

When Knowing About God Is Not Knowing God

A Five-Day Devotional from Titus 1:10–16

Day 1 — Truth Matters Because People Matter

Read: Titus 1:9–13, Acts 20:28–31, Ephesians 4:14–16

Devotional

False teaching can sound like an argument reserved for classrooms, podcasts, or people who enjoy theological debate. Paul will not let Titus treat it that way. The teachers in Crete were “upsetting whole households.” Their words were entering homes, reshaping beliefs, and damaging people Christ loved.

That is why an elder must hold firmly to the trustworthy Word. He teaches sound doctrine and rebukes contradiction because truth gives spiritual health. Paul does not tell Titus to silence anyone who asks a question or reaches a different conclusion about a secondary matter. He describes insubordinate deceivers who reject God's authority and whose lives contradict their words. Their error is both doctrinal and moral.

Faithful correction therefore requires more than a desire to win. It requires love for God, submission to His Word, and compassion for people endangered by error. Truth without love becomes a weapon for proving superiority. Love without truth leaves people exposed to beliefs that corrupt faith and life. Biblical love refuses both alternatives.

Jesus is full of grace and truth. He never softened truth to avoid discomfort, and He never used truth to humiliate repentant sinners. He confronted deception because He came to rescue people from lies and bring them into the freedom of knowing God. His shepherding gives us the pattern and the hope for every difficult conversation.

This posture matters beyond formal church leadership. Parents correct children, friends warn one another, and church members sometimes need to name harmful ideas. Silence can feel peaceful while allowing damage to spread. Harshness can feel courageous while leaving a wounded person farther from the truth. Christ calls us to a better courage: one that listens carefully, speaks accurately, and remains committed to the person's good.

Before correcting someone, examine your purpose. Are you trying to display knowledge, release frustration, or restore a person to sound faith? Ask Christ to give you courage governed by compassion. Truth matters because people matter to Him.

Reflection Questions

1. When you encounter error, are you more tempted to remain silent or to correct without compassion?
2. How does the phrase “that they may be sound in the faith” reshape your purpose in correction?
3. Is there a belief currently shaping your home or life that needs to be tested by Scripture?

Practical Application

Read Titus 1:9–13 twice. Before discussing a disputed teaching this week, write one sentence explaining how your response could protect or restore another person.

Prayer

Father, thank You for speaking a trustworthy Word that gives life and health. Forgive me for avoiding truth when courage is needed or using truth without love. Make me humble, discerning, and compassionate. Help me speak so that others are protected and restored to sound faith. In Jesus' name, Amen

Day 2 — Truth That Produces Godliness

Read: Titus 1:1–4, Titus 1:13–16, John 17:1–3

Devotional

Paul opens Titus by describing “the knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness.” He closes chapter one by describing people who profess to know God but deny Him by their works. Those statements belong together. Genuine knowledge of God is never bare information. The truth God reveals creates sound faith and begins reshaping the life of the person who receives it.

This does not mean Christians become sinless. Paul is not teaching salvation by moral achievement. He is exposing a profession permanently contradicted by a person's direction, motives, and works. Genuine faith produces repentance when sin is exposed. Counterfeit faith protects appearances while resisting God's authority.

That distinction presses an important question. It is possible to collect biblical facts, speak Christian language, and remain unchanged. We can admire sound doctrine while refusing the God whose truth we affirm. Knowledge becomes Christian only when it brings us into trusting submission to the God who has made Himself known.

Jesus defines eternal life as knowing the Father and Jesus Christ whom He sent. Christ does not merely add more religious information. He reveals the Father, reconciles sinners to God, and gives new life. We do not earn that life by producing enough godliness. We receive Christ by faith, and His grace begins producing what our profession claims.

That fruit often grows quietly. It appears when pride gives way to confession, bitterness begins to release its claim, anxiety learns to pray, and hidden obedience matters more than public recognition. These changes do not make Christ's acceptance more secure. They testify that His grace is active. Even slow growth can be real growth when it keeps turning toward Jesus.

Ask more than, “Do I know about God?” Ask, “Is the truth I believe producing repentance, trust, love, and obedience?” Do not answer by pretending your failures are small. Bring them to Christ. His grace gives forgiveness, righteousness, and transforming life.

Reflection Questions

1. Where is it easiest for you to substitute correct words for trusting obedience?
2. How does your response to conviction reveal whether you are submitting to God's truth?
3. What evidence of Christ's transforming grace can you thank Him for today?

Practical Application

Compare Titus 1:1 and 1:16. Name one belief you profess, then identify one concrete way that truth should shape your choices this week.

Prayer

Father, thank You for making Yourself known through Your truth and through Jesus Christ. Forgive me when my words outrun my obedience. Expose empty profession, deepen genuine faith, and produce godliness in me by Your grace. Keep me trusting Christ rather than managing appearances. In Jesus' name, Amen

Day 3 — When Human Rules Replace God's Truth

Read: Titus 1:13–15, Mark 7:14–23, Colossians 2:20–23

Devotional

The false teachers in Crete turned away from the truth and promoted Jewish myths and human commands. They promised purity through external rules, but Paul traced defilement deeper: “both their minds and their consciences are defiled.” Human regulations could restrain behavior for a time, but they could not cleanse a heart alienated from God.

We remain attracted to external religion because it gives us something visible to measure. If holiness can be reduced to approved foods, preferred traditions, cultural habits, or our group's unwritten rules, we can compare ourselves with others and feel secure. Meanwhile, pride, greed, anger, envy, and unbelief remain comfortably hidden.

Jesus taught that defilement comes from within. The problem is not that God's commands are unimportant. The problem is our attempt to replace His truth and transforming grace with standards that leave the heart untouched. Human rules often create an appearance of wisdom while strengthening self-reliance.

Christ offers more than external improvement. He bears our guilt, gives us His righteousness, and cleanses the conscience through His sacrifice. His Spirit changes our desires so obedience increasingly flows from faith and love rather than fear, comparison, or the need to appear superior.

This also guards Christian freedom from becoming self-centered. Rejecting man-made rules does not mean rejecting wisdom, accountability, or loving restraint. It means we refuse to bind another person's conscience where God has not spoken. We use freedom to serve, and we receive God's commands as the good words of a Father rather than tools for ranking ourselves above others.

Ask where you have made your preferences a test of faithfulness. Are you judging spiritual maturity by something Scripture does not command? Are you maintaining a respectable exterior while excusing sin within? Bring both legalism and hidden defilement to Jesus. The One who exposes the heart is also the One who cleanses it.

Reflection Questions

1. Which external standards are you tempted to use as a shortcut for evaluating godliness?
2. What heart sin can remain hidden behind a respectable Christian appearance?
3. How does Christ's cleansing free you to confess rather than protect your image?

Practical Application

Identify one personal preference you have treated like a biblical command. Release that judgment and pray for the person you have measured by it.

Prayer

Father, thank You that Christ cleanses more than my outward behavior. Forgive my self-made standards, hidden pride, and efforts to appear righteous. Purify my mind and conscience through the gospel. Teach me to obey Your Word from a heart changed by grace. In Jesus' name, Amen

Day 4 — A Profession Tested by Its Fruit

Read: Titus 1:15–16, Matthew 7:15–23, James 2:14–18

Devotional

“They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works.” Paul could hardly state the contradiction more sharply. Their religious confession sounded orthodox enough to make a claim, but their conduct exposed what their words concealed.

Works do not earn salvation. We are accepted by God through faith in Christ, not through our moral record. Yet the faith that receives Christ does not remain alone. It produces fruit because the gospel joins us to a living Savior. James makes the same point when he distinguishes living faith from an empty claim. Jesus warns that religious language, public ministry, and impressive activity cannot replace actually knowing Him.

This truth should produce examination without despair. The question is not, “Have I ever failed?” Every Christian still battles sin. The question is whether our lives display a settled denial of the God we claim to know or a grace-created pattern of repentance and growing obedience. Genuine believers do not hide from conviction forever. They come into the light because Christ has already borne their condemnation.

Do not use another person's inconsistency to avoid your own. Ask where your life currently denies what your mouth confesses. Perhaps you affirm God's generosity while clinging to money, His sovereignty while nurturing anxiety, His holiness while excusing secret sin, or His grace while refusing forgiveness.

The answer is not trying harder to prove you know God. The answer is knowing God through Jesus Christ. Run toward Him with the contradiction. His perfect obedience is counted for us, and His Spirit produces the fruit of new life.

Growth may begin with an unremarkable act: telling the truth after hiding, asking forgiveness without defending yourself, closing the screen that feeds temptation, or giving generously when fear says to hold back. Such works do not advertise our goodness. They reveal dependence on Christ and a desire for our lives to agree with His truth.

Reflection Questions

1. Where is there presently a gap between a truth you confess and the way you live?
2. Do you respond to that gap with repentance, concealment, excuses, or despair?
3. How does Christ's righteousness give you courage to come into the light?

Practical Application

Confess one specific contradiction to God and, where appropriate, to a trusted Christian. Choose one act of obedience that agrees with the truth you profess.

Prayer

Father, thank You that I am accepted through Christ's righteousness, not my performance. Forgive the places where my works deny what my mouth confesses. Give me honest repentance, living faith, and fruit that reflects Your transforming grace. In Jesus' name, Amen

Day 5 — The Shepherd Who Protects His Sheep

Read: Titus 1:9–16, John 10:11–30, 1 Peter 2:24–25

Devotional

Titus faced many deceivers, damaged households, and teachers whose lives contradicted their profession. That danger was real. Yet the final hope of the church could not rest on Titus's ability to identify every counterfeit or on elders who never made a mistake.

The church belongs to Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd. He knows His sheep personally. He protects them from voices that lead away from His truth. Most importantly, He lays down His life for them. Our security rests in the Shepherd who purchased His flock and promises that no one will snatch His people from His hand.

Christ ordinarily carries out that care through means He has appointed. He gives His church the gospel, the trustworthy Word, faithful shepherds who teach and guard it, and sound faith that produces godliness. We should therefore value biblical discernment, pray for qualified elders, and take harmful teaching seriously. Trust in Christ does not make vigilance unnecessary; it keeps vigilance from becoming fear.

The same confidence keeps us teachable. Sheep are safest near the Shepherd's voice, not insisting that they need no guidance. Christ's protection does not encourage spiritual independence. It draws us toward Scripture, healthy membership in a local church, and relationships where mature believers can warn, encourage, and restore us.

Some believers live anxious that one persuasive teacher, one difficult question, or one unnoticed error will destroy their faith. Others grow cynical after watching spiritual leaders fail. John 10 redirects both fears. Our hope is neither perfect discernment nor flawless undershepherds. Our hope is Christ Himself.

Listen to His voice in Scripture. Stay near His people. Receive correction with humility. Test teaching carefully. Then rest: counterfeit voices do not have the final word over Christ's flock. The Shepherd who gave Himself for His people still faithfully knows, protects, and keeps them.

Reflection Questions

1. Are you more tempted toward careless trust, fearful suspicion, or cynical withdrawal?
2. Which promise in John 10 most directly addresses that temptation?
3. How can you support faithful shepherding and biblical discernment in your church?

Practical Application

Pray for your church's elders by name, asking Christ to keep them faithful to His Word and to protect the congregation from deceptive teaching.

Prayer

Father, thank You for Jesus, the Good Shepherd who knows me and laid down His life for His sheep. Forgive my carelessness, fear, and cynicism. Give Your church faithful shepherds, sound faith, and humble discernment. Keep my confidence fixed on Christ, who will never abandon His flock. In Jesus' name, Amen