



KING'S HARBOR CHURCH

Love God. Love People. Make Disciples.

Connecting Belief and Behavior (1:1-11)

I. INTRO

A. Series intro -- Discipleship In Action

1. Video intro to 1 Timothy...
2. To both support and add to the video introduction, I would say that Paul is writing for two primary reasons:
 - a. **To remind Timothy that sound doctrine really really matters** – and that he must correct bad, false, and strange doctrine (We get glimpses of the Ephesian Church over a period of about 40 years – Eph is first mentioned in Acts 18-19)
 - b. **To provide Timothy with instruction on biblical leadership and discipleship principles.**
 - 1) I would think it would be a universal desire to everyone in this room because, at its most basic core, leadership = influence – and we all want to influence our own sphere of relationships with causes we believe in – including the cause of Christ.
 - 2) This letter has been written to Timothy yet Paul intended it to be read to the whole congregation.
 - a) We know this because the very last words of the letter is often translated as “you all” or “all of you” -- the plural form of “you.”
 - b) We can view it as an “open letter” to Timothy and the church on leadership and discipleship principles.

B. With that introduction I have a (rhetorical) question that I'd like to ask you: **“If you knew more about God do you think that would help you love God more?”**

1. Knowing more about God is exactly what doctrine is...

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2. What we want to consider today is, “How our beliefs and our behavior are connected.”

C. Please turn to 1 Timothy 1:1-11 in your Bible or device. I will read the text, pray, and then we will consider together how Paul is mentoring and discipling Timothy. *“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, ²To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. ³As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, ⁴nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith. ⁵The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. ⁶Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, ⁷desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions. ⁸Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, ⁹understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, ¹¹in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.”* --1 Timothy 1:1-11

II. BODY

A. There are **three main points** that I observe this passage making. I will lay them out and then we will go back through them to learn more about the importance of **taking the time to build a sound doctrinal foundation** for our lives.

B. Here they are:

1. **The NEED for sound doctrine (vs. 1-4)**
2. **The NATURE of sound doctrine (v. 5)**
3. **The NECESSITY of the glorious gospel (vs. 6-11)** [the gospel connects all the dots]

1. **The NEED for sound doctrine (vs. 1-4)** [“different doctrine”]

- a. First, we need to define “sound doctrine” (v. 10): In the most basic sense, doctrine is any sort of teaching – and the word “sound” means healthy, so “sound doctrine” literally means “healthy teaching.”
- b. The opposite of healthy teaching would be diseased teaching – and diseased doctrine will **eat away at our spiritual health**. That is what Paul is telling Timothy about what is going on at Ephesus.
- c. More specifically, Christian doctrine is teaching from God, about God, that directs us to God in worship and adoration. (It is intended to take us from head to heart.)
- d. Sound doctrine provides a pattern that, when followed, promotes healthy faith and love. We see at the beginning of 1 Tim the damaging results of unhealthy doctrine, which replaces faith with speculation and love with dissension.
- e. *Didaskalia* (did-as-kal-ee'-ah) used 8 times throughout Paul’s first letter to Timothy – let’s see what he says:
 - 1) 1 Tim 1:10: “*sound doctrine*”
 - 2) 1 Tim 4:1: “*doctrines of demons*”
 - 3) 1 Tim 4:6: “*...being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed.*”
 - 4) 1 Tim 4:13: “*Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to [doctrine].*”
 - 5) 1 Tim 4:16: “*Keep a close watch on yourself and on the [doctrine].*”
 - 6) 1 Tim 5:17: “*Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and [doctrine].*”
 - 7) 1 Tim 6:1: “*...so that the name of God and the [doctrine] may not be reviled.*”
 - 8) 1 Tim 6:3: “*If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ...*”
- f. Paul is VERY concerned about the church in Ephesus having strong and sound doctrine.

- g. Many churches have a tendency to move toward an “experiential theology” and move away from a “biblical theology.” What does that mean?
- 1) Experiential Theology defines God through personal experience, emotion, and the subjective discernment of reality, which causes the understanding and presentation of Scripture to be contextually flawed and misrepresented.
 - 2) Biblical Theology is the careful, healthy study of the doctrines of God and the Bible in their proper context.

2. The NATURE of sound doctrine (v. 5)

- a. Sound doctrine will position us to move from knowing ABOUT God to truly KNOWING God. .
- b. ⁵ *The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.*
 - 1) What Paul is saying to Timothy is that when sound doctrine is taught it will lead us to love God and others more.
 - 2) Knowing God in our mind leads to enjoying God in our heart.
 - 3) "Love is the overflow and expansion of joy in God, which gladly meets the needs of others." --John Piper¹
 - 4) This love for God and others is born IN sound doctrine. We then see the **triple dynamic of love**...
 - a) A pure heart – Having a pure heart means that our heart is undivided. (Ps 86:11 – “Give me an undivided heart...”) Out of a growing purity and focus bursts love.
 - b) A good conscience – We are keenly aware of the moral standing of our own actions – our conscience either approves or disapproves. Sound doctrine moves us toward a clear conscience, which frees us to love God and people more.
 - c) A sincere faith – This means a faith without hypocrisy. We’re not wearing masks, we’re not pretending about

¹ Piper, *The Dangerous Duty of Delight*: 44.

anything. Eight times in the Pastoral Letters faith and love are linked together.

- 5) Sound doctrine produces a dynamic love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.

3. The **NECESSITY** of the glorious gospel (vs. 6-11)

- a. Paul's comments about the false teachers in these verses lead him into what appears to be a digression into the purpose of the OT Law.²
- b. It actually provides us with an excellent summary statement about how the gospel ties everything together.
- c. First, let's consider what the purpose of the OT Law is...
 - 1) To expose the truth about our human condition – and that we cannot fix our broken relationship with God.
 - 2) Jesus fulfilled the OT Law and we are freed from its confines – in order to be joined to Jesus and adopted into the family of God.
 - 3) I have heard it said that the OT Law is like a dentist's mirror – it can reveal decay, but it can't do anything about it.
- d. In vs. 6-10 Paul is presenting a litany of the sins, which the law exposed.
- e. John Stott in his commentary on Paul's Pastoral Letters notes that (most of) the sins listed in vs. 8-10 each correlate to the 10 Commandments.

² John Piper has provided the following grid for helping interpret the various uses: "Whenever you read the word 'law' in the NT, ask yourself: 'Is this the OT, or the writings of Moses, or the legalistic distortion of Moses' teaching?'"

10 Commandments (Ex 20)	Paul's List (1 Tim 1:9-10)
1. No other gods before God	v. 9 "Ungodly"
2. No graven images or likenesses	v. 9 "Sinners"
3. Don't take the LORD's name in vain	v. 9 "Unholy"
4. Remember the sabbath day	v. 9 "Profane"
5. Honor your father and your mother	v. 9 "Those who strike their Fathers & Mothers"
6. You shall not kill	v. 9 "Murders"
7. You shall not commit adultery	v. 10 "Sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality"
8. You shall not steal	v. 10 "Enslavers"
9. You shall not bear false witness	v. 10 "Liars and Perjurers"
10. You shall not covet	<u>Roms 7:7-8</u>
<i>"And whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, ¹¹ in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted."</i>	
<i>--1 Timothy 1:10b-11</i>	

- f. What is the "gospel of the glory of the blessed God"? The gospel, that was entrusted to Paul -- and is now entrusted to us, is the **only** answer to the **sin-sick pathology** of the human heart. All healthy, life-giving theology flows out of this glorious gospel of grace.
- g. Now, as we move to a conclusion, we need to notice that Christianity cuts across the grain of our contemporary culture when Paul includes sexual immorality and homosexuality in this list of sinful behaviors.
- h. Here is how I would address this issue... I think the Church – the BIG C Church -- needs to see, notice, and own...
- 1) **See:** Vs. 8-11 describe "me" and not "them." I am "lawless and rebellious, an ungodly and sinner... I am unholy and profane." And I would suggest these words describe you too – committed Christian or not.
 - 2) **Notice:** How do we address the presence of homosexuality in this list of sins?

- a) Here's what we CANNOT do: We cannot apologize that the Bible contains a very clear sex ethic (Gen 2:24 – and referenced many times by Paul)
 - b) Here is what we CAN do: We, as the church, CAN apologize for is that we have used this (sex ethic) as a club.
- 3) **Own:** We need to own that we have shared the TRUTH of God without the LOVE of God.
- a) Additionally, we, the Church, tend to view homosexual sin as worse than heterosexual sin. It is not.
 - b) The Church needs to repent. And we need to love ALL people. Period.
- 4) We are not an “affirming” church, but we are an “accepting” church – in that anyone can walk through those doors and we will do our best to love them and introduce them to the love, grace, mercy, and transforming power of God.
- 5) We are to engage the culture with authenticity and the hope of the gospel.
- i. Tim Keller is helpful here.³
- 1) He maintains that REAL issue is not whether or not people agree with or even like the teaching of the Bible.
 - 2) The core issue, or question is: “Is Jesus God and did He rise from the dead?”
 - 3) That is issue on which everything else hangs. And again, that goes back to biblical theology and doctrine.

III. CONCLUSION

A. What we believe determines our behavior.

1. It is when the truth of the gospel wells up in our heart and we see the stark reality of our unfaithfulness, our degradation, our pride, our lust, our anger, and our fear – and then we catch a glimpse of the fact that, even in our desperate condition that we are loved, and accepted, and

³ *The Reason For God: 202.*

forgiven – not by what we have done, but by what Jesus Christ has done.

2. “Run John run the law commands
but gives me neither feet nor hands
Far better news the gospel brings
it bids me fly and gives me wings” --John Bunyan (*Pilgrim’s Progress*)
3. An excellent argument for studying theology is found in Frank Sheed’s book, *Theology and Sanity...*

“A virtuous man may be ignorant, but ignorance is not a virtue. It would be a strange God who could be loved better by being known less. Love of God is not the same thing as knowledge of God; love of God is immeasurably more important than knowledge of God; but if a man loves God knowing a little about Him, he should love God more from knowing more about Him: for every new thing known about God is a new reason for loving Him.”⁴
4. To connect belief and behavior always begins with God interrupting our lives as we begin to see that God is alive and active. Yet, like Paul’s admonishment to Timothy – to know more about God will certainly help us to love God more.

⁴ F. J. Sheed. *Theology And Sanity*, Sheed & Ward 1946: 9-10.

Discussion Questions:

Good doctrine and good theology in a gospel-centered context, makes Jesus the hero of every text whether it is in the OT or the NT (without getting too allegorical).

1. How does the text reveal Jesus? (i.e., if the OT text is about Nehemiah we would ask, "How does Neh show us, or point to, Jesus?")
2. What is the doctrinal burden of the text? (Not just what we are to do (i.e., the imperative/s), but where is the indicative (i.e., what Christ has done, or, in the OT, where is the promise of the gospel?)
3. What's the reason this text was written?
4. Put on gospel glasses — What is this text telling me/us about God, the fallen condition of humankind, and the gospel?

Pick a random passage in 1 Timothy and work through the four questions above to unpack what it is saying.