

Introduction:

In 1 Timothy 4:6-16, Paul exhorts his young protege to faithfulness in pastoral ministry. These two paragraphs serve as a compass for ministers and churches seeking to be a clear witness to an onlooking world

Questions:

1. Paul exhorts Timothy to teach good doctrine and goes so far as encouraging him to “command” these things.

–Discuss with your group how they may have previously viewed “doctrine.” Does it have a positive or negative connotation? If negative, why?

–Doctrine, even good doctrine, can be wielded unwisely or harshly. How can a Christian or church avoid this bad use of good doctrine?

–It’s been said that good theology (the study of God) leads to good doxology (the worship of God). Theology that does not lead to doxology leads to dead orthodoxy. Conversely, doxology that is not informed by right theology inevitably results in all sorts of error. Discuss this relationship between our right understating of God and our ability to worship him rightly.

2. Paul warns Timothy to avoid the silly myths of the Ephesian culture. While the exact nature of these silly myths is not certain, we can be sure that whatever they were, they distracted and diverted people from understanding clear biblical truth.

–What are some of the silly myths that we / our culture are vulnerable to?

–Silly myths are often deeply ingrained in our cultural or family psyche. What means of grace does God give to help us identify our blindspots and vulnerabilities?

3. Paul encourages Timothy that our hope is in a living God who is the Savior of all people. Some have wrongly interpreted this text to teach universalism—the believe that eventually all people are saved, whether or not they repent and believe.

–What evidence can we point to in the Bible that disproves a universalistic view of this passage?

–Rightly understood, this text reminds us that God can and does save all types and kinds of people. Take some time to be encouraged as a group by this great

truth and pray for loved ones and neighbors who seem very far from God but are not beyond his reach.