuel Church, we are passionate about living out the call to be disciples of Jesus Christ, and make it our goal to see His Kingdom come in our lives and the world in which we live. We recognise that in Biblical times, a disciple was someone who followed a teacher or rabbi, not simply to gain head knowledge to pass an examination, but to be fully immersed in the life of the rabbi, and *learn his ways*, so that they in turn could replicate this to the world around them. As Christians, we are now those who have been invited to 'follow' Jesus and all of His ways, and we therefore call ourselves His disciples.

"This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did." **1 John 2:5,6**

We therefore want to take seriously the words of Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20 to make disciples and also commit to an ongoing journey of teaching and discipleship together.

We all have differing personalities and learning styles. At Emmanuel, we recognise this diversity within the church body and therefore desire to support and journey together as we relate with God and each other in some of the following environments:

- **Public (20+)**

In the Bible, we see Jesus seeking to make disciples as He engaged with larger numbers of people, e.g., His interaction with the crowds (Matthew 4:25; Luke 14:25), and the 72 (Luke 10:1-24).

At Emmanuel, we want to use each of our **larger gathered environments** as an opportunity to make disciples, e.g., **Sunday services, Friday Youth/Kids'** environments, **men's/women's** gatherings.

- **Social (10-15)**

Jesus demonstrated the necessity for **smaller accountable relationships** as an essential part of the life of a disciple. He did this by teaching and doing life with his twelve disciples (e.g., Matthew 10).

At Emmanuel, small accountable relationships are offered through:

Lifegroup 12s

These are **gatherings of 10-15 people** who meet bi-weekly in homes or around specific interests, e.g., crafts, football.

- **Personal (2-5)**

As well as having smaller accountable relationships amongst His twelve friends, Jesus also seemed to go to even deeper levels of trust with three in particular – Peter, James and John (Matthew 17; Mark 9). At Emmanuel, we seek to do this through:

Lifegroup 3s

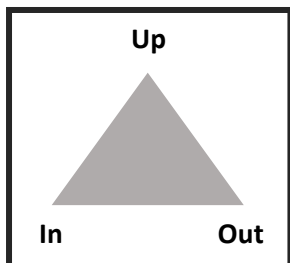
These are smaller **gatherings of 2-5 people** who are committed to transparent and accountable relationships in order to grow together in following Jesus. The aim for these groups is that after 1-2 years, each person in the group would be able to lead a smaller number of people themselves and replicate the process... **disciples making disciples!**

- **Intimate (1-1)**

Jesus regularly withdrew to spend time alone with the Father. This is the ultimate goal of discipleship, that each member of our church family would increasingly spend time alone with the Father and grow in devotion and desire to see the Kingdom come.

A TOOL TO USE

As stated previously, 1 John 2:6 makes it clear that for those of us who call ourselves disciples of Jesus, our goal should be to daily walk in the ways of Jesus, our Rabbi. As we examine the New Testament we see that Jesus lived His life based on three relationships: **Up** – with His Father; **In** – with His chosen followers; **Out** – with the hurting world around Him. This is illustrated in the following triangle:



Jesus taught and modelled out to His disciples how to live into each of these areas in life.

Up

Jesus frequently left the disciples to spend personal time with the Father (Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16). He taught them the significance of prayer, and how to pray and communicate with the Father (Luke 11:1-13). When comparisons with one another or insecurities presented themselves, He spoke into it in love and challenged them into a greater depth of living (Mark 9:33-37; Matthew 18:1-5).

In

Jesus had significant relationships with others in which He intentionally invested (12s and 3s). When He went to engage with the Father He brought the three with Him (Matthew 17:1). He taught them and modelled out the significance of Sabbath and rhythms of rest (Mark 6:31). He demonstrated with His life the significance of generosity and sacrificial love for others (John 13:1-17).

Out

Jesus personally lived a life that engaged with the crowds and the broken world around Him. He healed the sick (Matthew 8:1-4), fed the poor (Mark 6:30-44), and cast out demons (Matthew 8:28-34). But with the people who were closest to Him, He challenged them to do the same (Mark 6:37), and when they took risks themselves He critiqued and gave honest feedback to call out more for them (Luke 10:17-20).

As we spend time alone or together in this devotional, we want to help and encourage you to engage in each of these ways – UP, IN, and OUT.

HOW TO USE THE BOOK

First

If you haven't already done so, please take a second to fill in your name on the inside of the front cover. There'll be a lot of identical books floating around, and we don't want yours to get lost.

Prepare

Get ready for each session by spending some time to invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you. The Bible is a written word (logos), which becomes a living word (rhema) as the Holy Spirit breathes upon it and speaks directly to our lives through it.

Commit

Commit to the journey. Discipleship is not a commitment to a moment, but to a lifetime journey. As you personally commit to journeying with God daily, commit to others by sharing what you are learning (possibly in Lifegroup 12s or 3s), and in this way encouraging one another in what God is saying.

Reflect & Respond

Each day, as you spend personal time with God, we encourage you to ask the following two questions:

- 1) What is God saying to me?
- 2) What am I going to do about it?

This is how we become doers and not just hearers of what God is saying.

INTRODUCTION TO ...

TITUS

Paul writes a personal letter to Titus, one of his converts. In Galatians 2, we read of Titus serving with Paul at the church in Corinth. Titus, a friend of Timothy who also is referred to as young, received a difficult assignment as a young pastor to the work in Crete. This little book is similar in content to the letters written to Timothy which bring a challenge to raise up godly leaders within the church. Titus was instructed to ordain elders in each church he visited. The church is on the move and, as we say, for a movement to be a movement it must keep moving, otherwise it becomes a monument. We see that any movement is only as strong and healthy as its leaders.

PHILEMON

This little book is a simple but a very powerful one. It is a message of love and forgiveness from a wealthy former slave owner to a runaway slave called Onesimus. Paul is the writer. He was the one who led both of these men to faith in Christ. Now he wants Philemon to forgive Onesimus, to accept this slave as a brother in Christ, and to consider sending Onesimus back to Paul as the apostle found him useful in God's service. There was sacrifice involved in this request. It definitely wasn't cheap grace. This was a huge ask. The book of Philemon presents a picture of the beautiful and majestic transition from slavery to freedom that comes from the New Covenant.

Let us allow these books to challenge us to our core!

Phil

Live

We learn from verse 5 that Paul and Titus worked together in Crete spreading the gospel and establishing churches. Paul had to leave, but Titus stayed and worked among the congregations. Since Titus was left behind to do a difficult work, Paul wanted to instruct and encourage him, and he did so with this letter. There are basically two kinds of people. With some you say, 'This job is really hard, so we can't send them.' With others you say, 'This job is really hard, so we must send them.' Titus was most definitely in the second category. He was a man I would have liked on my team.

Paul addresses the reason he left Titus in Crete: to set in order what was lacking and to appoint elders in every city. "*Set in order*" is a medical term; it was applied to the setting or resetting of a broken bone. To assist Titus in that task, Paul reviews the qualifications necessary for those who would be appointed as elders. Titus' task was to be a strong leader in bringing both direction and correction. We need to be aware when we need one or the other of these.

It's not clear how the seed of the gospel got to Crete, though we know Cretans were present in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost when they heard the disciples speak in their language of the mighty deeds of God. It is therefore quite probable some of these Hellenistic Jews were converted when Peter preached and then went home to plant churches. The problem seems to be that there was a lot of baggage that came with them, as verse 11 indicates. Some of the Hellenistic Jews were promoting false doctrine as well as being downright dishonest. Titus had a commendable track record of dealing with difficult problems in Corinth, so Paul had left him in Crete to get the church there on solid footing. He wrote this letter to give instruction to Titus and the church on how to be the people of God in that pagan culture.

Pray

Father, thank You for Your love for the church of which I get to be a part. I pray for the leaders that they remain strong and that they will never dilute the power of Your name. I pray for holy boldness and fresh direction. Praise Your amazing name and thank You. In Jesus' strong name. Amen.

REFLECT

What is God saying to me?

RESPOND

What am I going to do about it?

Live

We can't escape it; the Bible is a book that tells us how to live. It is the height of hypocrisy to say that we believe its truth if we ignore how it tells us to live our lives. We don't always like it, but we always need to hear how God expects us to live. Paul wants Titus to simply fulfil the command of Jesus in Matthew 28:20, *“Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.”* Christians should live in active expectation of the return of Jesus.

Having reviewed the qualifications of elders, Paul exhorts Titus to speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine. Such things include the conduct expected of Christians both male and female, young and old. Paul then writes of the grace of God that brings salvation to all men. This wonderful grace instructs us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, choosing instead to live soberly, righteously and godly. This grace also encourages us to look forward to the blessed hope we have in the glorious appearing of Jesus.

This whole chapter deals with what might be called ‘the Christian character in action’. It takes people by their various ages and stations and lays down what they ought to be within the world. Paul starts with the older men, saying they must be healthy in faith, healthy in love, and healthy in fortitude when pain and struggle come their way. The years should temper a man like steel, so that he can bear more and more, and emerge more and more the conqueror over life's troubles. The older women must teach and train the younger. They must be an example and never discourage or demean but rather be uplifting and kind. The younger women are bidden to be devoted to their husbands and their children, to be prudent and to manage their households well. The duty of the younger men is summed up in one very powerful sentence: *“Urge the younger men to be self-controlled.”*

Pray

Father, I so want to live for You and especially now as I see and sense the day of Jesus' soon return. His footfall is at the door. Help me to live by the standards set forth in Scriptures, like in this chapter today. May my greatest desire be to please You. In Jesus' strong name. Amen.

REFLECT

What is God saying to me?

RESPOND

What am I going to do about it?

Live

Paul speaks as a father in the faith exhorting Titus and the believers in Crete with reminders of how God has laid hold of their lives. We live in a culture that has somewhat forgotten God, with an increasingly militant mood against those of us who hold to godly moral standards. We can fight against that all we want, but what our society needs is the gospel which alone can change human hearts. We must live godly lives in this evil world, and we must excel in good works that display God's grace through us. We need to keep being reminded of how God's grace changed us.

Titus was to constantly remind the Christians under his care to show proper respect and humility towards all people, particularly those in a position of authority. Remembering the work of God builds four things in us. Gratitude for how God changed us. Humility as we see that it was His work. Kindness to others in the same place. And faith that God can change them too.

I don't know about you, but I need chapters like this that bring me back down to earth and make me realise that there is so much I need to be thankful for. God's amazing grace that captured my wandering heart and claimed it for now and eternity is quite incredible. I love personalising verses 4–8 as it is written in the Passion Translation: *"When the extraordinary compassion of God my Saviour and His overpowering love suddenly appeared in person, as the brightness of a dawning day, He came to save me. Not because of any virtuous deed that I had done but only because of His extravagant mercy. He saved me, resurrecting me through the washing of rebirth. I am made completely new by the Holy Spirit, whom He splashed over me richly by Jesus, the Messiah, my Life Giver. So as a gift of His love, and since I am faultless—innocent before His face—I can now become heirs of all things, all because of an overflowing hope of eternal life."* Now there's a standard to live by!

Pray

Father, I so want to live my life for You in both the quiet place and the public square. Help me to be consistent in my faith and always ready to give an answer for the hope that is in me – Christ in me, the hope of glory. In Jesus' strong name. Amen.

REFLECT

What is God saying to me?

RESPOND

What am I going to do about it?

Read

Philemon

Live

I love these little letters of Paul. They are personal to me because Paul is now around my age, 60 or 61. He refers to himself in verse 9 as an “*old man*” and while I don’t really like that, Paul’s life had been an extremely hard one with life expectancy much lower than today. Paul is writing this personal plea to Philemon who is a wealthy Christian slave owner. He was converted under Paul’s ministry and lived in Colossae where the Colossian church met in his home. This little letter points out to believers that their homes should also be a church, and that each home can have the characteristics of a healthy church consisting of a small group worshipping together, having a bond of unity, studying the Scriptures together, and reaching out into their communities to win others for Christ. I love this discipleship model.

Slavery was accepted in the Roman world and under their law, a runaway slave was severely punished, quite possibly even put to death. Onesimus had got powerfully saved under Paul’s preaching and the two had become friends to the point where Onesimus confided his secret in Paul. Paul, who is in prison, picks up his pen and endorses Philemon to receive Onesimus back not as a slave but as a fellow brother in Christ. He even offers to pay any outstanding debts.

What a beautiful picture of the gospel. The once runaway slave now becoming the endeared brother with someone else paying the debt on his behalf. Jesus became the one mediator between God and us paying the great debt of our sin. I love how John Trapp explains this little epistle consisting of just one chapter. I quote, *“This is a notable Epistle, and full of worth; each word having its weight, each syllable its substance. From an abject subject, the receiving of a runaway servant, St. Paul soars like a heavenly eagle, and flies a high pitch of heavenly discourse.”*

Pray

Father, how beautiful it is to meet with other believers in smaller gatherings to fellowship and worship. Thank You that I don’t have to be ashamed of my battle with loneliness. Thank You for placing me in a body of believers who struggle as I do, but love You with their all. In Jesus’ strong name. Amen.

REFLECT

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RESPOND

What am I going to do about it?

