

Right Doctrine: Does It Really Matter?

Word

Scripture Reference

1 Timothy 1:3-11

Discussion Questions

1. Who has been a source of encouragement to you recently? Share with the group how that person has encouraged you.
2. It has been said, “Doctrine divides, but love unites.” However, this is not true. For example, God loves every single person in the world, but not everyone is united with God. What unites people is when they hear, understand and believe the gospel of God. Love may be the foundation of unity, but it is belief that results in it. Therefore the statement, “Doctrine divides, but belief unites” is more correct. In order for us to be united as a community of believers, we should believe in the same doctrine. This is the apostle Paul’s message to his disciple, Timothy. Read 1 Timothy 1:3-11. Discuss the main reason why Paul wanted Timothy to stay in Ephesus while he moved on to Macedonia (v. 3-4). What causes disputes rather than godly edification in the church?
3. What was the purpose of the command Paul pressed Timothy to carry out (v. 5)? Discuss how, as a Christian, you can love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.
4. Paul pastored the Ephesus church for three years and had been reminding the church to be careful of false teachers who would destroy the church. In what aspect had some Ephesian believers been misguided (v. 6)? How did Paul evaluate those who aspired to be teachers of the law (v. 7)? How can you recognize modern-day false teachers? What should you do in order to protect yourself from being deceived by false teachers?

5. Paul tasked Timothy to confront the false teachers from outside and inside the church. He wanted Timothy to protect the church. The false teachers at Ephesus constructed speculative methods that distracted the believers from the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. Describe the purpose of God’s Laws, which apparently the false teachers did not understand, yet wanted to teach. Who are the lawbreakers, rebels, the ungodly and sinful mentioned in verses 9-10? What did God entrust to Paul to protect the believers from this problem (v. 11)? What task did God entrust to you to protect yourself and the people in your circle of influence from false doctrines?

Walk

The Ephesus church should have been a strong church being pastored and disciplined by the apostle Paul himself. And yet, the church was not spared from being attacked by false teachers who twisted the doctrines and spoke with authority in their use of the Word of God, thereby endangering the spirituality and fellowship in the church. If it could happen in Ephesus, it can happen in any church. What kind of doctrines stimulates controversy in the church today? How should you ascertain what is and isn’t sound doctrine? What measures can you take to be certain that your intentions are from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith?

Worship & Prayer

Father, thank You because Your Word stays unchanged and unaffected by time, culture, or man’s opinion, and we can always come back to it to find the Truth. Give me wisdom, Lord, to understand it as You intended. Give me also a heart that is receptive to teaching and correction, and keep me from twisting Your Word to suit my selfish motives. I pray to find a person or a small group in the church with whom I can study the Bible safely and correctly, where we can keep each other accountable. I pray also for the spiritual leaders of my church. Guide them Lord, so they may teach the right doctrine. May Your Word continue to change lives, especially mine. In Jesus’ name. Amen.