

A JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME

NEXT LEADERS TIMOTHY & TITUS



Lesson 17: Next Leaders

Welcome

If you could learn from any historical leader from the past or present (outside of the Bible) who would you choose and why?

This question connects to mentoring the next generation as it invites your Life Group members to think about the kind of guidance, wisdom, and example they would want from someone they admire (just like Paul offered to Timothy and Titus). When someone identifies a historical leader that they'd like to learn from, they're really naming the qualities they value in a mentor (character, experience, courage, clarity of vision, etc.). Thinking about who we'd choose as a mentor helps us recognize the impact of godly guidance and why mentoring matters.

Worship

Let's spend time praying through *Psalm 78:1-8*, which highlights the importance of passing faith to the next generation. Have someone read the passage aloud slowly. Then pause and reflect silently for a few moments. As a group, pray in response to each of the following prompts:

- **Thank God for the people who have poured into your life.**
- **Ask God to help you pass along your faith with integrity, humility, and courage.**
- **Ask God to bless the next generation of believers at Shepherd, in your home, and/or in your workplace.**

Budget around 10 minutes for this portion of the lesson. Feel free to mention the following background about Psalm 78 with your Life Group, but you don't need to do so. Psalm 78:1-8 emphasizes the responsibility of passing down God's truth to the next generation. The author of Psalm 78 urges God's people to remember His works, teach His commands, and tell their children about His faithfulness so they would trust Him and not repeat the failures of the past. It's a picture of intentional, consistent spiritual investment where parents and leaders shape the future by guiding those who come after them. The heart of the passage is simple:

Faith isn't meant to stop with one generation—it's meant to be handed off

The same concept shows up in 1-2 Timothy and Titus, where Paul treats mentoring as a core part of church life. Paul pours into Timothy and Titus, calling them his "true sons in the faith," and urges them to teach others, train new leaders, and model godly living. What Psalm 78 describes on a family and community level, Paul practices on a personal and pastoral level. Both passages highlight that instead of happening by accident, spiritual growth is cultivated through intentional relationships, shared wisdom, and a deep commitment to helping the next generation walk faithfully with God.

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There are 10 questions/prompts in the WORD section. Your Life Group doesn't have to cover every question below. Life Group Leaders may select the ones that best fit your group. You can also use the remaining questions as personal reflection throughout the week.

Word

Please watch the video lesson and read as much of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus before your Life Group meets.

The books or letters of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus are often referred to as the Pastoral Epistles—letters written by the Apostle Paul to two younger leaders he had personally mentored and entrusted with church leadership: Timothy and Titus. These letters are not general epistles to churches but deeply personal messages filled with encouragement, instruction, and urgency. Paul wrote 1 Timothy around 62-64 A.D., after his first Roman imprisonment (Acts 28). 1 Timothy to help Timothy navigate complex issues in the Ephesian church, offer guidance on how to appoint leaders, correct false teaching, and lead with integrity.

Around 66-67 A.D., Paul wrote another letter to Timothy which is now known as 2 Timothy. This was Paul's final letter before his execution in Rome (2 Timothy 4:6-8). It's a heartfelt farewell that urges Timothy to remain faithful to the gospel no matter the cost. Filled with urgency and affection, the letter calls Timothy to courage, endurance, and Jesus-centered living.

Titus, another trusted co-worker of Paul, was stationed on the island of Crete—a difficult cultural environment known for dishonesty and immorality. Paul wrote a letter to him sometime between 63-65 A.D. (around the same time as 1 Timothy). Paul's letter to Titus emphasizes the importance of strong character, sound doctrine, and healthy leadership within the church.

Throughout these three letters, Paul paints a compelling picture of what faithful ministry looks like: leaders who live with humility, teach with clarity, and serve with conviction. These epistles remind us that Christian leadership is not about status, but about stewardship—and that God uses ordinary people to build extraordinary churches when they live out the gospel with courage and consistency.

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1. Read *2 Timothy 2:1-2*. Paul tells Timothy to entrust what he's learned to "reliable people" who will pass it on. What does this passage teach us about discipleship and leadership development?

2 Timothy 2:1-2 gives a simple but powerful picture of how discipleship and leadership development are meant to work. Paul instructs Timothy, "You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others." Paul is reminding Timothy that spiritual strength comes from the grace Christ provides, not personal ability or status. The instruction to "entrust" truth to "reliable people" highlights intentionality.

- The Greek word for "entrust" is *paratithēmi* (παράτιθημι), which carries the idea of "placing something valuable into someone's care."

Paul is talking about passing down the gospel message with the same seriousness and care that a family would use when passing down an heirloom.

This passage also teaches us that discipleship is meant to be generational. Paul invested in Timothy, Timothy was to pour into dependable leaders, and those leaders were expected to make an investment in others. Four generations of disciples appear in a single sentence, which shows us that early Christian leaders viewed spiritual multiplication as normal.

In the first-century, when persecution was rising and false teaching was spreading, Paul understood that the health of the church depended on training trustworthy Christians who were anchored to the gospel. The phrase "qualified to teach" points to more than skill. It includes character and faithfulness, showing that leadership development is about forming people who genuinely reflect Christ.

2. In the video lesson, Jeremy said, "Sometimes we are the 'discipler,' sometimes we are the disciplined... many times, both at the same time." How do you recognize when it's time to lead vs. when it's time to learn?

This is a subjective question and there is no correct or incorrect answer. Give your Life Group members time to answer from their own life experiences as it sets their minds to process the upcoming questions/prompts.

If it helps, here is some information on what Jeremy shared in the video lesson: Jeremy said that Paul kept pouring into Timothy, but he also stepped back and let Timothy lead when it was time. Timothy learned from Paul, yet he also appointed leaders and shaped the church in Ephesus. In the same way:

Recognizing when it's time to lead or time to learn often comes down to paying attention to what God is doing around you and within you

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When a situation calls for encouragement, guidance, or clarity that you already possess (based on life experience or lessons learned), that's often a nudge to step forward and use what God has developed in you. However, when a situation stretches you, exposes a gap, or requires wisdom you haven't gained yet, that's usually a sign to slow down, listen, and receive from someone else. In other words, your role shifts based on the needs of the moment and the maturity God is forming in you.

Jeremy also reminded us that spiritual leadership works like a ripple.

- Paul poured into Timothy
- Timothy poured into others
 - Each person influenced the next

As you probably already know all too well, there will be seasons where someone's strength becomes your strength, and seasons where your experience becomes someone else's anchor. The key is staying humble enough to learn and confident enough to serve. When you notice God bringing people into your life who need encouragement, truth, or support, it may be time to lead. When God brings people who challenge you, sharpen you, or model a maturity you aspire to, it may be time to lean in and learn. The healthiest disciples live in the rhythm of sometime discipling, sometime being disciplined, and often, both at once.

3. In 1 Timothy 4:12, Paul challenges Timothy not to let others look down on him because of his youth. Why do age, experience, and/or personality become barriers to spiritual leadership and how can such barriers be overcome?

In 1 Timothy 4:12, Paul tells Timothy, "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the Christians in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity." In the first-century world, youth often meant limited social influence and little authority. Many early Christian communities were made up of older Christians who might have questioned Timothy's leadership because he was younger than they were and, from their perspective, lacked life experience. Personality differences could have added to that tension as well. Some people naturally command attention while others lead with quiet strength. Timothy's temperament appears to have leaned toward timidity. Paul's instruction reminds the church that spiritual authority does not come from age or the level of charismatic personality that one has but from a life shaped by Jesus.

- The Greek word for "set an example" is *typos* (τύπος), meaning "a pattern or imprint worth following," which shows that Paul believed credibility grows from consistent character rather than outward impressiveness.

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Barriers tied to age, experience, or personality are overcome when a leader focuses on the qualities Paul lists. Speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity form the kind of witness that earns trust in any community. As Christians see a younger and/or quieter leader displaying these traits, doubts tend to fade because the gospel becomes visible through that person's life. Paul also anchors this guidance in the larger pattern of his letters to Timothy, encouraging him to guard his doctrine, persevere through challenges, and rely on the gifts God has given. When a leader models maturity, grows in competence, and depends on God's grace, the very barriers that once limited influence can become opportunities for others to see how God works through unexpected people.

4. The disciples spent 3 years or so with Jesus ([Matthew 4:18-22](#); [Mark 1:16-20](#); [John 1:35-51](#)) before the church began. Paul spent 3 years with Jesus in Arabia before beginning his ministry ([Galatians 1:11-18](#)). Paul poured into Timothy before sending him out to lead. Why is spiritual mentorship so crucial before someone leads?

In the first century, Jewish students (aka, "disciples") typically followed a rabbi for an extended period of time—ranging from several years to more than a decade. This relationship was far more immersive than classroom learning. A first century disciple would do things like:

- Live with the rabbi
- Travel with him
- Observe how he interpreted Scripture
- Memorize his teachings
- Share the rabbi's teachings with others
- Imitate his way of life
- Carry out assignments from the rabbi

The goal was not to just learn the rabbi's teachings but to become like the rabbi in character, decision-making, and devotion to God. This long-term process reflected the seriousness of spiritual formation in Jewish culture. A disciple was expected to absorb the rabbi's understanding of the Law and develop the maturity needed to eventually teach others with accuracy & integrity.

This background sheds light on why Jesus' disciples were with Him daily for several years and why Paul's three-year period of preparation with Jesus in Arabia ([Galatians 1:11-18](#)) fits the broader tradition. A rabbi was not viewed as merely a religious instructor but as a living model of the kind of life the disciple hoped to embody. This kind of discipleship required time, consistency, and personal proximity.

First century Jewish people wouldn't have expected a spiritual leader to step into public ministry without a substantial season of being shaped under the guidance of a trusted teacher. The first century model helps explain why spiritual mentorship in Scripture is never rushed. Deep formation was considered essential for anyone who would eventually carry authority and represent the teachings of their rabbi to the world.

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This pattern continues in the way Paul invested in Timothy, Titus, and others. Before sending Timothy to lead, Paul taught him, encouraged him, and helped him grow. One reason mentorship matters is that spiritual leadership requires more than insight. It requires tested character.

- The Greek word Paul often uses for teaching or instruction is *didaskalia* (διδασκαλία), which refers to “sound, careful training” in the faith.

Mentorship passes down not just information but a way of life rooted in the gospel. It helps leaders learn how to handle Scripture faithfully, navigate conflict, shepherd people, and walk in humility. When someone has been shaped by a mentor who models Christlike living, that person leads from spiritual strength rather than personal insecurity. The biblical pattern shows that leadership grows best when a mature Christian walks alongside a developing one, ensuring that the work of ministry flows from a life deeply grounded in Christ.

5. What criteria did Paul give for leadership in *Titus 1:5-9*? What stands out to you most in this list? Why would Paul prioritize character over charisma?

In Titus 1:5-9, Paul gives Titus a detailed list of qualities that church leaders must demonstrate. Paul says that an elder must be:

- Blameless
- Faithful in marriage
- Someone whose children are Christians
- Someone whose children are not known for being wild or disobedient
- Able to manage God’s household
- Not be overbearing
- Not be quick-tempered
- Not given to drunkenness
- Not violent
- Not pursuing dishonest gain
- Hospitable
- Love what is good
- Self-controlled
- Upright
- Holy
- Disciplined
- Hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught
- Encourage others with sound doctrine
- Refute those who oppose it (“it” = sound doctrine, trustworthy message)

Notice that Paul mentions the word “blameless” twice (verses 6 and 7).

- The word “blameless” translates the Greek term *anegklētos* (ἀνέγκλητος), which refers to “someone who cannot be legitimately accused of wrongdoing.” The word is not referring to perfection but to a reputation shaped by consistent integrity.

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Basically, Paul says that elders and leaders should handle the following in a godly and blameless manner:

- Family (verses 6-7)
- Personal life and attitude (verses 7-8)
- Doctrine (verse 9)

Obviously, Paul wants elders and Christian leaders to be godly and blameless in every area of their lives. In Crete, where Titus ministered, the church was surrounded by a culture known for moral instability. Even in Titus 1:12, Paul quotes a local saying that Cretans were “liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons,” and then in verse 13, Paul says, “This saying is true.” In such an environment, Christian leaders needed inner strength, not outward charisma. They needed stability of heart, clarity of mind, and a life others could trust. Charisma alone could not protect the church from false teaching or moral drift. This helps explain why Paul prioritizes qualities like self-control, integrity, and sound doctrine.

- The Greek word for “sound doctrine,” *hygiainō* (ὕγιαίνω), means “healthy or wholesome” (from where we get our English word, “hygiene”).

Paul wanted leaders whose teaching and lives would promote spiritual health in the community.

Paul prioritizes character over charisma because genuine Christian leadership flows from a person’s faith and character, not how impressive that person appears.

- Charisma creates excitement, but character creates stability
- Charisma can attract a crowd, but character sustains a ministry
- Charisma may inspire enthusiasm, but character inspires trust
- Charisma makes people notice you, but character compels people to follow you
- Charisma might help you get started, but character helps you to finish well

First century Christians often faced persecution, false teachers, and cultural pressure, so a Christian leader without deep-rooted faith and character wouldn’t last very long. Paul understood that Jesus’ message spreads most effectively through Christians whose lives reflect the message they preach. Character ensures that leadership remains grounded in Jesus rather than personality, safeguarding both the leader and the church.

6. One of Titus’ assignments was to “correct what was lacking” in a culture full of confusion. What might “correct what is lacking” look like in our modern-day churches, homes, and/or schools?

In Titus 1:5, Paul instructs Titus to “put in order what was left unfinished” or “correct what was lacking” and appoint elders in every town in Crete where there were churches. The phrase “put in order what was left unfinished” points to bringing order, clarity, and stability to churches that were struggling with confusion and spiritually unhealthy influences.

- The Greek verb Paul uses for “straighten out” is *epidiorthōō* (ἐπιδιορθόω), which carries the idea of “setting something right or restoring what has become crooked.”

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In Crete, where a lack of morality and an abundance of false teaching were creating disorder, Titus was called to establish structure, truth, and godly leadership that would help churches grow in spiritual maturity and devotion to Jesus' mission.

When it comes to our modern-day churches, homes, schools, and more, give your Life Group members time to answer. If it helps, you can share some of the following to spur on their thinking:

- In our modern churches, to “put in order what was left unfinished” can involve strengthening Christian relationships, prioritizing biblical teaching, being people who love to worship, helping others develop a faith that holds steady in a culture of distraction, etc.
- In mentoring relationships, this might look like making investments that help others to learn more about the Bible, addressing areas where people are spiritually drifting, etc.
- In homes, it can mean cultivating rhythms of prayer, regularly having conversations about faith, and forgiveness that shape the next generation with a clear vision of Christlike living. Today, too many families feel overwhelmed or spiritually disconnected. Bringing order may simply mean returning to the basics of loving God & loving one another (Matthew 22:37-40).
- In schools or learning environments, correcting what is lacking might involve supporting students in developing character, discernment, and resilience. Confusion often grows in places where identity, values, and truth feel undefined. Helping students anchor their lives in what is good, upright, and true echoes Paul's desire for the Cretan churches.

Whether in a church, home, or school, the principle remains the same: God calls His people to bring clarity where there is confusion, stability where there is disorder, and spiritual health where things have been neglected.

7. In the video lesson, Jeremy said, “We will disagree with people, but I want it clear that we love them.” Think about someone you disagree with... Would that person describe you as loving? Why or why not?

Give your Life Group members plenty of time to answer this question/prompt because they are applying what was discussed in the previous two questions/prompts. If someone in your Life Group is overly negative toward themselves, encourage them not to do that as God loves them deeply. Encourage them as you can.

It might be helpful to share that disagreement is a normal part of life, but the way someone feels in the middle of that disagreement says a lot about the posture of the heart. When Jeremy said, “We will disagree with people, but I want it clear that we love them,” he was pointing to the kind of presence Paul encouraged in leaders like Timothy and Titus who were firm in conviction, but gentle in character. Thinking about someone you disagree with, the real question becomes whether that person would walk away feeling valued, heard, and treated with dignity. If they sense patience, kindness, and a willingness to understand them, they would likely describe you as loving even if you don't see eye-to-eye.

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On the other hand, if disagreement tends to make the other person feel dismissed, unheard, or pushed aside, they might not experience your actions as love, regardless of your intentions. Often the challenge isn't the disagreement itself but the tone, timing, or attitude that shapes the conversation. Reflecting on this honestly can help reveal whether your approach reflects Jesus' example: full of truth, but also full of grace (John 1:14, 17; Ephesians 4:15; 2 John 1:3).

8. Both Timothy and Titus were assigned to lead in messy places—Ephesus and Crete. What encouragement can we draw from their willingness to serve in difficult environments?

1–2 Timothy and Titus remind us Christians that serving in difficult environments isn't a sign that something has gone wrong but often a sign that God is doing important work.

- Timothy pastored the church in Ephesus, a city known for spiritual confusion, false teaching, and social pressure, and Paul urged him to stay and “command certain people not to teach false doctrines” (1 Timothy 1:3–4).
- Titus served as a pastor in the Roman province of Crete, which was a place that Paul described as morally corrupt (Titus 1:12–13).

Both pastors stepped into situations that were messy, complicated, and emotionally exhausting. Their willingness to remain faithful shows that God often places leaders where their presence is most needed, not where circumstances are most comfortable. Also, the faithfulness of Timothy and Titus teaches us that strength for ministry comes from God's grace rather than personal confidence. Paul repeatedly encouraged Timothy to be strong “in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:21), reminding him that courage grows from dependence on Christ rather than natural boldness.

- The Greek word for “be strong” in this context is *endynamoō* (ἐνδυναμώω), which means to be “empowered or strengthened by another.”

In other words, *God supplies whatever the situation requires.*

Titus also received instructions to put in order what was broken and to appoint leaders who could steady the churches. So, the assignments that Timothy and Titus received make it clear that God equips His servants to handle challenges that would otherwise overwhelm them. Why? Because difficult places can become opportunities for growth and transformation. Ephesus eventually became one of the strongest churches in the region, and the churches in Crete gained stability through Titus' leadership.

Challenging environments don't limit God's work. They highlight how powerful His guidance and presence can be through faithful Christians. 1–2 Timothy and Titus demonstrate that God uses ordinary people to bring clarity to confusion and hope to chaos.

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9. Read 2 Timothy 1:6-8. Paul tells Timothy to fan into flame the gift of God and to not be ashamed. What "gift" might God be stirring in your life right now? How can you fan that gift into flame?

In 2 Timothy 1:6-8, Paul encourages Timothy to "fan into flame the gift of God" and to resist being ashamed of the Lord or of Paul's imprisonment. 2 Timothy 1:6-8 captures Paul's urgency as he reminds Timothy that spiritual gifts need intentional cultivation.

- The Greek verb is *anazopyreō* (ἀναζωπυρέω), which means "to rekindle, cause a fire, to blaze again." So, the phrase "fan into flame" suggests "stirring up" or "rekindling something that may be fading."

Paul is calling Timothy to strengthen the ministry abilities God has given him, probably referring to teaching, leadership, courage, etc. This was especially important as evident in 2 Timothy where Paul encouraged him as he faced opposition (2 Timothy 1:8; 1:15; 2:3-4; 3:12; 4:5), false teachers (2 Timothy 2:14-18; 2:23-26; 3:1-9; 4:3-4), and discouragement (2 Timothy 1:6-8; 1:16-18; 2:1; 4:5).

Paul also tells Timothy not to be ashamed of the testimony about Jesus or of Paul (2 Timothy 1:8), who was in prison for preaching the gospel. The concept of shame was a powerful social force in the first century, and aligning with a prisoner could cost someone credibility. Paul reminds Timothy that "the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline" (2 Timothy 1:7).

- The Greek word for "timid" is *deilia* (δειλία), meaning "cowardice or fearfulness."

Instead of shrinking back, Timothy is called to embrace the power, love, and disciplined strength provided by the Holy Spirit. 2 Timothy 1:6-8 highlights that faithful ministry often requires courage, resilience, and a renewed commitment to one's calling, especially when cultural pressure or suffering makes bold witness difficult.

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10. How would your life look different if you saw yourself as a “next leader” (aka, someone called to pass on faith, wisdom, and love to the next generation)?

Below are some examples of answers that you can share if your Life Group is having trouble answering the question:

- Viewing everyday moments as opportunities to influence someone younger in the faith.
- I'd be more intentional with my words because they have the power to shape others' views of God and more.
- I'd be more serious about my walk with Jesus because my example should be worth following
- Slowing down to invest in the people God has placed in my life.
- I'd be more patient, realizing that mentoring someone takes time, consistency, and grace.
- Praying more often for the next generation.
- Using the gifts God has already put in me.
- Looking for small ways to serve, teach, or encourage instead of waiting for a formal leadership role.
- I'd be more mindful that my faith, character, and choices influence more people than I realize.
- Seeing myself as part of a bigger story where faith keeps moving forward through me, and the next person, and the next person, and the next person...

Witness

Find out if anyone in your Life Group needs help this Christmas or knows a family who needs help this Thanksgiving. Then, as a Life Group, try to do your best to provide a good Christmas for that family (find out what presents they want, ask if they have a place to go to on Christmas Day, etc.) and/or invite them over to one of your houses for Christmas.

Budget about 5-10 minutes for this portion of the lesson