

HOW TO USE **engage**

- 1 Set a time you can read the Bible every day
- 2 Find a place where you can be quiet and think
- 3 Grab your Bible, pen and a notebook
- 4 Ask God to help you understand what you read
- 5 Read the day's verses with **engage**, taking time to think about it
- 6 Pray about what you've read

BIBLE STUFF

We use the NIV Bible version, so you might find it's the best one to use with **engage**. If the notes say "**Ruth 1 v 14–18**", look up Ruth in the contents page at the front of your Bible. It'll tell you which page the book starts on. Find chapter 1 of Ruth, and then verse 14 of chapter 1 (the verse numbers are the tiny ones). Then start reading. Simple.

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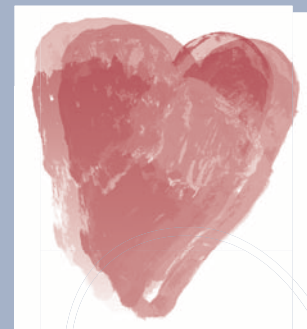
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Ruth

God's big love story

Imagine your life edited into a 90-minute movie. In which section of the rental store might you find it? Comedy? Romance? Thriller? The chances are, the true story of your everyday life wouldn't break records at the box office. Real life isn't often like the movies. You can't edit out the dull bits and the plot is hard to follow.



That's why it's great to know there's another bigger story being told. God is steering the world through its dramas to a glorious climax. However entertaining our lives turn out to be, what matters is that we fully take up our part in His story.

The story of Ruth wouldn't be out of place on the big screen. It's got it all — tragedy, romance, drama — and even a happy ending. (Why not read it through like a novel before starting the studies?) But God's big story is also in view. The events described are more than just random happenings to ordinary people. Heaven's King is

directing the details of their days. Over the next 8 studies, follow Ruth's story carefully, keeping these key questions in mind:

- How do her experiences and choices compare with mine?
- How has God stepped directly into the chapters of my life?
- Am I living my life like Ruth, to play my part in His plot?

Although God has a plan, there is a sense in which your life remains unwritten. The choices you haven't yet made will shape the story ahead. Let Ruth inspire you to face every episode with faith.



1

Who do you think you are?

Imagine life as a refugee. Imagine rolling into a town with no home or mates. Imagine just trying to survive where you don't know the language or customs. Imagine yourself in Naomi's shoes.

Read Ruth 1 v 1–5

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- ▶ *Why did they leave Bethlehem in the first place?*
- ▶ *Why was Moab a weird place to run to? (see Judges 3 v 14)*

In their 10 years away, Naomi's family had been hit by multiple tragedies. As if losing her husband wasn't enough, her two sons were taken too. Whatever is to come in her story, it's clear Naomi's past is no picnic.

Read Ruth 1 v 6–13

- ▶ *Where does the conversation in v8–13 take place? (v7)*
- ▶ *What are Naomi's hopes for her daughters-in-law? (v8–9)*
- ▶ *How does she view their prospects if they follow her?*

In many ways, Naomi talks sense. Two foreign widows couldn't expect to get the pick of the available Jewish boys. But there's a hint that her logic has been coloured by her tragic past: Why stick with me? God's against me. (v11, 13)

PRAY ABOUT IT

Have tough times affected your confidence in God? Tell Him about your lowest moments. Then thank Him that circumstances don't change His death-defying love (John 3 v 16).

THE BOTTOM LINE

Even in your lowest moments, don't forget God's great love for you.

→ TAKE IT FURTHER

For more, turn to page 110.



2

Clinging on

“It just didn't work out.” That's a common verdict on a failed romance. But is that it? Does love just sometimes run out of gas whether we like it or not, or can we keep it moving?

Read Ruth 1 v 14–18

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- ▶ *What pulls Orpah back to Moab (according to Naomi)? (v15)*
- ▶ *In contrast, what parts of Naomi's future does Ruth promise to share? (v16–17)*
- ▶ *What part of Ruth's character convinces Naomi to stop persuading? (v18)*

THINK IT THROUGH

Because life is unpredictable, the idea of being totally committed to anyone or anything for life can seem extreme. But Ruth, not thinking of herself, and knowing her responsibility to God, holds nothing back.

- ▶ *Do you show that type of determination in your love?*

Read verses 19–22

- ▶ *What kind of welcome do they receive in Bethlehem?*

- ▶ *Naomi means “pleasant”. What words in her speech mean the opposite?*

- ▶ *What hope is hinted at in v22?*

Naomi's friends barely recognise her. Her 10-year ordeal has clearly left its mark. If Naomi is still clinging to the Lord, it's only by her fingernails. But the author wants us to know, it's not over yet.

GET ON WITH IT

- ▶ *Who do you know who's running on empty?*
- ▶ *How might you encourage them today to cling to the God who is always good?*

THE BOTTOM LINE

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him (Psalm 103 v 11).

→ TAKE IT FURTHER

Cling on and go to page 110.

3

Don't just sit there!

"It's Not Fair!" It's easy to feel that God does exciting things for others but never for you. Is it possible we need a change to our attitudes and actions?

Read Ruth 2 v 1–13

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- ▶ What attitude does Ruth hope to find among the harvesters? (v2)
- ▶ In what ways does Boaz demonstrate just that attitude?
- ▶ What does Boaz expect God to do and why? (v11, 12)

THINK IT THROUGH

Ruth's mopping up plan is not as cheeky as it seems on the surface. God's law commanded harvesters to be "deliberately careless" — leaving leftovers for poor foreigners. Even in simply receiving what she's entitled to, Ruth is experiencing the simple benefits of her choice to make Naomi's God her God (1 v 16).

Read Ruth 2 v 14–16

- ▶ In what way has Boaz exceeded Naomi's expectations and rights? (v14)
- ▶ How does Boaz add to God's basic allowance? (v15–16)

Ruth's optimistic outlook and humble hard work are a far cry from Naomi's self pity of chapter 1. As a result she starts to experience "over-the-top" favour, showing that God doesn't limit His care for the poor to just survival necessities. It also seems that Boaz is starting to take a shine to Ruth. (Try reading verses 8 and 14 over a romantic movie soundtrack.) God is blessing Ruth by meeting more than her dietary requirements!

GET ON WITH IT

What do you really need? Tell God about it today! Now follow Ruth's simple action plan, showing you trust God to provide.

1. Think about others too. Who can you work alongside who has the same need? (v2)
2. Be bold but humble. Who can you ask respectfully to help you? (v7)
3. Work hard. What effort can you put in towards your target? (v7)

→ TAKE IT FURTHER

Get up and go to page 110.

4

Hold on to hope

What a difference a day makes. What might be different by this time tomorrow? The truth is, whatever you have planned, you really don't know what's just around the corner. Are you ready for the unexpected?

Read Ruth 2 v 17–19

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- ▶ Boaz was already impressed by Ruth's commitment. Which actions show she's determined and faithful? (v17–18)
- ▶ What makes Naomi so keen to ask questions about her day?

THINK IT THROUGH

An ephah was a container big enough to climb into — not bad for one day's leftovers! But given what we know about God, should we be surprised when he gives more than the bare minimum?

- ▶ How has He gone over the top for you?

Read Ruth 2 v 19–23

- ▶ Naomi's excitement explodes when she finds out who's helping Ruth. What is her view of Boaz's character?

- ▶ How does he show the extra-generosity of God? (v21)

- ▶ What does this offer mean for the two widows?

Between the ends of chapters 1 and 2 everything has changed. Bitter Naomi can now see a brighter future. It reminds us that with our loving and powerful God there is always hope. If you're in a hole, today could be the day things turn around.

PRAY ABOUT IT

Is there anything good you've given up hoping for? A friend or family member who rejects Jesus? An unfair situation that seems ignored? Bring it back to your Father today, and ask Him for the perseverance that keeps hope alive. (Colossians 1 v 11)

→ TAKE IT FURTHER

Hold on for some more — page 111.

5 Comfort vs commitment

How far would you put yourself out for your family? Do someone else's chores? Spend your savings on a gift for them? Marry someone for their benefit???

Read Ruth 3 v 1–9

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- ▶ *What is Naomi's hope for Ruth? (v1)*
- ▶ *Why do you think Ruth goes along with the scheme?*
- ▶ *Although strange to us, Ruth's request was a clear signal to Boaz. What did it mean? (See Ezekiel 16 v 8 for a clue.)*

Put yourself in ancient Israel. You're male and your married brother dies before having kids of his own. The law says you ought to marry his widow — become her "kinsman redeemer". To us, it might sound unfair, but God wanted His people to imitate His amazing covenant love. Commitment was to matter more than convenience.

Read Ruth 3 v 9–18

- ▶ *What kindness had Ruth already shown? (2 v 11)*
- ▶ *What was her image among the town's men? (3 v 11)*

- ▶ *What freedom did she give up for her family?*

Right back at the start of our story, Ruth refused to opt for an easy life in her homeland. At every stage she has been more concerned with loyalty to Naomi than clinging to her rights. And now that she practically has her pick of eligible men, again she chooses what's best for her family.

Jesus surrendered His freedom in praying "not my will, but yours be done." He calls us to the same attitude. The anguish He felt at Gethsemane reminds us that this is far from easy.

GET ON WITH IT

We are called to put commitment before comfort. In what way might following Christ this week mean giving up time, money, popularity?

→ TAKE IT FURTHER

Don't get comfortable, turn to p111.

6 New-look love

What's the most romantic thing imaginable? A candlelit dinner for two? Serenading your loved one by moonlight? An exotic holiday on paradise island? Get ready for a new-look love.

Read Ruth 4 v 1–6

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- ▶ *Who witnessed Boaz's meeting?*
- ▶ *What was the relative's response to the offer of land? (v4)*
- ▶ *Why did he not want a wife? (v6)*

As we've already seen, Ruth was an attractive proposition! And the relative was not reluctant to buy the land. So why was the idea of marriage a deal breaker? Well, when you sign up as a "kinsman redeemer", your main role is to give the dead man an heir. That means you buy the land, but once you have a son, he gets everything you've paid for. For Ruth's relative, this deal would take a huge chunk away from the inheritance due to his own kids. But Boaz is ready to pay.

Read Ruth 4 v 7–10

- ▶ *What does the custom of removing a sandal signify?*

- ▶ *How would you describe the mood of Boaz's summary speech?*

Becoming a kinsman redeemer costs. Yet Boaz seems to celebrate the deal. His speech says: Ruth is mine and I don't care who knows it!

PRAY ABOUT IT

The Bible's model for a husband's love is the self-giving love of Jesus. Not flowers and chocolates, but the commitment of the cross. Is that the kind of marriage you're aiming for? Ask God to develop in you a love that shows something of His passion.

THE BOTTOM LINE

This is love: not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his son as an atoning sacrifice for sin (1 John 4 v 10).

→ TAKE IT FURTHER

Loving it? Turn to page 111.



7

The comeback king

The sprinter crosses the finishing line milliseconds before his big rival, and he wins the gold medal. As the world's media surround him, he just smiles and says: "Thanks, Dad!" In his finest hour, he wants someone else to get the glory. Do you?

Read Ruth 4 v 11–15

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- ▶ *Who does the future of this new family depend on? (v11–13)*
- ▶ *Why might Ruth's age give new hope to Boaz?*

Some people think you get what you deserve. When things go well, we congratulate ourselves for our hard work. But we should really thank God. Right through the Ruth story, He has been at work, invisibly providing for each of our main characters.

Read Ruth 4 v 7–10

- ▶ *What had God provided for childless Naomi?*
- ▶ *How will Boaz's arrival change her life?*

As kinsman redeemer, Boaz offers new hope to an old lady. His arrival does not just promise food on her table, but the descendants she

dreamed of. It's a small picture of the Great Redeemer, who just loves to turn our despair to joy.

THINK IT THROUGH

- ▶ *How is God working behind the scenes of your own life?*
- ▶ *What situation has he redeemed?*
- ▶ *In what situation do you need new hope?*

PRAY ABOUT IT

Take your thanks for the past and requests for the future to God, who specialises in the glorious comeback.

THE BOTTOM LINE

You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing to you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever. (Psalm 30 v 11–12).

→ TAKE IT FURTHER

Come back for more on page 111.

8

History makers

Some people make history. Others end up being part of world-changing events by accident. Either way, just by living for Jesus you'll leave an everlasting legacy. Are you ready to change the world?

Read Ruth 4 v 16–17

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- ▶ *What role and relationship is Naomi given?*

As the story ends, we discover a bigger picture. God is using Ruth and Naomi in providing Israel with their greatest king, David. It's a reminder that even the seemingly small details of our humble days can be crucial to His plans.

Read Ruth 4 v 18–22

- ▶ *What country did David's great-grandma, Ruth, come from?*
- ▶ *Why might this have surprised some Jews?*
- ▶ *Who do you think is the main character in this story?*

THINK IT THROUGH

Ultimately, the Bible is one book, with God as its author. That means we can only really understand any part when

we see how it fits into the whole. The storyline running throughout is this: Jesus, "Son" of David, and God's rescue through Him.

- ▶ *What have we learned about Jesus through Ruth?*

PRAY ABOUT IT

Without knowing it, Ruth has played a key role in God's eternal plan. We can't fully grasp how our actions today might affect future generations. Bring before God your decisions and encounters of the next 24 hours. Pray that He would use you in His mind-blowing purposes.

→ TAKE IT FURTHER

More big picture stuff on page 111.



TRICKY

What happens next?

Each issue in TRICKY, we tackle those mind-bendingly difficult questions that confuse us all, as well as questions that friends bombard us with to catch us off guard. This time we ask: is there really life after death?

BYE BYE BODY

None of us can be certain of what will happen in the rest of our lives. We can't be sure how things will turn out or what the future holds. The only thing we can all be certain of is this — one day we will die. It's unavoidable. But then what? Is death the end?

According to the Bible, death *is* the end — for our earthly bodies at least. God created humans out of dust (Genesis 2 v 7) and our bodies will return to dust — dying and decomposing (Ecclesiastes 12 v 6–7). But that doesn't mean death is the end. Far from it. Our spirit (or soul) lives on. The human body is just a temporary home for the human spirit, and it will be replaced by something better (2 Corinthians 5 v 1–5).

ETERNITY NOW

Christians often concentrate so much on this life that we forget there's something far better to come. We should probably stop thinking of life as being in two parts: life on earth and life in heaven. For Christians, eternal life has already begun — those who have trusted in Jesus' death for them possess eternal life. They won't be condemned because they have crossed over from death to life (John 5 v 24).

When believers die, they go to live with Christ in His perfect new world. Their imperfect bodies will be turned into glorious new bodies, like Christ's (1 Corinthians 15 v 51–54). So, for Christians, death is actually victory — the start of a new perfect life (Philippians 1 v 21).

JUDGMENT DAY

But this experience is not for everyone. One day, Jesus will return as Judge. All those who trust in Him will be forgiven and go to eternal life, but everyone who rejects Jesus will be sentenced for their sins and go to eternal punishment in hell (Matthew 25 v 31–46). Death is not the end, but where you go depends on Jesus and whether you've trusted Him to save you.

So if there is life after death, what can Christians expect? Well, the Bible tells us that believers will live in God's presence for ever, and they'll be holy (Hebrews 12 v 14). Nothing sinful or imperfect will be there and all the puzzles of this human life will be resolved (1 Corinthians 13 v 9–12). We don't know exactly what it will be like — the Bible only gives us hints — but we do know it will be perfect.

HEAVENLY LIVING

God's word makes it clear that there *is* life after death. This should have a huge impact on our lives.

For those who refuse to live God's way, it means they're heading for eternal punishment. For those who love Jesus, it means they can live life looking forward to an amazing eternity (Hebrews 11 v 16).

Believers should set their standards by those of heaven, rather than those of this sinful world, for they're now citizens of heaven (Philippians 3 v 17–21). They shouldn't care so much about earthly possessions; they're not so important in the context of eternity (Hebrews 10 v 34). They should set their minds on things above, where Christ is, rather than on earthly things (Colossians 3 v 2–4).

Death is not the end, but we need to put ourselves right with God before we reach it. For Christians, their eternal future is safe because of Jesus, so death should hold no fear for them. We should long for eternity with God and let it positively affect the way we live now.

Getting it right

x + y = z. Equations — I'm rubbish at them. But in the Christian life, it's crucial we understand this equation: right belief = right behaviour. Believing right and behaving right are the two halves of the equation. If something is missing from one half or the other, our Christian lives won't add up.

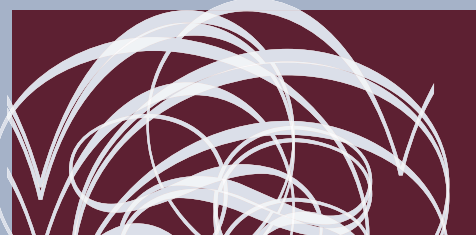
In his letter to Titus, Paul wants to make sure Christians are believing the right things and putting their beliefs into practice. Practising what they preach at home, in work, in society — so that non-Christians will be attracted by the gospel message, as they see it result in changed lives.

Paul is writing to Titus, who was one of his right-hand men. Titus travelled around with Paul through places like Asia Minor and Greece as Paul preached about Jesus and set up churches (groups of Christians) in various places he visited.

On their travels, Paul and Titus went to the Greek island of Crete, though not for the snorkeling. They went to preach the gospel, and their visit to Crete was a great success — many of the islanders becoming Christians. Paul left Crete, but Titus stayed.

Paul wants Titus to make sure the Christians on Crete get the equation right: believe the right things and live out their beliefs in the real world, so that other people will want to become Christians.

As we read Titus, we'll see it's bang up to date. Nothing is more of a turn-off in a Christian than hypocrisy. And nothing is more appealing in a Christian than to see him or her getting the equation right. Right belief = right behaviour.



9

Hi, Titus!

How would you begin a letter or email to a friend? “Hi Jane, how’s things?” Well, Paul’s letter to Titus doesn’t start off quite so simply. Actually, it’s completely fact-packed.

Read Titus 1 v 1

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

► What do we learn about Paul?

► Why does he spread the message of Jesus?

Paul describes himself as an apostle — someone sent to share the truth about Jesus’ death and resurrection. He serves God by helping to build up the faith of God’s chosen people (“the elect”, Christians). He wants people to understand the truth so they live the kind of lifestyle God wants. Notice how the equation appears in this very first verse: right belief = right behaviour.

Read verses 2-3

► What does faith in Jesus rest on? (v2)

► What has God promised to believers? (v2)

► And why can we trust Him? (v2)

Read verse 4

► What does Paul call Titus?

► What makes them so close?

At the heart of this letter is Jesus. God kept His promise and sent Jesus to rescue people and give them eternal life. If we know this great truth, then we should want to live in a way that pleases God. Just as Paul and Titus did.

THINK IT OVER

► What would you say to a friend who says they believe the gospel but doesn’t live a godly lifestyle?

PRAY ABOUT IT

Ask God to help you believe His great promises and live in a way that shows you do.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Right belief = right behaviour.

→ TAKE IT FURTHER

Right. Turn to page 112. Right now.

10 Lead by example

What qualities do you think a church leader should have?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Let's see if Paul agrees.

Read Titus 1 v 5-7

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- ▶ What was Titus' job? (v5)
- ▶ What should a church leader's family life be like? (v6)
- ▶ What should a leader NOT be like? (v7)

A church is a family of believers. So a church leader should have a good family life at home too. If one of your parents is a church leader, remember that how you live affects how others view them. A church leader (or "elder" or "overseer") should set a good example, not a bad one (v7).

Read verses 8-9

- ▶ In your own words, describe what a church leader should be like (v8)
- ▶ What must he do? (v9)
- ▶ What two things will this enable him to do?

Good leaders must practise what they preach. If they do that and stick to God's word, they'll encourage believers to grow and be able to stand up to opposition.

PRAY ABOUT IT

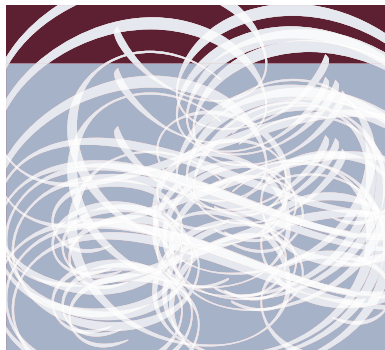
Pray for Christian leaders you know. Thank God for them. Pray that they will live up to this tough job description and continue to teach God's word and live by it.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Christian leaders must lead by example.

TAKE IT FURTHER

Follow the leader to page 112.



11 Dishonest deceivers

Remember the equation? Right belief = right behaviour. Well, the opposite is true. Wrong belief = wrong behaviour. There were people in the church in Crete who were teaching rubbish and leading Christians astray.

Read Titus 1 v 10-16

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- ▶ How does Paul describe these troublemakers? (v10)
- ▶ What were they doing? (v11)
- ▶ What should Titus do about it? (v11, v13-14)

The "circumcision group" told Christians they must keep Jewish rules like getting circumcised and not eating pork etc. Paul called these rules "Jewish myths" (v14). They were causing great damage, ripping families apart and gaining from it (v11). So Paul told Titus to take a hardline approach, silencing such teaching and making sure no believers fell for it.

Yesterday we heard that it's essential for Christian leaders to "hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught" (v9). This was the message about Christ, taught by

Paul and the apostles. We have their teaching in the New Testament.

THINK IT OVER

- ▶ So how can we spot false teachers today?
- ▶ How will their beliefs and behaviour give them away? (v15-16)

If you're unsure about any teaching you hear, check it with the Bible. Is it in line with what God's word says? And ask a mature Christian you respect about it too.

PRAY ABOUT IT

Pray for Christian leaders you know that they'll have the courage to stand up against those who teach wrong things. Pray that you'll know your Bible better so you won't be taken in by such teaching.

TAKE IT FURTHER

More about "Jewish myths" on p112.



12

Equal to the task

Think of older Christians you know. How can you learn from them? And how is their example not always a good one?

Read Titus 2 v 1–2

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

▶ *How should Titus teach?*

▶ *What should older Christian guys be like?*

Titus should teach stuff that's in line with "sound doctrine". Sound here means "healthy". Titus is to teach the Christians in Crete to live a healthy Christian lifestyle. For Christian men, that means living lives that set a good example to younger men — being self-controlled, full of faith and love, and keeping going as Christians.

Read verses 3–5

▶ *How should older Christian women live? (v3)*

▶ *What about younger women? (v4–5)*

Young Christian women should look up to more mature women and learn from them. They should not

get addicted to booze and shouldn't spread false rumours about people. Self-control and purity are the order of the day.

If you're married, you should love your husband and kids, remembering that the husband is the head of the family. Paul isn't saying Christian women should be timid or stay at home and not have a job. He's saying that if you have a husband and kids; love them, don't neglect them. The key thing here is that Christians should act in a way that doesn't reflect badly on God and His word.

GET ON WITH IT

▶ *Which older Christians can you spend more time with?*

▶ *What can you learn from them?*

▶ *Have these verses reminded you of anything you need to sort out?*

TAKE IT FURTHER

More on these issues on page 112.

13

Life lessons

Yesterday we read Paul's advice to young Christian women. Today he turns his attention to young Christian men. And slaves. But there are valuable lessons here for all of us.

Read Titus 2 v 6–8

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

▶ *What does it mean to be self-controlled?*

▶ *Specifically, how do you need to show more self-control?*

▶ *Why must Titus watch what he preaches and the way he lives? (v7–8)*

Read verse 9–10

▶ *What will be the result if Christians keep Paul's principles and work hard? (v10)*

In this chapter, Paul keeps repeating the fact that the way we act will affect non-believers. Whatever they say about us, non-Christians always keep an eye on Christians to see if they practise what they preach.

If we lead a life of love, faith and self-control then it reflects well on the gospel. If we show no self-control

and have messed up relationships at home, work or church, then the gospel will seem unattractive.

Think how you can improve your act as a Christian at home, at college/ school, when you're at a party, at work... so that non-Christians are attracted to Jesus. God has rescued us for heaven and has restored our broken relationship with Him. So let's live for Him.

PRAY ABOUT IT

Pray that you and your Christian friends would live genuine Christ-honouring lives, so that your unbelieving friends will find the message about Jesus attractive and want to become Christians too.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Live for God. You're being watched.

TAKE IT FURTHER

More life lessons on page 113.



14

Heart of the message

This section is the heart of this great letter.
Here, Paul gives us another equation:
healthy teaching = healthy lifestyle.

Read Titus 2 v 11–15

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- ▶ *Who or what is Paul talking about in v11?*
- ▶ *What does Jesus' death and resurrection teach us to say "no" to? (v12)*
- ▶ *What should we replace these things with? (v12)*

The "grace of God" is Paul's shorthand for everything the Lord Jesus has done for us. Coming into this world to show us what God is like; dying to free us from God's punishment, which our rebellion deserves; rising from the dead to give us the hope of eternal life.

- ▶ *What's the great hope that Christians wait for? (v13)*
- ▶ *Why did Jesus die on the cross? (v14)*

This is what Christianity is all about. Jesus gave Himself for us — dying, to buy us back from sin, making us His own people and purifying us. We should respond by doing "what is good" as we wait for Him to return in glory.

GET ON WITH IT

We should look back to what Jesus did for us on the cross and look forward to the glorious future when He returns.

- ▶ *How will those two events affect the way you live now?*

PRAY ABOUT IT

Please pray that you, us and every Christian will realise how much we owe the Lord Jesus and long to live to please Him.

THE BOTTOM LINE

We owe everything to Jesus.

→ TAKE IT FURTHER

A little more heart on page 113.

15

Get on with it!

This great letter keeps reminding us that if we trust in Jesus, then we should live in a way that shows it and attracts others. So how can we actually do that?

Read Titus 3 v 1–2

This is not just theory — if you're serious about Jesus, then it's time to start living in a way that shows it. Let's get practical. Make sure you write down your answers.

GET ON WITH IT

- ▶ *Who should we be obedient to? (v1)*
- ▶ *How should this change the way you treat... teachers/bosses?*
- ▶ *parents?*
- ▶ *the law?*
- ▶ *Christian leaders?*

- ▶ *So what will you do about it?*

- ▶ *What should you be prepared for? (v1)*

- ▶ *What "good" do you fail to do?*

- ▶ *Who do you badmouth?*

- ▶ *Who do you need to make peace with?*

- ▶ *How can you make sure you don't lose it next time someone teases you?*

- ▶ *How can you be more considerate with the people you spend most time with?*

- ▶ *How will you be more humble and less full of yourself?*

PRAY ABOUT IT

Now read through your answers and talk to God about them, one by one. Ask Him to help you make the changes you need to.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Being a Christian means living with Christ at the centre of your life.

→ TAKE IT FURTHER

More about authority on page 113.

16 Bath time

Before becoming Christians, we all believed wrongly and lived wrongly. What difference does becoming a Christian make? What difference has it made in your life?

Read Titus 3 v 3

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- What's life like before people turn to Christ?
- What rules their lives?
- How were/are you like this?

Read verses 4–6

- Who gets the credit for you becoming a Christian?
- Did you deserve to be saved? (v5)
- How were you saved? (v5–6)
- What do these verses tell us about God's character?

Read verses 7–8

- What is the future for believers? (v7)
- If we believe all these things, what should be the result? (v8)

Before we became Christians, our lives were a mess. We didn't deserve anything from God yet He mercifully rescued us from our sinful lives. He sent Jesus to die in our place so that our lives could be washed clean and

renewed by the Holy Spirit. Christians are "justified" (v7) — put right with God, forgiven, accepted by Him. So they should be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good (v8).

GET ON WITH IT

- Have you trusted in God yet?
- If so, are you still trusting Him?
- Are you being careful? And devoted?
- What can you do that's good for others?

PRAY ABOUT IT

Thank God for giving you a bath. Tell God all the credit goes to Him for saving you. And ask Him to help you get the equation right. Right belief = right behaviour.

TAKE IT FURTHER

From bath time to birth time: p113.



17 Argu-mental

What do you tend to have arguments about? What topics get you fired up? What issues cause divisions between your friends? What about in your church / youth group?

Read Titus 3 v 9

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- What kinds of arguments should Christians avoid?
- Why?

This doesn't mean we should never have discussions and disagreements about Christian stuff. After all, Jesus caused plenty of controversy and debate. It's healthy to get excited about the Bible and moral issues.

Paul says avoid "foolish" controversies — stuff that's pointless and causes divisions. If you're ever in the middle of a heated debate, think to yourself: is this important? If you're defending the gospel, go for it! If you're getting aggressive about whether hamsters go to heaven, maybe you could let it drop.

Read verses 10–11

- How should someone who causes splits be treated at first?

- What if they continue to cause trouble?

If someone is causing splits between Christians, get a leader to talk with them. If they continue to cause problems, then we should have nothing to do with them.

THINK IT OVER

- What pointless arguments do you get involved in?
- What do you say or do that might cause division?

PRAY ABOUT IT

Ask God for unity in your church / youth group. Ask Him for help in deciding which discussions are worth having and which ones are a waste of time.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Avoid foolish controversies

TAKE IT FURTHER

More arguing on page 114.



18

Fond farewell

They think it's all over. But it isn't. Yet. Paul finishes off his letter with some instructions for Titus and a final word of encouragement.

Read Titus 3 v 12–13

Paul is going to send Artemas and his (possibly shorter) colleague Tychicus to Crete. They will replace Titus, who's needed in Nicopolis, a city in mainland Greece.

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- ▶ *How does Paul sending Artemas and Tychicus show his concern for the new Christians on Crete?*
- ▶ *And how should Titus treat Zenas and Apollos?*

Read verses 14–15

- ▶ *What does Paul say fellow believers should be devoted to?*
- ▶ *Why?*

Paul's equation comes back one last time. Right belief = right behaviour. It's one thing to believe the truth about Jesus, but we've got to live it too. That means devoting our lives to serving Him and doing what is good. So that our lives aren't unproductive.

PRAY ABOUT IT

Thank God for what you've learned from Titus, for the equation, for God's love for you, and for Jesus who gave Himself for you.

Pray that God would help you grow in knowledge and understanding of the Bible, so you'll know the difference between sick and healthy teaching.

Pray that you'll make God's saving message attractive to non-Christians you know and meet.

→ TAKE IT FURTHER

One last visit to Titus on page 114.



19

Judge dread

Before we jump into 1 Samuel, it's time for a psalm break. Psalm 82 is a dark and tricky one, but stick with it and you'll learn something about our great God.

Read Psalm 82 v 1–5

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- ▶ *What's the scene? (v1)*
- ▶ *What is God's role? (v1)*
- ▶ *What annoys Him? (v2)*
- ▶ *What had people been failing to do? (v3–4)*
- ▶ *What does this reveal about them? v5)*

The tricky bit in this psalm is identifying who the "gods" are (v1, v6). Are they: a) those who were judges among God's people; b) spiritual powers; c) something else? We vote for a) but won't get upset if you disagree.

God looked for His people to live His way, as they should. But they were failing to look after those who were weak, poor or downtrodden.

Read verses 6–8

- ▶ *What will happen to rulers who fail to rule fairly? (v7)*
- ▶ *What does the psalm writer ask God to do? (v8)*
- ▶ *What reason does he give?*

One day, God will summon the whole earth before Him. He'll take charge of that court and pass judgment. Those who've failed to serve Him or treat people rightly will be punished. It's a sobering thought. And a direct challenge for God's people now to get living God's way.

PRAY ABOUT IT

Thank God that He's in charge and He's perfectly fair. Pray that you will "defend the cause of the weak and fatherless" and "maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed".

→ TAKE IT FURTHER

A tiny bit more on page 114.