

## The Apprentice

### Discussion Guide for Titus 2

Some of you may remember the old days when Donald Trump wasn't a politician, but a reality TV star.

The premise of *The Apprentice* was that aspiring young business people would compete to impress Trump with their business acumen so he would select them to run one of his companies for a year.

The real payoff for winning was not getting a job for one year. What kind of prize would that be?!?

Contestants competed so they would get the chance to learn how to run a business the way Donald Trump ran his. They spent time with Trump, were accountable to him, and learned to do things "the Trump Way."

The goal in that year was to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to become billionaires themselves.

Much of the New Testament compares the Christian life to the concept of apprenticeship — the primary means of educating young people in the first century.

We celebrate a vastly more worthy leader than Donald Trump. Our pursuit is the life of Jesus.

The idea of Christian discipleship is to follow Jesus around and participate in his life. As we get to know his ways, our lives begin to replicate his thoughts, values, and behaviors.

When Jesus left earth for the right hand of The Father, he commissioned his followers to "go and make disciples." They were to replicate the same apprenticeship process that Jesus had used to educate them.

Titus 2 gives us principles for the way apprenticeship works in teaching each other to follow Jesus within our own life group ministry. The following rationale based on this passage serves as my own guide for how we aspire to practice life groups at Venture.

## Life Group Rationale from Titus 2

**Jonathan Pugh, Associate Pastor: Life Groups & Church Partnership**

One final key text for inter-generational discipleship from the Pauline epistles can be found in Titus 2. This text puts forward the idea that propagating sound doctrine from generation to generation is intertwined with living before one another in righteousness. Disciple-making serves as the intersection between orthodoxy (right belief) and orthopraxy (right practice). A discipleship group will explore doctrine, see where doctrine is applicable to their lives, and be involved in each other's lives well enough to see doctrine put into action. This is how disciples truly learn the doctrine they are taught. Titus 2:11-13 says, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ."

Paul here is addressing a Cretan problem that had to do with how new Cretan Christians were representing the Christian message with their conduct.<sup>1</sup> This Cretan problem may well be similar to the problem of pastoral care for young Americans who come from an increasingly secular background and must learn how to live an ethical Christian life. The word translated as older men and older women in Titus 2 is πρεσβυτερος (Presbuteros, which literally means elder). Hippocrates used this word to describe men between fifty and fifty-six years of age along with character traits that should be present in the life of a respectable Greek elder. Paul names several respectable character traits for older men to embrace, but is likely addressing all adults in the church as they relate to younger people, not simply those aged fifty to fifty-six.<sup>2</sup>

Titus 2:1-5 is one extended sentence saying what older men and women are to be taught. Similarly, young men and young women are to be "urged."<sup>3</sup> Teaching and urging, as with the shema discourse (Deuteronomy 6) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), must go beyond merely getting people to assent to propositional truths. Truth that is properly taught in the context of disciple-making must result in a change in the very character traits of the life of the disciple. Hulitt Gloer says, "Teachers of faith must embody that faith. As the rabbi was "living Torah," so the Christian teacher must be "living gospel."<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> William Mounce, "Pastoral Epistles," Word Biblical Commentary. Vol. 46. Ed. by Bruce Metzger, et. al. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 407.

<sup>2</sup> Mounce, 408.

<sup>3</sup> W. Hulitt Gloer, 1 & 2 Timothy-Titus, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2010), 51.

<sup>4</sup> Gloer, 61.

### Discussion Questions:

- What characteristics of elders do you find the need to work on the most?
- Is it enough to simply say “I am following Jesus” and not be in community with people who show you day-to-day what it looks like to follow him?
- Who are you modeling your life after to help you obtain the characteristics that Paul describes?
- Who are you training as an apprentice?
- How can life groups help you to be more obedient to Titus 2:1-6?
- Is our life group fulfilling its purpose if it does not include multiple generations?
- How are older people teaching younger people critical to fulfilling the Great Commission?
- How can we use the relationships of everyday life to spread our faith?