

TITUS

FOUNDATIONS OF THE CHURCH

— A Devotional Series —

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INTRODUCTION

By **Mason Powell &
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Titus is a short, but powerful Scripture. These smaller works are often overlooked, but all Scripture is God breathed and profitable for teaching. This letter is instructive for how the culture of church communities should be formed. Its teaching guides us in how we should view church leadership and the character of all believers. As you engage with Paul's letter to Titus, it is our hope that the Holy Spirit would build you up in your faith and understanding of the life of the Church.

We wrote this devotional series as an aid for you in your study. These short devotionals are not a replacement for reading and meditating on Titus, rather they should be seen as encouragements to regularly revisit this work in a reflective manner. We hope that this short devotional series encourages you to dwell on what it means to be part of a gospel community following Jesus. It is our prayer that this work is helpful in reminding you of the calling God has given you to imitate Christ.

You may find as you read this series that some of the devotionals and reflection questions have repetitive themes. This repetition is not a bad or unintentional thing. In fact, the repetition is intentional. Repetition is how we learn and grow. Repetitive questions and content force us to give answers worthy of our time and attention. We encourage you to read through the entirety of Titus several times as you work through the series for this reason. Anytime you see a repetition of Scripture or a reoccurring theme in the series, take that as an opportunity to dive deeper into the meaning of the text.

For further study, we recommend you check out *The Bible for Everyone* commentary series as well as BibleProject's resources on Titus. These works helped shape and guide our development of this devotional series and provide much more detail for intentional study.

#01

PROCLAIMING THE TRUTH

OPENING PRAYER

Jesus, we thank you for the beauty of your word and that you have preserved these words of wisdom from Paul to Titus for us today. Please open our ears to hear you, our eyes to see your beauty, our hearts to receive your love, and our hands to be of service to you. Amen.

READ TITUS 1:1-4

What Does It Mean?

Like his letters to Timothy, Paul writes to another church leader about their responsibilities in their role. This man is named Titus, a man whom Paul has a close relationship with. The relationship is so close that Paul considers Titus to be his “spiritual son!” It is important for us to recognize that this letter is a caring message from a loving father as he guides his son into an important task.

Paul begins his letter by introducing himself in light of Christ’s salvation and explains the purpose of his letter. Paul describes himself as a servant of Christ for the sake of God’s people. His mission is to proclaim the truth about Christ which results in godliness when received by someone in faith. Through Paul’s self-presentation, there is a note of what he believes the role of a Christian leader to be.

These men work to present the truth of God’s faithfulness through the person of Christ. This message is an encouragement and comfort to those within the gospel community. It is through this truth that God shapes the believers into the people He calls them to be. Paul believes that God is working through leaders such as Titus and himself to shepherd the church as they grow in faith and maturity.

REFLECTION

1. **What role do you see preachers and leaders serve in a church?**
2. **Where have you experienced God's faithfulness in your life?**
3. **According to Paul, what will happen when we share the truth of God's faithfulness with others?**

GOING FORWARD

By sharing the story of God's faithfulness with others, we can share with them eternal life, encouragement, and personal growth in discipleship.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, thank you for your faithfulness. Where we have been unfaithful, you have been faithful. Now you call us to share who you are and what you have done, because in that sharing, you are always at work. So please, Jesus, work through us for your glory. Amen.

#02

QUALIFICATIONS TO LEAD

OPENING PRAYER

Jesus, we thank you for the beauty of your word and that you have preserved these words of wisdom from Paul to Titus for us today. Please open our ears to hear you, our eyes to see your beauty, our hearts to receive your love, and our hands to be of service to you. Amen.

READ TITUS 1:5-9

What Does It Mean?

Paul reminds Titus that his mission in Crete is to appoint elders to lead individual church communities. This is an important task because these elders will carry the responsibility of teaching, encouraging, guiding, and even at times rebuking the members of these congregations. So how should Titus go about appointing elders? According to Paul, Titus should be first and foremost concerned with the character of these elders.

While all believers are called to live lives of godliness, Paul recognizes that great care must be taken to examine those who lead the church. Elders are not to be selected because of their skills, social status, wealth, or accomplishments. Paul believes that the primary qualification for church leadership is the status of their character. Is the man wise? Is he peaceful? Does he care for his household well?

The Church cannot afford to take this responsibility lightly or blow it off when it ceases to be convenient. The Church must expect a certain character from those who wish to be leaders. Leaders of these gospel communities have the important task of nurturing the saints and reaching the lost. This role cannot be taken lightly.

REFLECTION

1. **If you are someone in church leadership, what challenges and encourages you in Paul's words?**
2. **If you are not in leadership, what sort of leader do you want leading you?**
3. **If you are not in leadership, how can you show appreciation to your leader for the high responsibility they have stepped into in order to serve you?**

GOING FORWARD

If you are in leadership, take your character seriously, and if you are not, hold your leaders to a high expectation of character.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, you expect much of us. We will not always get it right, but good character is not always about getting it right. Sometimes good character is about what we do when we get it wrong. Leadership is difficult, and comes with great responsibility. Help us, as your ambassadors, to step into whatever role of influence we have with the character you expect from us. Help us to grow in our pursuit of imitating Christ. Amen.

#03

HONOR AND SHAME

OPENING PRAYER

Jesus, we thank you for the beauty of your word and that you have preserved these words of wisdom from Paul to Titus for us today. Please open our ears to hear you, our eyes to see your beauty, our hearts to receive your love, and our hands to be of service to you. Amen.

READ TITUS 1:1-9

What Does It Mean?

The Bible was written within the context of an honor-shame culture. The world that Paul and Titus lived in was a world deeply concerned with one's honor. Honor was something which could be earned and could be lost. Not only did Paul and Titus live in an honor-shame culture, but they also lived in a communal culture. This means that one's honor or shame is not only the result of their own actions; a person's honor or shame can be the result of another person's actions.

Every individual member of a family has the opportunity to bring honor or shame to the entire family. The people in this culture did not view themselves with the individualistic lens that we see the world through today. These people treated family, friends, and other relationships with great importance, and in any relationship with leadership, the leader of the group brought the most honor or the most shame.

Appointed elders play a crucial role as they can either honor or shame their church communities and the gospel itself. Their selflessness and humility can shine the light of the gospel, while wickedness tarnishes the name of Christ.

REFLECTION

1. **How do the actions of a leader impact the whole group?**
2. **How would the character of elders impact the church community at large?**
3. **What kind of influence do you have within your community? How can you be an example of Christ to your church community?**

GOING FORWARD

Recognize the impact of your decisions and how your character will have consequences for those around you.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, we too often forget how we were made for one another. Our lives impact the lives of those around us. Help us to recognize that our character can show others your light or hide your light from their eyes. Help us to imitate your care and concern for others. Amen.

#04

LEADING IN THE MIDST OF REBELLION

OPENING PRAYER

Jesus, we thank you for the beauty of your word and that you have preserved these words of wisdom from Paul to Titus for us today. Please open our ears to hear you, our eyes to see your beauty, our hearts to receive your love, and our hands to be of service to you. Amen.

READ TITUS 1:10-16

What Does It Mean?

After mentioning the role and qualifications for leaders, we now see why Paul sets such a high bar. The culture in which the church exists within possesses obstacles in opposition to God's Kingdom. There are tremendous difficulties that require those with great calling and powerful character to step into with diligence and purpose. This is not only clear outside of the church, but within the church as well.

The world that is opposed to the kingship of Jesus often seeks to enter its way into God's kingdom workers. Here, Paul gives a reminder that what we do while we are waiting for Jesus to come back should be driven and motivated by the grace with which he purchased us. Titus must be aware of those who are deceiving the people of God from within their own church communities. As Christians, we must seek truth and cling to the purity of the gospel.

REFLECTION

1. Paul calls Titus and the elders to know the truth well so that they can proclaim it when deceivers arise. How can you commit yourself to growing in your knowledge of God's truth?
2. Paul warns us about the way in which negative aspects of a culture influence gospel communities. What negative qualities of the world do you see easily slipping into the church?
3. How can you pursue truth in your church community in a graceful and Christlike manner?

GOING FORWARD

Be diligent to recognize unhealthy traits from the culture outside the church and seek to maintain a clear pursuit of the gospel.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, we can see the world needs your Gospel, but so does your church. We all need your good news every day. Help us to see your gospel clearly and to not be distracted by worthless talk and deceit. Forgive us when we get caught up in these distractions, and prune our sin from our lives. Amen.

#05

A CALLING FOR EVERYONE

OPENING PRAYER

Jesus, we thank you for the beauty of your word and that you have preserved these words of wisdom from Paul to Titus for us today. Please open our ears to hear you, our eyes to see your beauty, our hearts to receive your love, and our hands to be of service to you. Amen.

READ TITUS 2:1-10

What Does It Mean?

Paul has already informed Titus that the culture outside of the church is filled with plenty of negative qualities that can cause great harm. In contrast to this, the leaders of a church are called to cultivate a new culture within the church. This Christ centered culture is supposed exemplify peace, love, and selflessness through each generation. The church cannot afford to have an “every man for himself” mentality.

The elders must strive to remind individuals that they are to be aware of their impact on the other members of the community. Those older in the faith have a responsibility to invest in the growth of those younger in the faith, presenting a model for a gospel focused life. Those younger in the faith must show self-control and respect for those who are older. This way of life is of mutual encouragement, investment, and shared inspiration. How can you participate in cultivating such a culture within your church community?

REFLECTION

1. **Read over this passage again. Paul describes a healthy church not in growing programs and attendance, but as a community that is visibly seen pouring life back into each other in a counter-cultural way from the outside culture. How does this challenge our own views of a healthy church culture?**
2. **Paul encourages those older in the faith to invest into those younger in the faith. Who is someone who has invested in the growth of your faith and who is someone you can invest back into?**
3. **Paul stresses Titus to have a character that matches this new community's way of life. Why does Paul think that this is needed?**

GOING FORWARD

Don't turn a blind eye to unhealthy qualities, but be proactive in creating healthy qualities within your faith community.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, you invite us into a new community. In your community, you desire for us to love one another, encourage one another, and belong to each other. Help our leaders to foster this community, and help us be partakers in investing back into this community. Amen.

#06

A COMMUNITY FORMED BY GRACE

OPENING PRAYER

Jesus, we thank you for the beauty of your word and that you have preserved these words of wisdom from Paul to Titus for us today. Please open our ears to hear you, our eyes to see your beauty, our hearts to receive your love, and our hands to be of service to you. Amen.

READ TITUS 2:11-15

What Does It Mean?

In this section of his letter, Paul explains how the development of a Christlike community is even possible: God's grace leads us into godly living. In other words, our theology always precedes our ethics. What we believe about God will dictate what we believe about our morality and purpose. What we think of Jesus has a dramatic impact on our daily lives. The gospel is not merely about a future salvation; the gospel brings us transformation in this current age. The good news of Jesus has been transforming the world for 2,000 years.

Though it will not reach completion until Christ returns, the gospel story is calling us to live a new life right here, right now. By accepting God's grace made evident through the work of Christ, we are a new creation. We have been made to be part of the Messiah's new people who await his eventual return. We live and work today to point others to Christ's present reign through every word and action we take part in. All ethical preaching comes first from this sound doctrine.

REFLECTION

1. **Why does what we think of Jesus have any say on how we live our lives?**
2. **How have you grown the more you have learned of Jesus?**
3. **Why does knowing and proclaiming the story of Jesus matter for creating a new community?**

GOING FORWARD

Think carefully about how this story of redemption plays out in your life today, and what your ethics say to others about who you think Jesus is.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, your story matters. Your story gives us life. Your story brings us into a new community filled with hope and purpose. Help us live considering this story. Shape us into a people who live out this story in everything we say and do. Amen.

#07

TWO WORLDS COLLIDING

OPENING PRAYER

Jesus, we thank you for the beauty of your word and that you have preserved these words of wisdom from Paul to Titus for us today. Please open our ears to hear you, our eyes to see your beauty, our hearts to receive your love, and our hands to be of service to you. Amen.

READ TITUS 3:1-2

What Does It Mean?

The church community always exists within the larger context of the nation and rulers over them. As much as we might want to separate ourselves from the rest of the world, the Church is called to be a shining light in the midst of a dark world. Therefore, Paul offers some guidelines to help this new community operate within a kingdom of wildly different ethics and values.

Paul urges the gospel community to be submissive to their authorities, obedient, and always ready to do good when their context needs Christians to step up. The intent behind Paul's words is for the new gospel community to see themselves as representatives of Christ to a culture that still rejects the kingship of Jesus. Jesus lived a life of peace under the harsh rule of the Roman Empire. Christians all around the world are called to live as Jesus did – being peace-makers even in hostile environments. The gospel story has just as much to say about how we live in community with each other as it does in instructing us in how we ought to live in the larger community that rejects Christ's authority. The point being, the gospel community strives to be a blessing and a light to everyone, even its enemies.

REFLECTION

1. **Paul encourages the church to be a light to its community through their ethics. Where have you seen churches do well at this? Where can we do better?**
2. **What role do you see churches having in the larger community?**
3. **How can you put what Paul has said into practice?**

GOING FORWARD

Be aware of your responsibility to represent Christ and his ways to the world.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, your gospel shapes us internally, but it also guides us in how to live with those outside of the gospel community. You have given us a great responsibility. You have asked us to represent you well in our character. We know there will be times we will fail at this, so we ask for the grace and power to walk according to your will today to represent you well. Amen.

#08

REMEMBER YOUR SALVATION

OPENING PRAYER

Jesus, we thank you for the beauty of your word and that you have preserved these words of wisdom from Paul to Titus for us today. Please open our ears to hear you, our eyes to see your beauty, our hearts to receive your love, and our hands to be of service to you. Amen.

READ TITUS 3:3-7

What Does It Mean?

Paul underscores the theology behind urging the gospel community to follow an ethical standard in their interactions with outsiders. We're called to represent Christ because we were once outsiders ourselves, saved by God's mercy and faithfulness, not by our own merit.

Paul's point is for us to see that the mercy and goodness of God changes who we are. Therefore, we should never be proud or arrogant. We never earned our own salvation; it was a free gift given to us by God. When we remember the immense mercy of God, it cultivates within us a deep sense of humility. That humility should then compel us toward a new standard of living, both individually and in our communities. We should do all that we can to show the rest of the world the grace that we have been given. We must seek to act toward others just as Christ acted toward us. We show grace to others not because they deserve it, but because we have been given grace when we did not deserve it. Our kindness toward others, especially those who don't deserve our kindness, is one of the greatest testimonies to our belief in the kingship of Jesus.

REFLECTION

1. **How do you feel knowing you did nothing to deserve God's grace and mercy?**
2. **How does the kindness of Jesus affect the way we engage with others?**
3. **Paul shows that the kindness of Jesus was crucial toward us becoming part of God's people, though we didn't deserve it. How should this influence us in our interactions with others?**

GOING FORWARD

Think back to who you were before Christ and identify ways that the kindness of Jesus has changed you.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, your kindness is indescribable. Without it, we would be lost in our sin and depravity. We would have no hope. We would have no people to belong to. But your kindness saved us. But it also changes us, and can change others. So help us, please, to show kindness toward others, even those who hurt us and we feel don't deserve our kindness. We didn't deserve your kindness, but you showed it anyway and it changed us. May we follow your pattern to do the same. Amen.

#09

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT

OPENING PRAYER

Jesus, we thank you for the beauty of your word and that you have preserved these words of wisdom from Paul to Titus for us today. Please open our ears to hear you, our eyes to see your beauty, our hearts to receive your love, and our hands to be of service to you. Amen.

READ TITUS 3:8-11

What Does It Mean?

There is so much out there that is insignificant and unprofitable. If we think carefully, we have no trouble identifying this to be true. If it is true for us, it was true for Titus and the churches he helped lead. To feed into these unprofitable distractions produces no goodness in our lives, and yet they pressure us so much to give our full attention and priority to. Leaders know this dangerous trap well - what often looks urgent isn't what is always most important.

Sometimes what is most important is what remains the least attractive and most ignored. But to ignore what is most important will often lead to the greatest destruction in one's life and community. A good leader, and a gospel-centered community, strives to remain focused on what matters and what produces good deeds and results. So what truly matters? We are reminded that it is the gospel which matters so greatly.

REFLECTION

1. **How do we prioritize what is important, and what isn't?**
2. **What stands most important in a gospel-centered community?**
3. **What dangers can we face if we neglect what is most important?**

GOING FORWARD

Evaluate everything through the gospel to identify what is most important in your context and circumstances.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, we can easily allow ourselves to be blinded by what screams at us urgently and neglect what is most important. We have seen relationships and opportunities suffer because of this. We have seen this trap in our own lives where neglect of what is most important led to greater problems in the future. You offer us grace and mercy and guidance to help us stay focus on what is most important. You. May everything we do focus on you as most important. Amen.

#10

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

OPENING PRAYER

Jesus, we thank you for the beauty of your word and that you have preserved these words of wisdom from Paul to Titus for us today. Please open our ears to hear you, our eyes to see your beauty, our hearts to receive your love, and our hands to be of service to you. Amen.

READ TITUS 3:12-15

What Does It Mean?

As he has done in his other letters to Timothy and the other churches, Paul reminds Titus that he is not alone. This is a big theme and ongoing passion for Paul in all of his letters. He wants his readers to know they are not alone. When times are tough, when we feel like walking away, when our dreams of what the gospel community can be clash against the reality of what it currently is, there is great pressure of loneliness and depression. Our world has a manner of disconnecting us, even in our modern age. With all its appearance of connection, the modern age can produce feelings of severe isolation even in church communities.

It is in our feeling of isolation and loneliness that the enemy strikes hard at our heart, especially in church leadership. Therefore, Paul always ends his letters with a final greeting of all who walk this road with his readers. Today, two thousand years after Paul's writing, we can take solace knowing others have walked this path before us. We are not alone but join in with a long line of others. If we look up, we can see that there are always others beside us. Some come, some go, but we are never truly alone. We belong to each other, and God has made us to be a cosmic family that walks in grace together.

REFLECTION

1. **Why do you think we can naturally drift to feeling so alone?**
2. **What dangers can arise when an individual, or even a church, thinks they are all alone?**
3. **Paul encourages his audience to know they are not alone. Who is someone in your life right now that might need that same encouragement?**

GOING FORWARD

Reach out to someone simply to share that they are not alone, but you are cheering them on.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, You never leave us or forsake us. You promised us this was true. You have included us in a divine family that we are a part of, and in real time, we know that there are others who are walking this path of following you. Thank you for the encouragement we find in others and help us share that encouragement with those around us who need to know they are not alone. Amen.

#11

DO ALL THAT YOU CAN

OPENING PRAYER

Jesus, we thank you for the beauty of your word and that you have preserved these words of wisdom from Paul to Titus for us today. Please open our ears to hear you, our eyes to see your beauty, our hearts to receive your love, and our hands to be of service to you. Amen.

READ TITUS 3:12-15

What Does It Mean?

The New Living Translation translates Titus 3:13 this way: “Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos with their trip.” Paul instructs Titus, and therefore the church communities he is helping to form, to place a great importance on helping their fellow believers. If the Church is to fulfill its mission, it must be comprised of individuals seeking to help one another.

It can be easy for us to get so caught up in our own goals that we forget our brothers and sisters around us. When we assist a brother or sister in Christ, we are playing a part in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus to the world. When we bear one another’s burdens, we physically display the counter-cultural way of Jesus. If we want to imitate Christ well, we need to be aware of our Church family. How can we love Christ if we neglect His bride?

REFLECTION

1. **How can you be more aware of your Christian brothers and sisters?**
2. **What are your church's greatest needs at the moment? How can you play a part in addressing those needs?**
3. **How have you experienced love and assistance from your Christian brothers and sisters?**

GOING FORWARD

Ask God to show you how you can be a loving help to your church community.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, You prayed to the Father for our unity. Help us to have eyes to see the needs of our brothers and sisters. Instill within us a great desire to love one another. Let it be evident that the love we share is an extraordinary love which can only come from You alone. Amen.

#12

GRACE BE WITH YOU ALL

OPENING PRAYER

Jesus, we thank you for the beauty of your word and that you have preserved these words of wisdom from Paul to Titus for us today. Please open our ears to hear you, our eyes to see your beauty, our hearts to receive your love, and our hands to be of service to you. Amen.

READ TITUS 3:12-15

What Does It Mean?

While Paul wrote this letter to Titus, it was also intended to be read by the surrounding church communities. It can be easy for us to fixate on church leaders like Paul, Timothy, and Titus. We have a tendency to narrow our vision of the Church to the actions of leaders, but when we do, we easily forget that the early Church was comprised of thousands of Christians whose names we do not know.

God's grace is for us all. The call to live a peaceful, selfless life is for us all. Every Christian has a calling to participate in the Kingdom of God. The Church does not consist of just its leaders. The Church is made up of all the believers who seek to follow Jesus. Regardless of who you are, you have a calling and a place in the Church. How can you be a thriving and active participant?

REFLECTION

1. **How did Jesus show the love of God to all those around Him?**
2. **How did Jesus' ministry lift up the lowly and the weak? How does the work of Jesus impact our understanding of everyone's value and calling in the Church?**
3. **How can we display the grace of God to all who are around us?**

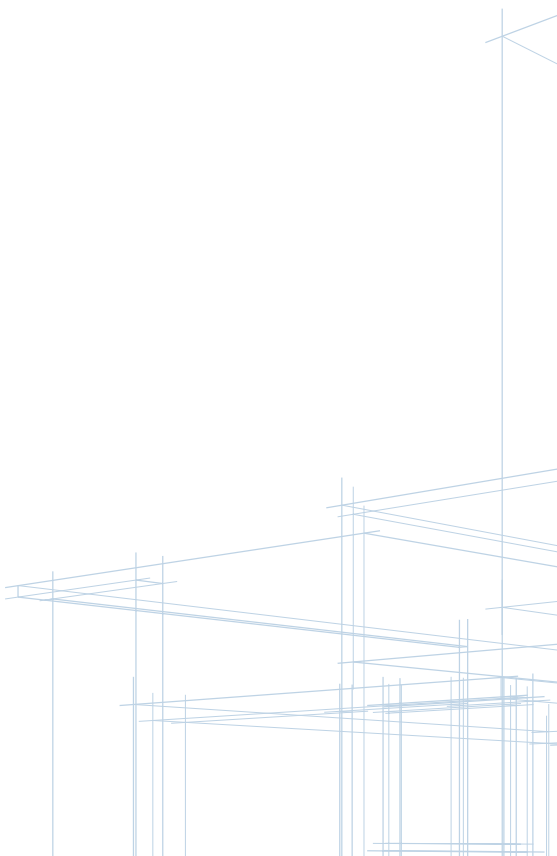
GOING FORWARD

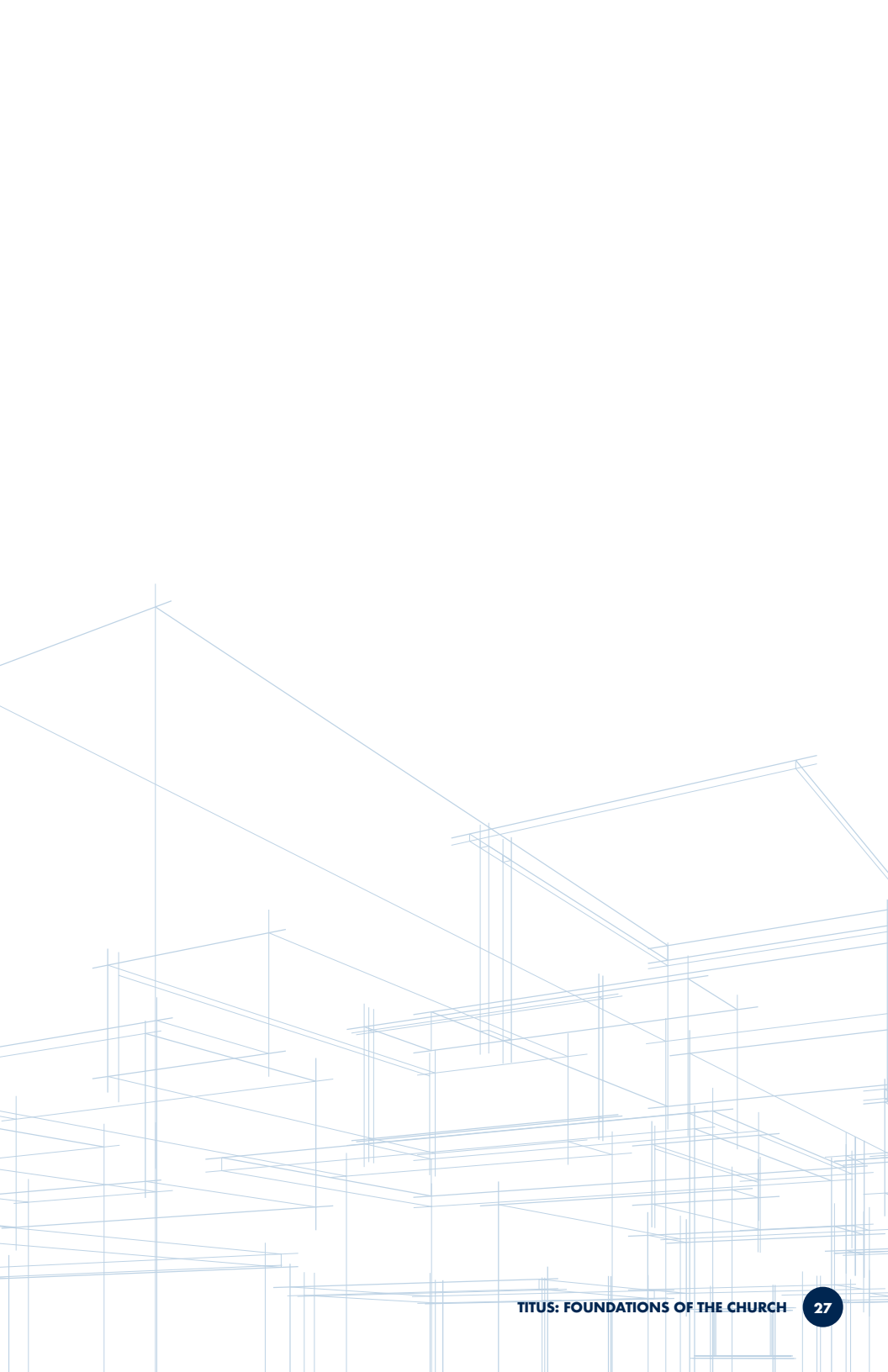
Ask God to show you what your role in your church community should be.

CLOSING PRAYER

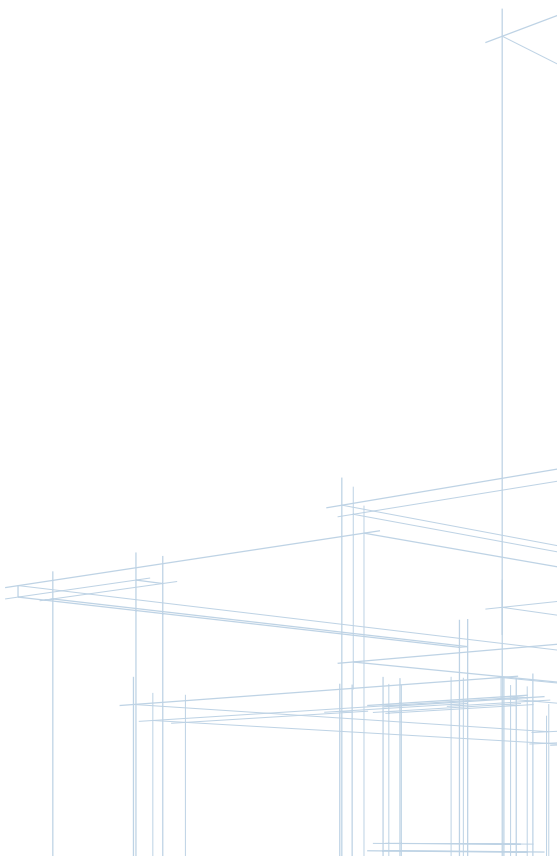
Jesus, your grace extends to all. You did not come for the famous or the powerful. You came for all. Your love extends throughout the whole earth. Your love lifts us, the hidden and the lowly. Your love touches those who are weak and afflicted. Do not let us be blinded by the pursuit of success or achievement. Help us to see others just as you do. Help us to see ourselves just as you see us. Your love is marvelous. Amen.

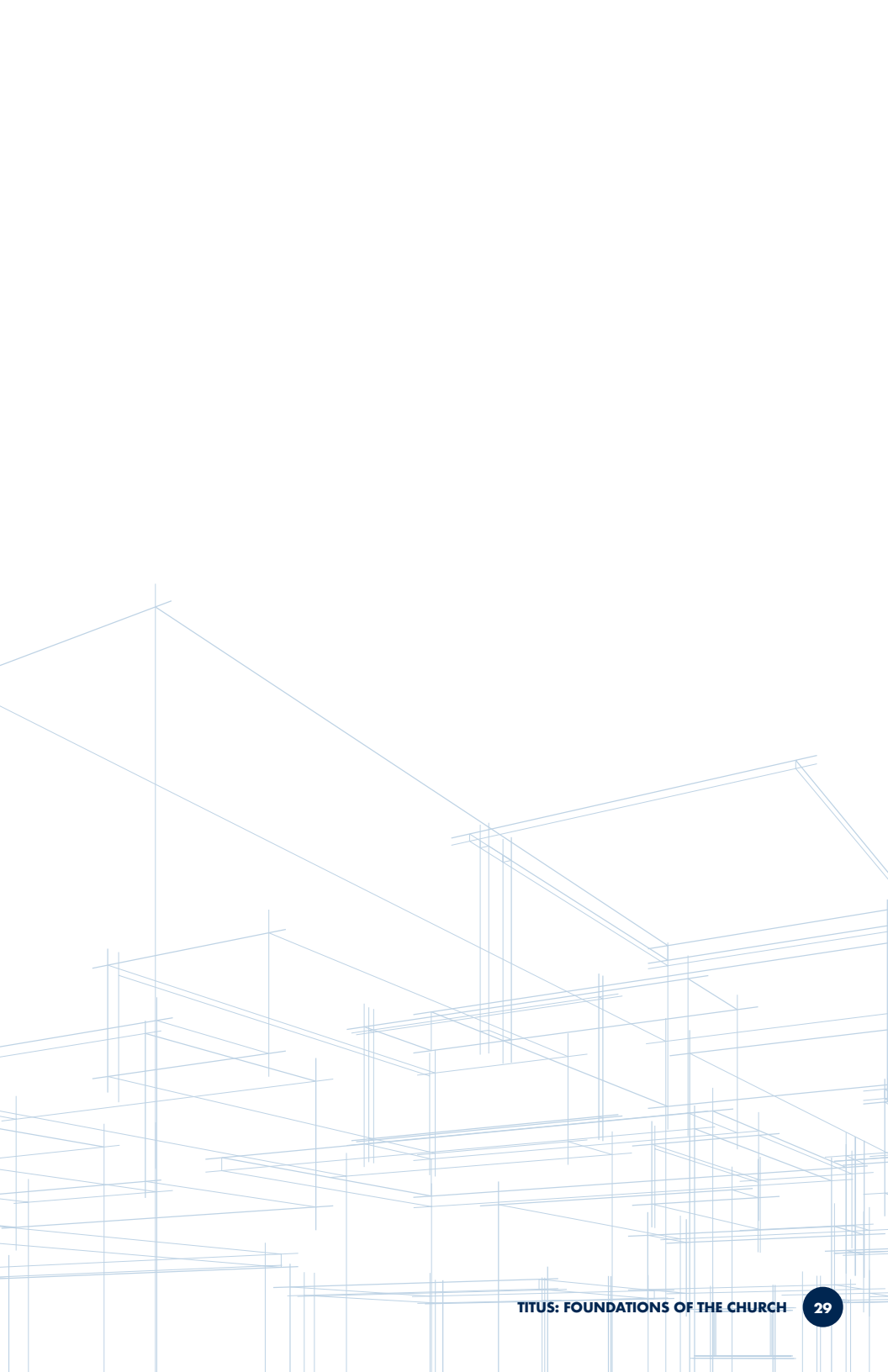
NOTES





NOTES





**HE SAVED US, NOT BECAUSE
OF THE RIGHTEOUS THINGS
WE HAD DONE, BUT BECAUSE
OF HIS MERCY. HE WASHED
AWAY OUR SINS, GIVING US
A NEW BIRTH AND NEW LIFE
THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

—— Titus 3:5 NLT ——