

Small Group Guide: The Pattern of Sound Doctrine

Based on Titus 1-2

Opening Prayer

Begin by asking God to help your group understand how to faithfully receive, live out, and pass down His Word to others.

Ice Breaker

Who is someone in your life (parent, mentor, teacher, pastor) who faithfully passed down wisdom or faith to you? What made their influence so impactful?

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **The Chain of Transmission:** God's Word has been faithfully passed down from Moses → Prophets → Christ → Apostles → Church leaders → us. We are part of this ongoing chain.
2. **The Core Challenge:** Our lives are either adorning (beautifying) God's Word or dishonoring it to a watching world. There is no neutral position.
3. **Qualified Leadership Matters:** Elders must be people in whom the Word has already taken shape—their character and household demonstrate the transformative power of Scripture.
4. **The Dual Threat:** False teachers have right words but wrong works. Their confession doesn't match their conduct, making them "worthless for any good deed" (Titus 1:16).
5. **Every Person's Role:** From older men to younger women, from young men to slaves—every member of the community either adorns or dishonors the doctrine through their daily conduct.
6. **Grace is Training Us:** The same grace that saves us also instructs and disciplines us to live godly lives while we await Christ's return.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. Read Titus 1:5-9. What qualities does Paul list for elders? Why do you think Paul emphasizes both the elder's household and their ability to teach?
2. In Titus 1:10-16, Paul describes false teachers who "profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him." What are the characteristics of these false teachers? Why is their influence so dangerous?
3. Read Titus 2:1-10. How does Paul's instruction differ for older men, older women, younger women, younger men, and slaves? What is the common thread running through all these instructions?

Going Deeper

4. The sermon stated: "You cannot hand down what hasn't first formed you." What does this mean? How does this principle apply to parenting, mentoring, or discipleship?
5. Paul says the elder must "hold fast the faithful word" so he can both "exhort in sound doctrine AND refute those who contradict" (Titus 1:9). Why are both functions necessary? Which one does the modern church tend to emphasize or neglect?
6. Titus 2:5 and 2:10 both give a reason for godly conduct: "so that the word of God will not be dishonored" and "so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior." How does our behavior affect how others perceive the gospel?

Personal Reflection

7. Think about the opening statement: "Your life is either adorning the Word of God or dishonoring it." Does this statement make you uncomfortable? Why or why not? How does it challenge you?
8. In what specific area of your life (marriage, parenting, work, friendships, church relationships) do you most need the Word to "take shape" and transform your conduct?
9. Who are you currently passing the faith down to? If no one, who might you invest in (children, younger believers, neighbors, coworkers)?

Practical Applications

This Week:

- **Examine the alignment:** Make a list of what you say you believe about God, the gospel, and Christian living. Then honestly assess whether your daily actions align with those beliefs. Confess any gaps to God and ask for His grace to transform you.
- **Identify your link in the chain:** Who has faithfully passed the Word to you? Thank them. Who are you passing it to? If no one, pray about one person you could begin investing in spiritually.

This Month:

- **Study the qualifications:** Whether you're in leadership or not, study the elder qualifications in Titus 1:6-9. Ask God to form these qualities in your life over time.
- **Guard against false teaching:** Evaluate what voices you're listening to (podcasts, books, social media, teachers). Do they demonstrate both sound doctrine AND godly conduct?
- **Adorn the doctrine:** Identify one relationship where you have the opportunity to "make the teaching beautiful" —and intentionally live out the gospel in that relationship.

Closing Reflection

Read together Titus 2:13-14: *"Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds."*

Reflect: We live between two appearances—the appearance of God's grace in the gospel, and the appearing of Christ's glory at His return. In the in-between, we have a job to do: to be a people zealous for good deeds that adorn the gospel.

Closing Prayer

Pray for:

- Hearts that are shaped by God's Word, not just informed by it
- Wisdom to identify and resist false teaching
- Grace to live lives that adorn the gospel in every relationship
- Faithfulness to pass down the Word to the next generation
- The return of Christ and the completion of God's redemptive plan