

Cornerstone Christian Fellowship
Wednesday Night Bible Study
6:30pm, Oct 7th- Nov. 18th (7 weeks)

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1Timothy
Supporting the Pillar that Supports the Truth (3:15)

Week 1. Chapter 1: Marks of True Church Teachers

Introduction:

Many people have had bad church experiences. Many of them revolve around teaching and teachers. What have your experiences been? It begs the question: How do we know true church teachers from false ones?

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| A. | Their Authority is from God. | (1:1-3, 1:18-20) |
| B. | Their Focus is on Teaching. | (1:3) |
| C. | Their Goal is Love. | (4-6) |
| D. | Their Gospel has Two Parts: <i>Law and Grace</i> . | (7-11) |
| E. | Their Gospel is Personal | (12-17) |

Applications:

1. For teachers and would-be teachers: How does this list challenge you? Consider the list again: where are you strongest? Where are you weakest?
2. For learners: Many people today seem to seek out entertaining teachers. How does this list challenge that? If you do not have godly teachers as this list describes, what do you think your response should be? What are you looking for in a teacher/preacher?
3. The church is the pillar that supports the truth. How can you support the church this week through what we have talked about today?

Week 2. Chapter 2: *Honoring Creational Differences in Public Worship*

Introduction:

Many people have trouble with this chapter. At first glance it certainly does seem offensive and odd. How have you seen what is said here used to hurt someone? Which part/point is the hardest for you? Which part is the most exciting or helpful?

- A. Prayer is for Every Kind of Person. (2:1-7)
- B. Public Prayer is to lead by (peaceable) men. (2:8)
- C. Public Worship is to be received by (modest) women. (2:9-15)

Excurses: How The New Roman Woman (ancient feminism) informs this passage.

Applications:

1. We have been told to pray for every kind of person without distinction. What kind of person do you tend to exclude? (i.e. Politicians, Muslims, Other Races?)
2. How do we determine which part (if any) of this passage is culturally conditioned and which part (if any) is universally continually binding? See John Stott's helpful section in TBST: "The Message of 1Timothy and Titus," pg. 74-81 (class handout).
3. Because of time and the pressing need to deal with the issue of men and women in worship, we did not deal very much with the Arminian/Calvinism question. If you want to dig further into this question, I recommend J.I. Packer's *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*.
4. It seems men tend to go overly passive or overly aggressive when it comes to leading. If you are man, which imbalance do you tend toward? If you are a woman, which imbalance do you find hardest to respect?
5. How is the command for women to learn encouraging to you (if you are a women)? How does Paul's limit on women teaching in public worship conflict with culture today? In what other areas or times might a woman teach? What do you think Paul is eager to defend and protect in this passage? Does your heart align with that?
6. The church is the pillar that supports the truth. What is one way you can support the church this week through what we have talked about today?

Week 3. Chapter 3: *Leadership as Example*

Introduction:

Many see the problems in organized church and wonder if they can be resolved by making it an unorganized church. Have you ever wanted to re-imagine church this way? Have you seen others do it? What was the result? Chapter 3 is a strong argument for maintaining several of the forms we are accustomed to – such as church leadership, and confessions. But at the same time, it will challenge how we often think about them.

- A. Necessary Character and Relationships for *Elders* 3:1-7 (see Acts 14:23)
 - B. Necessary Character and Relationships for *Deacons*. 3:8-13 (see Acts 6)
- Excurses: What about women as elders or deacons? (3:11 in context)*
- C. The Church Supports the Truth (Purpose of Book) 3:14-16

Applications:

1. This passage implies that there is such a thing as church office (elder and deacon), but it does not give us an exact description of what each office does. Where can we go to fill out our understanding of these offices? (Hint: Analogy of Faith/Place of History)
2. Today we see many celebrity pastors and leaders. We have also seen many of these fall into sin (of various kinds). How does *success* test our character? We also see pastors of small and struggling churches give in to patterns of control and manipulation. How does *stress* test our character? Why is it important for our leaders to be “above reproach?”
3. How does taking seriously these lists for leadership change the way the church tends to look for new pastors and elders? How would it change the health of our churches to focus in on character and relationship rather than program and organizational skill?
4. Pick one of the character traits to work on over the next four weeks. Share with the class which one you chose. Do this if you are a teacher or not – for these are all really just *Christian* traits.
5. How do you tend to think about creeds and confessions? How does Paul demonstrate the goodness of them here? What are your church’s creeds and statements of faith? In what tradition do you find home?
6. The church is the pillar that supports the truth. How can you support the church this week through what we have talked about today?

Week 4. Chapter 4: *No One Said This Would Be Easy*

Introduction:

In this passage Paul gives specific directions to the young pastor. He warns him of troubles ahead and offers practical help for how to lead through rough waters. This offers lay people insight into the struggles of their own pastors as well as how to evaluate his leadership without getting personal.

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| A. | Defend The Goodness of the World | (4:1-6) |
| B. | Discipline Your Body, Mind, and Soul. | (4:7-10) |
| C. | Take Pains into Progress. | (4:11-16) |

Applications:

1. How does it help you to know that this is not the first generation to have people fall away from the faith? How does Paul's description here help you to pray for those who do fall away? (*Hint: the issue is not just intellectual*)
2. Do you practice prayer before eating? Why? When might you pray before enjoyments of other kinds?
3. God made us as whole people. Thus, if you are not disciplined in your body, you have a character problem. How might you discipline yourself for the sake of godliness, both body and soul?
4. Is your pastor doing what is described here for Timothy? If so, how might you show appreciation for him?
5. The church is the pillar that supports the truth. How can you support the church this week through what we have talked about today?

Week 5. Chapter 5-6:2: *Honoring Different Relationships in the Church*

Introduction:

How do we navigate all these complicated situations that continually pop up in the church? How do you know when it is time to give to the needy? What do we do if one of our elders falls into unrepentant sin? In this passage, Paul runs the gamut.

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| A. | Treat Church as Family | (5:1-2) |
| B. | Honor Widows (without alienating the family or supporting evil.) | (5:3-16) |
| C. | Honor Elders (without suspicion, favoritism or haste) | (5:17-25) |
| D. | Honor Masters (gospel priorities) | (6:1-2) |

Applications:

1. We live in a time when fighting for our rights has risen to fever pitch. For Christians, what is even more important than individual rights? How does Jesus model this way?
2. Most churches have a mercy/deacons fund. How does your church go about giving out money and meeting needs? How have you seen this work well? When have you seen it go badly? Why is it important to consider the whole situation before giving?
3. Sometimes Paul sounds like he does not like women, widows or marriage. Other times he sounds favorable. Why is it important to understand when he is speaking situationally and when he is speaking on principle? (NOTE: This issue applies to all of Paul's letters)
5. Why is it important to not install someone as an elder too quickly?
6. The church is the pillar that supports the truth. How can you support the church this week through what we have talked about today?

Week 6. Chapter 6:3-19: *Chasing The Almighty Dollar?*

Introduction:

The question of money is always with us. We need it but sometimes we despise it. Some (prosperity) preachers tell us that if we believe, we will be given much more of it. Others say we have to give it all away. What is the truly Christian attitude and action?

- A. False Teachers are Greedy (6:3-5)
- B. True Teachers are Content (6:6-8)
- C. Pursuing Money is Dangerous (6:9-11)
- D. Pursuing Virtue is Valuable (6:12-16)
- E. Riches: In this Life and the Next. (6:17-19)

Application:

1. Is Money bad? If not, what does Mark 10:17-27 mean? (Read it and explain to the class)
2. How do we know if money is becoming an idol in our lives? How do we keep that from happening?
3. In 6:11 we are told to flee greed but pursue virtue. Pick one on the list and work on it for the month. (Note: This is not virtue for *salvation*, it is virtue for *sanctification*)
4. What is the difference between what many call the “good life” and what Paul calls “life indeed?”
5. Are you ready for the retirement that comes at death?
6. The church is the pillar that supports the truth. How can you support the church this week through what we have talked about today?

Week 7: Chapter 6:20-21 Conclusion: *Guarding What Has Been Entrusted to Us.*

Application and Review:

1. What has been the most challenging to you in this class/book? What has been the most encouraging?
2. The church is hard for many people today (for various reasons). Why is it sometimes hard for you? How has Paul's description and defense of it encouraged you to support the church despite the difficulties?
3. In our passage today, Timothy has been told to guard what has been entrusted to him. What do you think have been entrusted to us? How do we go about it today?
4. The end of the book ends with "grace." Why is grace essential for the church? (Hint: Think about its formation, maintenance, and its mission)
5. The church is the pillar that supports the truth. How can you support the church this year through what we have talked about over the last 7 weeks?