

Small Group Discussion + Leader Guide

Sunday - October 4, 2026

Preached By: Matt Stewart

“Pillar of Truth”

Message #8

“Set In Order: God’s Design for His Church” 1 Timothy Series

1 Timothy 3:14-16

Homiletical Bridge:

CIT: Paul exhorted Timothy to combat false teaching for the protection of the church

THESIS: We must combat false teaching for the protection of the church.

PROPOSITION: FC must combat the false teaching for the protection of the church

PROBING QUESTION: How do we combat false teaching for the protection of the church?

Through the...

- 1-Prediction of Apostasy v1-3
- 2-Provision of Truth v4-6
- 3-Practice of Godliness v7-8
- 4-Perseverance of Hope v9-10

OVERVIEW

This week's sermon examined how the church combats false teaching through four movements in Paul's letter to Timothy: the prediction of apostasy, the provision of truth, the practice of godliness, and the perseverance of hope. As a group, use this guide to move from hearing the Word to applying it in your daily lives and in your homes.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The Holy Spirit expressly warns us that apostasy will occur, and understanding this prepares us to recognize and respond to false teaching rather than be caught off guard by it.
- Everything God created is good and is to be received with thanksgiving. False teaching often adds rules and restrictions that God never intended, leading people into a bondage He never designed.
- Combating false teaching is not only the pastor's responsibility in the pulpit. It is the responsibility of every parent and grandparent in the home. We cannot teach what we do not know.
- Pursuing godliness is an active discipline, not a passive hope. Just as an athlete trains with intention, believers are called to train themselves toward holiness through Scripture, prayer, obedience, and community.
- Our hope is anchored in the living God, not in gifted leaders or strong institutions. Men will disappoint us. Christ alone is the firm foundation for our faith.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening

1. When you hear the phrase "false teaching," what comes to mind first? Has your understanding of what false teaching looks like changed over time?

Section 1: Prediction of Apostasy (1 Timothy 4:1-3)

2. Paul describes those who depart from the faith as people who were present in the community of believers but whose hearts were never truly changed. How does the Parable of the Sower help you understand this reality? Does it concern you, encourage you, or both?

3. The sermon pointed out that not every doctrinal error is consciously demonic, but that sincere errors and demonic deception can lead to the same destination: people being led away from truth. How does that distinction shape the way you engage someone who holds a mistaken belief?
4. The false teachers in Ephesus were an early form of Gnosticism, teaching that spiritual advancement required strict denial of physical goods like food and marriage. Where do you see similar thinking in today's culture or even in church culture?

Section 2: Provision of Truth (1 Timothy 4:4-6)

5. The sermon emphasized that the best defense against false teaching is knowing what God's Word actually says. How confident are you right now in your ability to recognize false teaching when you encounter it? What would help you grow in that area?
6. Deuteronomy 6:5-7 calls parents to teach God's commands diligently to their children throughout the rhythms of daily life. What does that look like practically in your home? What is one barrier that makes this harder than it should be?
7. The sermon mentioned that sometimes pastors are accused of being harsh when they speak against cultural trends, but that silence in the face of false teaching puts a leader at odds with God's Word. How do you think a church should balance speaking truth boldly with speaking it in love?

Section 3: Practice of Godliness (1 Timothy 4:7-8)

8. Paul uses athletic training as a metaphor for pursuing godliness. What does your current "training regimen" look like spiritually? Are there areas where you have gone passive that need to become intentional again?
9. The sermon used the illustration of a healthy lawn crowding out weeds. In your own life, what spiritual disciplines have you found most effective at leaving less room for old habits or false ideas to take root?

10. Ephesians 4:22-24 describes the Christian life as putting off the old self and putting on the new self. What is one specific thing you are currently in the process of putting off, and what are you putting on in its place?

Section 4: Perseverance of Hope (1 Timothy 4:9-10)

11. The sermon gave a direct caution: do not place your faith in pastors or church leaders because they will disappoint you. Have you ever experienced a season where your faith was shaken because of a person rather than rooted in Christ? What did you learn from that?
12. The concept of common grace teaches that God extends goodness to all people, believers and unbelievers alike. How does understanding common grace shape the way you view unbelievers in your life and your motivation to share the gospel with them?
13. Second Peter 3:9 reminds us that God's patience is an opportunity for repentance. How does that truth motivate you personally in your relationships with people who do not yet know Christ?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Choose one or more of the following to put into practice before your group meets again.

For Individuals

- Identify one area of your life where you may have accepted a cultural assumption without testing it against Scripture. Bring it to God in prayer and look for what His Word says about it.
- Begin or recommit to a daily Bible reading habit. Even fifteen minutes a day of consistent time in the Word builds the foundation needed to recognize false teaching.

For Parents and Grandparents

- Start or restart a regular time of family worship or devotions in your home this week. It does not need to be elaborate. Read a passage together, discuss one question it raises, and pray.
- Have an honest conversation with your children or grandchildren about something they are hearing in culture that conflicts with what Scripture teaches. Model how to think through it biblically.

For the Group

- As a group, identify one false teaching or cultural belief that is actively influencing your community or the people you love. Spend time together finding what Scripture says about it and how you would respond if someone brought it up.
- Pray together for someone in each of your lives who has walked away from the faith or who has never trusted Christ. Commit to being intentional about the gospel in those relationships.

CLOSING REFLECTION

Paul's charge to Timothy was not simply to avoid false teaching but to actively combat it through truth, godliness, and hope. The same charge belongs to every believer. As you close your time together, reflect on this question individually before praying as a group:

Am I simply professing Christianity, or is there fruit in my life that demonstrates a changed heart?

Close in prayer, *asking God for discernment to recognize false teaching, courage to speak truth, discipline to train in godliness, and hope firmly anchored in the living God rather than in anything or anyone else.*