

September 7 – 13

1 Timothy | Guarding the Gospel

Icebreaker: What's a belief, rumor, or "fact" you once thought was true but later found out wasn't? (Ex: food myths, urban legends, sports trivia, childhood misunderstandings, etc.)

In this session, we will explore Paul's letter to Timothy, where he urges a young pastor to guard sound doctrine, avoid myths and speculations, and lead with love.

Background Notes (for leader to share briefly)

- **Paul:** Apostle, witness of the risen Jesus, chosen by the Spirit, and builder of the early church (1:1). Writing near the end of his life.
- **Timothy:** Young pastor in Ephesus, raised by his believing mother & grandmother, mentored by Paul. Known for faithfulness but often fearful and discouraged.
- **Context:** The church in Ephesus was plagued by false teachers spreading myths, genealogies, and controversies. Paul charges Timothy to stay, correct false teaching, and guard the gospel.

Read 1 Timothy 1:1–11

1. Context and Calling

- Why do you think Paul begins this letter by reminding Timothy of his authority as an apostle? How might that have encouraged Timothy in his challenging role?
- What challenges do you think Timothy faced as a young leader in the difficult city of Ephesus? How do you relate to his discouragement?

2. The Problem of False Teaching (vv. 3–7)

- Why does Paul insist that sound doctrine is of primary importance in the church?
- What kinds of "different doctrines," myths, or speculations do you see distracting Christians today?
- Why do myths, endless genealogies, or speculation (like conspiracy theories or debates about mysteries) feel attractive to people?
- How do these distractions pull people away from the heart of the gospel?

3. The Goal of Sound Doctrine (vv. 5–6)

- Paul says the goal of instruction is **love** from a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith.
 - How is this kind of love better than other expressions of love?
 - How does this kind of love contrast with the false teachers' motives and methods?

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- How can we distinguish between teaching that fosters love and teaching that only produces pride, division, or controversy?
- What are the keys to growing a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith? How do we examine our own motives when interacting with others?

4. Guarding the Gospel (vv. 8–11)

- Paul says the law is good when used lawfully. What happens when God's Word is misused or twisted?
- What are some ways we, as a group and as a church, can guard the gospel so that it is taught clearly and lived out faithfully?
- How can we support our pastors and leaders who bear the heavy responsibility of upholding sound doctrine?

Personal Application

- What's one way we can practice discernment when we encounter questionable teachings, podcasts, social media "prophets," or divisive debates?
- Where in your life do you need to shift your focus to live and serve out of love, rather than speculation or controversy?

Closing Prayer

- Pray for your leaders and pastors, that they would guard sound doctrine with courage and grace.
- Pray for your group, that your faith would be marked not by speculation or controversy, but by love that flows from Christ.
- Pray for strength to live with pure hearts, good consciences, and sincere faith.