

1 Timothy 1:3–7 Pt 2

MPS: Sound doctrine is vital because it produces love in the family of God.

INTRO:

- We started a new series last week
- The family of God flourishes under His good authority and in the hope of Christ.
- The whole letter was read – what a blessing! We got to experience something of the early church by listening like they did, the whole letter being read
- If you love the Word of God, then I know you really loved that. If you didn't, I hope you one day will.

OPEN:

- I asked a simple question to a counselor teaching us a certain mode of counseling and just mentioned 'doctrine' and he went ballistic.
- People often flinch at the word doctrine (or theology)
 - **They think doctrine means conflict.**
They have watched Christians use "sound doctrine" as a weapon. The word now sounds like a fight waiting to happen.
 - **They think doctrine is for professionals.**
Pastors, professors, and "theology people" handle that. Ordinary believers just need Jesus. So the word feels like it belongs to someone else.
 - **They have been wounded by harsh teachers.**
Someone was doctrinally precise and personally cruel. The teaching may have been true, but the tone taught them that doctrine is cold.
 - **They think doctrine kills life with God.**
Experience feels alive. Doctrine feels like it will turn a relationship into a system. Lewis is answering this one.
 - **They think love and doctrine are rivals.**
"Just love God and love people." Doctrine feels like it will make them less kind, less inclusive, less relational.

Sound doctrine is vital because it produces love in the family of God.

- Paul is not asking Ephesus to become a seminary. He is asking the family of God to stick to the teaching he gave them and the result is to love God and others – but without sound doctrine there will be wonky motives to loving God and loving others.
- Paul wants sound doctrine, so the family of God stays healthy.
- I don't want you to be ashamed to use the biblical word doctrine, and so I want you to know it is and why it matters.

1. What is doctrine: and why it matters.

Vs 3 *As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus* (The apostle Paul is telling his protégé Timothy to stay at this messed up church in Ephesus – Paul is leaving Ephesus with his best!) *so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine,* (Some translations [NIV, CSB] say ‘false doctrines’)

- What is a doctrine? At the core, it is a teaching.
- A doctrine is what the whole Bible teaches us today about some particular topic.

1 Timothy 3:14–15 (ESV) *14 I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, 15 if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.*

- What is holding up the church? The truth. Doctrine is the teaching of truth.
- But what doctrine is Paul speaking of here?

1 Timothy 6:3 (ESV) *3 If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness,*

- Later in this chapter, Paul says the law is used rightly when it serves the gospel entrusted to him (vv. 8–11), and then he lands on this: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (v. 15).
- Why does doctrine matter? Because this is not trivia. If the church loses Jesus and the gospel, it does not merely lose a Jeopardy category. It loses real love in the family of God.
- The gospel is not just for salvation, its for your spiritual growth – faith and repentance is required to be saved and its required to mature in your faith.

Examples:

- a. **Justification** — God declares the guilty righteous (approved) in Christ. You are no longer guilty of being a sinner. The verdict is in. So you do not have to prove yourself to God or impress anyone. You already have the approval of the One who matters.
- Romans 5:1 — “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God...”
 - Romans 8:1 — “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

- b. **Sanctification** — God is not only declaring you approved; He is actually making you new. You are not stuck. Sin is no longer your master. Growth is slow and often messy, but it is real. In the household of God this means we do not pretend we are finished, and we do not give up on one another. The gospel says change is possible because God is at work in us.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3 — “For this is the will of God, your sanctification...”
- c. **Glorification** — God will finish what He started.
- This body, this struggle, this partial holiness is not the last chapter. Christ will raise you, make you like Himself, and wipe the last tear. That frees you from living as if this week, is ultimate. This builds endurance.
- Romans 8:30 — “...those whom he justified he also glorified.”
 - Philippians 3:20–21 — “...we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body...”
 - Romans 8:18 — “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”

Justification says, You are accepted.

Sanctification says, You are being changed.

Glorification says, You will be made whole.

- That is why doctrine is not extra. It is how the gospel gets into your life.
- Gospel fluency academy module starts Oct 5

There is a way CS Lewis discusses doctrine that may be helpful to us.

- There is a difference between looking at the ocean and looking at a map of the ocean.
- Standing on the beach feels more real. The map is only paper. In Mere Christianity, C. S. Lewis says that is how some people feel about doctrine. Meeting the living God— hearing His Word, being confronted by Him—feels alive. Doctrine can feel dry.
- But Lewis says two things about the map.
 - First, it was not made up. It was drawn from thousands of people who actually sailed the ocean. Your glimpse of God from the shore is real, but it is only one glimpse. Sound doctrine gathers what God has revealed in His Word, and what His people have faithfully seen there across the centuries.
 - Second, if you only want to walk on the beach, you may never need the map – BUT If you ever want go deeper, you cannot leave the map behind or you will end up lost.

- So the ocean is God Himself and the living reality of His Word. The map is doctrine. We do not love the map more than the ocean. But the family of God will not cross that ocean safely without the map God has given us.
- The responsibility of elders guarding sound doctrine (add some color either by giving a process of how that works, or our education, or something here)
- Elders (pastors) carry the responsibility of guarding the doctrine of the church.

Acts 20:28–31 *Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert...*

Titus 1:9 *He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.*

2. False teaching leads to speculation

Vs 4 *nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith.*

Vs 6-7 *Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, 7 desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.*

- Certain Persons could be **1 Timothy 1:20 (ESV) 20** *among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.*
- But these certain persons wandered away – they are confident, persuasive and claim to be teachers.
- Vain discussion... empty talk – like a merry go round or a rocking horse.
- But what does it lead to? Paul uses the word speculation.
- The English word is probably a little soft – it *sounds* more like “guessing” or “a theory.”
- Paul means something sharper. The Gk word is *ekzētēseis*. (It is rare—this is its only New Testament use) It comes from *zēteō*, “to seek or search,” with a prefix that intensifies it: a searching out.

- So the idea is not honest questions. It is a kind of searching that never lands. They are talking about deep things that never have an end or application.
- Speculation hurts us because it keeps us busy with things that do not change us.
- Some of it even has a sliver of truth. That is what makes it dangerous. It feels like we are going deeper, (we gotta figure out who the anti-christ is and make charts to date the rapture) when we are only going sideways. A wild goose chase can still look like a hunt. A rabbit hole can still feel like study. (we gotta get to the bottom of who these Nephilim are... OR It's imperative we find out who really shot Charlie Kirk)
- Meanwhile the doctrine that actually saves and teaches us to love gets left on the shore.
- This kind of speculation is 'Rearranging the furniture on the Titanic.'
- Speculation becomes a diversion. A spiritual detour. Not always because it is loud and heretical, but because it is endless. It occupies the mind so that you never have to face Jesus, never have to repent, never have to love the person in the next seat.
- Speculation is anything that keeps the church from being saturated in this glorious gospel.
- That doesn't mean we don't do deep dives into doctrines, especially if you are a pastor/elder, you MUST study, diligently study, so that you can understand all the doctrines you've been asked to guard.
- But here, Paul is telling Timothy, do not leave the gospel and don't allow others to come in to lead the church away from the gospel

The problem in Ephesus.

- In Ephesus the problem was not the Old Testament. It was people treating the Law, genealogies, and extra Jewish lore as a hidden key.
- That still happens today. A teacher brings in Hebrew roots, feast-days, sacred names, bloodlines, or mystical readings of Torah as if the church has been missing the real thing. The appeal is Raiders of the Lost Ark: we found the chest no one else found. If you learn this calendar, this pronunciation, this code, this genealogy—then you will finally be spiritual.
- Notice the bait. **It promises transformation through discovery.** Paul says real change comes through the gospel received by faith. **The "ark story" makes you feel like an**

insider. Sound doctrine makes clear you a sinner saved by Christ and a brother or sister in the household.

- The Old Testament is Christian Scripture. Jesus did not cancel Moses; He fulfilled him. The danger is a mystical add-on that treats Judaism like buried treasure and the gospel like the shallow version. That is not going deeper into the Word. That is leaving the map for a rumor of a secret map.
- If any teaching needs a special code to make you new, it is not the gospel. The gospel is not hidden in the sand. It is Christ Jesus, come into the world to save sinners.

There are other examples today to be careful of as well. All of which, **promises transformation through discovery.**

- Secondary hills treated as the whole faith
A view of the end times, spiritual gifts, polemics, schooling choices, food, or extra-biblical rules can be discussed but they become speculation when they start defining who is in the family and crowd out Jesus, repentance, and love.
- Not every extra conversation is false teaching. It becomes a problem when the side trail becomes the road—and the family never arrives at Christ.

3. True teaching produces love

***Vs 5** The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.*

- Sound doctrine (gospel doctrine) has a destination: a family that actually loves God and others. (Gospel culture)
- ‘Loving God and loving others’ is where we want to go, but if we are not rooted in truth, we may miss loving others or even miss the very god we say we want to love (allude to Lewis’ beach view of God).

Love – “Sacrificing for the sake of another without expecting anything in return.”

- And when you have received HIS love despite being a sinner, you can now love other sinners.
- You can’t give away what you’ve never had.
- Love is not niceness, and it is not vague warmth. It is the household of God treating one another as fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters. False teaching makes us suspicious

and proud. True teaching makes us responsible for each other. If the doctrine you prize never moves you toward people, you have not arrived at the aim of real love yet.

- “Just love God and love people” is the right destination. It is the wrong engine. Without the gospel making these three things true of you, love becomes a performance.
 - **The gospel makes a pure heart** because it tells you the verdict is already in. You are justified. A heart that is still proving itself cannot love; it can only manage an image.
 - **The gospel gives a good conscience** because the blood of Jesus actually deals with guilt. You don’t have to hide through spiritual fog. You feel free to stand before God JUST AS YOU ARE, and then look your brother in the eye.
 - **The gospel makes a sincere faith** because you are no longer wearing religion as a costume. You are clinging to Christ, not to being impressive. Hypocrisy can mimic care. Only sincere faith can spend itself on someone else.
- So love issues from those three. Keep the gospel primary, and they grow. Leave the gospel behind, and “love God and love others” becomes another way to stay busy without being changed.

Conclusion

In the spring of 1846, nearly ninety people left Illinois for California. Families. Children. Wagons. They were called the Donner Party, after two brothers who helped lead them west. For a while they stayed on the known trail. Then, at Fort Bridger, a man named Lansford Hastings offered them something better.

He had a cutoff. A discovery. Faster than the old road. Smarter. The kind of route you take if you do not want to travel with everyone else. There was a sliver of promise in it. There was land out there. What Hastings had not done was prove the trail with a wagon train like theirs. They took it.

The shortcut was not short. They lost weeks cutting a path through mountains and dragging wagons across the Salt Lake desert. Oxen died. Strength drained away. By the time they reached the Sierra Nevada it was late October, and the snow came down like a door slamming shut. They were trapped near a lake that now bears their name.

Winter did not lift. Food ran out. People began to die. In that white prison some of the living, in order to stay alive, ate those who had already died. A few snowshoed out for help. Rescue parties finally came in 1847. Of nearly ninety who had started, fewer than fifty walked out.

A girl who survived, Virginia Reed, later wrote the sentence the whole story had already taught them: “Never take no cutoffs and hurry along as fast as you can.”

That is what speculation does. It sells a better route. It can even carry a sliver of truth. Then it takes a family off the map and into a wilderness they cannot finish. Paul told Timothy to stop a different teaching because the household of God cannot afford a trail that never brings them home. The aim of the charge is not a new discovery. It is love—from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.

Stay with the gospel. That is the road that actually gets the family through.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUPS:

1. Where are you most tempted to take a “cutoff”—a teaching, controversy, or rabbit hole that feels deep but keeps you from the gospel? What would it look like to return to the known trail this week?

2. Which of the three does the gospel most need to form in you right now—a pure heart, a good conscience, or a sincere faith—and how would that change the way you love someone in this family at GB?