

D Group Lesson: Devoted to Truth

Series: The DNA of a Healthy Church #1

Text: 1 Timothy 1:1–11

Big Idea: A healthy church is devoted to biblical truth and committed to sharing that truth in love.

Goal: Help the group recognize false teaching and distractions, grow in their love for Scripture, and live out truth with love.

Suggested length: 45–60 minutes

HOOK — “Which Way Should I Go?”

Opening Question

Start by saying:

“One of the big questions people are asking today is, ‘Which way should I go?’ We face decisions about relationships, parenting, marriage, finances, work, sexuality, aging parents, and countless other things. The problem is that we live in a world where we're surrounded by information—but information isn't necessarily truth.”

Then ask:

Discussion

1. **When you have an important decision to make, where do you normally go for guidance?**
 - Friends?
 - Family?
 - Google?
 - Social media?
 - Your own experience?
 - Scripture?
 - Prayer?
2. **Why is it sometimes difficult to know what is actually true?**

3. Think about something you've heard recently that turned out to be **misinformation or only partly true**. What made it believable at first?

Transition

“The challenge isn't simply that there is false information in the world. The challenge is that false ideas can influence the way we think—and eventually the way we live. That's exactly what Paul was concerned about when he wrote to Timothy.”

LOOK — What Does the Bible Say?

Read: 1 Timothy 1:1–11

Have someone read the passage aloud.

Then remind the group:

Paul is writing to Timothy because **false teaching is threatening the health of the church in Ephesus**. Paul doesn't treat this as a minor disagreement. He gives Timothy a serious responsibility: to **protect the truth and protect the church**.

1. Truth Matters

Read verses 3–4 again.

Paul tells Timothy to remain in Ephesus and instruct certain people **not to teach false doctrines**.

Ask:

Why do you think Paul takes false teaching so seriously?

Allow the group to discuss.

Then ask:

What happens when someone believes something that isn't true?

You can draw out:

- Beliefs influence decisions.
- Decisions become habits.
- Habits shape character.

- What we believe eventually affects how we live.

Key thought:

What we believe really matters because it eventually shapes how we live.

2. Not Everything Deserves Our Attention

Paul specifically mentions **myths and endless genealogies**.

The issue wasn't simply that these people were curious about things. Their arguments were producing **speculation rather than God's work, which is by faith**.

Ask:

What are some things Christians can become obsessed with that may distract us from the central message of Jesus?

Possible answers:

- End-times speculation
- Political arguments
- Church preferences
- Worship styles
- Secondary theological debates
- Social media controversies
- Personal opinions
- Who is "right" about every minor issue

Then ask:

How can something that is technically a spiritual or biblical subject still become an unhealthy distraction?

Important distinction:

Not every biblical question is equally important.

There are truths we must hold firmly, while there are other issues where faithful Christians can disagree.

Ask:

What are some truths that should never become negotiable for us?

Your sermon gives examples:

- Scripture is God's truth.
 - Jesus is the Son of God.
 - Salvation is found in Christ.
 - Heaven and hell are real.
 - Jesus died and rose again.
 - Jesus is coming again.
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3. The Goal of Truth Is Love

Read **1 Timothy 1:5** again:

“The goal of this command is love...”

This is one of the most important verses in the lesson.

Paul isn't saying:

“Make sure you win every argument.”

He's saying the goal of sound teaching is **love**.

Ask:

Why is it possible to have correct beliefs but still fail to represent Jesus well?

Then discuss:

Truth without love can become legalism.

Love without truth can become compromise.

Biblical Christianity requires both truth and love.

Discussion Question

Which is easier for you personally?

A. Speaking truth when it's uncomfortable

or

B. Showing love when you disagree with someone

Why?

The Mushroom Illustration

Sermon illustration:

Tell the group:

Imagine you're hiking in Brown County. You're exhausted and hungry, and you see some mushrooms. Another hiker says, "I think those are edible." You're tempted to eat them. Suddenly, someone else yells, "Don't eat those! They're poisonous!"

Ask:

Was that person being unloving by telling you not to eat the mushroom?

Of course not.

Then ask:

What made their warning loving?

Because they knew the truth and cared about what happened to you.

Key statement:

Sometimes the most loving thing we can do is tell someone the truth.

But then add:

How we tell the truth matters.

Ask:

What is the difference between telling someone the truth because we love them and telling someone the truth because we want to prove we're right?

That's a great place for honest discussion.

TOOK — What Will We Do With It?

Now it's time to move from understanding the passage to application.

Takeaway #1 — Know the Truth

Ask:

How are you intentionally growing in your knowledge of God's Word?

Then ask:

What is one practical change you could make this week to spend more time in Scripture?

Examples:

- Read one chapter of 1 Timothy each day.
- Use a Bible reading plan.
- Listen to Scripture during your commute.
- Memorize one verse.
- Discuss Sunday's sermon with someone.
- Replace some social media time with Bible reading.

Challenge:

Don't just consume information about the Bible. Get into the Bible.

Takeaway #2 — Test What You Hear

Ask:

“When you hear a Christian claim something online, how do you determine whether it's actually biblical?”

Discuss questions such as:

- What does Scripture actually say?
- Is the verse being taken out of context?
- Is this someone's opinion or biblical truth?
- Does the teaching point me toward Jesus?
- Is this producing faith and love?
- Have I checked the source?

Key thought:

We don't measure truth by how strongly someone says it. We measure truth by God's Word.

Takeaway #3 — Don't Major on the Minors

Ask:

What are some issues that Christians sometimes allow to divide them even though they aren't central to the gospel?

Then ask:

What happens to a church when secondary issues become more important than Jesus?

Connect this back to your previous **Better Together** series:

Healthy churches don't have to agree about everything. But they do have to agree about what matters most.

Challenge:

Ask each person:

Is there a preference or secondary issue that I need to hold more loosely so I can protect unity and love?

Takeaway #4 — Speak Truth in Love

Read 1 Timothy 1:5 one final time.

“The goal of this command is love...”

Ask:

Who is someone in your life who needs to experience both the truth and love of Christ through you?

Don't require people to share names if they don't want to.

Then ask:

What would it look like to communicate the truth to that person in a loving way?

Final Group Challenge

Give everyone a few moments of silence and ask them to complete these three statements privately:

This week...

I need to KNOW:

What truth from God's Word do I need to understand better?

I need to AVOID:

What distraction, argument, or empty debate might be pulling my attention away from Jesus?

I need to DO:

How can I demonstrate biblical truth through love this week?

Closing Thought

Close with:

“Paul's concern wasn't simply that Timothy would know the truth. His concern was that the church would remain healthy. Healthy churches are devoted to truth, careful about false teaching, resistant to distractions, and motivated by love. We don't choose between truth and love. We pursue truth **because we love God and because we love people.**”

Close in Prayer