



Getting started with the Pastoral Epistles

(1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon)

Do you remember at school, when the teacher would speak directly to one student, but in front of the whole class? The message to that one student was really something that everyone needed to hear.

So it is with the Pastoral Epistles. Paul writes personal letters to three leaders in the early church – Timothy, Titus & Philemon. Even though these letters are addressed to individuals, they are supposed to be read & heard by the whole church. The message within these books applies firstly to the person being addressed, but also to the church as a whole.

Likewise, as we read these Bible books today, there are particular lessons for church leaders to learn, but in reality the content is stuff that everyone needs to hear.

These letters have crucial things to tell us about how Christian communities should function.

Timothy is Paul's protégé – a young pastor in Ephesus, modern day Turkey. He is instructed to guard the gospel by being personally faithful, teaching the truth, opposing false teachers & raising up godly leaders.

Titus is another man under Paul's influence – he has been left on the island of Crete with the express purpose of establishing local church leadership. Paul explains that the gospel of grace changes us for good, to do good; and so good leaders are needed and false teachers must be silenced.

Philemon is a dear friend of Paul who now helps to lead a church in Colosse. Philemon's runaway slave Onesimus has ended up with Paul in Rome, so Paul sends him back with this letter in hand. He wants Philemon to understand that the gospel so radically changes our relationships that even a runaway slave can be treated as family.

Some RBT reading ideas:

- Meet up once a week to read it with a friend.
- Listen online at Biblegateway.com
- Write down a verse that struck you that day.
- Encourage someone by texting them a thought from what you've read.

Grow 1:1 questions to unlock the passage:

What does this teach me about God?

How does this point me to the Lord Jesus and His cross?

What does this teach me about myself?

How does this help me to pray?

What difference will this make to my week?



Here are some questions the Bible wants you to ask of itself. Use these to help you as you read your way through this month's book: (please don't feel like you have to fill in every question in loads of detail. These are a guide to help you learn from what you are reading.)

- What did you learn about Jesus and what it means to trust him? (Luke 24:45-47)
- What did you learn about yourself? (James 1:23 & 2 Tim 3:16-17)
- How were you corrected or rebuked or equipped for every good work? (2 Tim 3:16-17)
- What did you learn from the book that will help you keep going as a follower of Jesus? (Romans 15:4)
- What did you learn that will help you serve and build up the church? (Eph 4:11-16)
- What have you learnt that helps you love the Lord your God with all your heart & with all your soul & with all your mind? (Matt 22:37-40)
- What has helped you love your neighbour as yourself? (Matt 22:37-40)