

## What Does God Want of Us – Radio Show #146

I. The book of Titus is a personal letter of Paul to Titus, a leader among the believers on the island of Crete. He is instructed how to act as a leader, and also how to choose others as leaders over the believers in Crete. From these instructions, we learn much about how God wants His people to act in this dispensation of grace in which we live.

II. Paul is writing to Titus as a leader, and particularly instructing him how to choose leaders in Crete, where Paul had left him. We saw him give the qualifications of leaders, the kinds of behaviors they should and should not indulge in. Now, let us consider these instructions further.

III. Titus 1:5-9. Further thoughts.

- A. Many today wish to “obey the Bible” by giving their church leaders Biblical names. Yet then they are unwilling to subject the choosing of such leaders to Biblical standards! It is possible to “obey” God while disobeying. David did this when he sinned with Bathsheba! II Samuel 11:4.
- B. Judges 17. The man Micah thought the Lord would bless him when he had the “right” man as his priest. At the same time, his “worship” was a study in hypocrisy. Do we really think God will honor the right positions with the wrong morality?
- C. In our society, we do not want anyone to ever be disqualified for anything. We seem to think it is “unfair” to be disqualified for something because of someone else’s actions over which we do not have direct control, like what your wife or children might do. But this is not Biblical, and just does not make sense.
- D. It is not right to “force” ourselves to disobey God’s Word, and claim we are justified. We should not write church constitutions in ways we cannot follow. This is just having a form of godliness but denying its power, II Timothy 3:5.
- E. Nothing is written that says we have to choose elders or overwatchers at all. There is no reason to exalt our leaders with such names, especially if they do not live up to them! Names like “trustees” should be good enough.
- F. These standards do not just apply to leaders, and everyone else can ignore them. These are good character traits for all believers to strive for. The reason the leaders need to be this way is that this is the kind of lifestyle we wish to promote.
- G. This does not have to be an official position. One can represent believers in Christ or overwatch younger believers without any official title. Anyone capable can do the work of a representative or especially an overwatcher, but let him at least live up to most of the criteria!
- H. The idea of elder is a representative, and even if we do not give a title of “elder,” any leader really represents the people he is leading (like the pastor for example). These criteria then are good and important to consider when giving anyone a leadership position. At the same time, we are not under law, and especially if a change has happened we can use wisdom in acknowledging that. Yet I want to see a track record of change before I just forget past sins. And if we want to use the Bible’s titles, we had better follow the Bible’s rules!

IV. Churches today who desire to be Biblical often go to the Bible to try to find guidance on how they should set themselves up. One way they will adopt is using the Bible’s names for their leaders. Yet how can this possibly be obeying God if then the criteria for giving these names is not followed? We must not simply have a form of godliness and deny its power. If we use God’s names, let us use them God’s way, or else not use them at all.