

### **Warm-up Activity or Question**

Choose one and pursue it as a group.

- 1. Activity:** Everyone has had encounters where you see someone acting badly and you shudder and think, “Yikes, I don’t ever want to be *that guy/gal*.” Everybody grab a piece of paper and write down from recent memory one actual example of that kind of behavior – and then we’ll go around and share the “*that guys/gals*” that we don’t want to be. 😊
  - So, if we all refrained from being all of the “that guys/gals” that we just shared – how much would it change us? Any?
- 2. Question.** Let’s go around the table and share our recent examples of hospitality/neighborliness in our homes.
  - When was the last time that you had non-family guests in your home here in the Katy area? Workmen doing AC repairs don’t count! 😊
  - Tell us a bit about how that came about and how it went.
  - Many of us aren’t good at hospitality or don’t enjoy it. What would have to change in your life to make that a more enjoyable and more common occurrence in your home?

### **Can You Relate?**

In laying out the qualities of godly leadership – and some attributes of those who make trouble in the church - this week’s scripture raises an illuminated mirror squarely in front of us to gain insight into qualities and attributes that we can seek to change for Kingdom purposes.

#### **1. Aspiring for Better.**

The Christian walk is a lifelong journey of spiritual growth and development. None of us in this group have arrived at a stopping point. Not one. As a catalyst for finding our growing edge, this week we will look at a particularly clear set of qualities and attributes to seek and avoid in any godly life. Begin by reading aloud and slowly Titus 1:5b-9.

While these are requirements for Church leaders, they are aspirational for all believers. There should be a few uncomfortable entries in the chart below – for you -- and any honest believer.

Someone set a timer, and let’s take 3 minutes of silence and each pick one (or two) of these traits that represent your growing edge (an area where you aspire to do better) and then share:

- A little bit about the challenge that you’ve experienced with this trait; and
- Why this trait is important to God.

#### **LET’S ASPIRE TO BE THIS**

• Above reproach (no pattern of immorality)	• Not arrogant
• One marriage	• Not quick-tempered or violent
• Self-controlled; disciplined	• Not an abuser of alcohol/substances
• Upright; holy	• Not greedy to get ahead
• At-home children who are of the age of accountability are believers	
• At-home children not in a pattern of rebellion	
• Enjoys hosting others at home; welcoming, gracious	

## 2. The Tall Order that Paul Gave to Titus

Titus (a Gentile) was working in a hostile cultural environment, where strong voices (including Jewish Christians) were imposing cultural expectations (e.g., annotations to the Law) on others. Pause and read aloud Titus 1:10-16. This chart describes the problematic community members:

### LET'S NOT BE "THAT GUY/GAL"

• Contradicts Biblical doctrine	• Insubordinate
• Leading others astray for personal gain	• Empty talkers
• Liars (deceiver; half-truth tellers)	• Evil beasts (driven by carnal desires)
• Lazy gluttons (self-indulgent; unproductive)	• Detestable (unpure); disobedient
• Following myths	• Following those who abandoned the truth
• Professing to know God, but denying him by their action/inaction (hypocrisy; duplicity)	
• Unfit for any good work in the Kingdom of God	

Paul's direction to Titus was to "**silence**" (stop the spread of error by rebuking the culprits and surrounding the house churches with elders who were clear on good doctrine so that they, too, could confront error) and "**rebuke ... sharply**" (firmly, clearly and promptly correct) those espousing unsound doctrine. A tall order for any Church leader, especially in a hostile culture.

Clearly, violence or anger were not an option for Titus (see 1:7). Rather, he was to rely on the "**authority**" (see 2:15) invested in him by God as one called to church leadership.

- So, where does that leave us who do not have the authority of an office in the church?
- In this divisive election year, can you relate to the difficulty of connecting across cultural divides? What has worked well for you?
- Can God's amazing love for you transform you in this season? Can the jaw-dropping majesty of the Creator make you different? How do you find that?

### Live It Out

**Let's take a moment and go around the group to identify what we want to take away from this discussion. Any quiet-time reflection required?**

- SOAP quiet-time journaling is a good starting point for reflection. This week, consider pledging with one of us to each doing SOAP quiet time for seven days in a row, texting one another for accountability and support as we go through it.
- Try resolving to start each day pouring your heart out to God in transparent prayer.
  - **How?** This week, **before you get out of bed** (making God your first priority of the morning), pick up your phone or tablet and play *Different* by Micah Tyler. Absorb the lyrics. Play them back in your head throughout the day. If it blesses you, consider doing it the next day. Report next time on how that went. If you do not have that song by other means, you can find it easily on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/XFT0zoKQWaM?si=GScEKHnRz1fVmDC>

**Encourage members of the group to commit time to praying for one another, encouraging and meeting one another's needs, fellowshiping together, and interceding for the other members. Contact absent group members and encourage them to continue to meet and to return together at the next scheduled gathering.**