

Small Group Discussion Guide

Perilous Waters | *Navigating the Dangerous Currents Shaping the Church*

Part 1: When Doctrine Feels Optional

BIG Idea: A faith unwilling to define what it believes eventually loses the ability to recognize what is false.

Application: Know what you believe and why. Learn to distinguish truth from error, conviction from preference, essential doctrine from legitimate disagreement—and become a lifelong student who can faithfully live and pass on the faith you have received.

Discussion Questions

Icebreaker: What's something you once had a strong opinion about that you've completely changed your mind on? Keep it fun—food, fashion, music, parenting, technology, anything!

1. Before Sunday, what came to mind when you heard the word **doctrine**? Did the message change that at all?
2. Read Ephesians 4:11–16. What connection does Paul make between Christian maturity and knowing truth?
3. What voices or influences are most likely to “toss” Christians around today?
4. Read 2 Timothy 1:13–14 and 2:1–2. What does it look like practically to guard and pass on the faith we've received?
5. Why is it important to know the difference between closed-hand truths, important convictions, and open-hand disagreements?
6. Where do Christians sometimes turn preferences into principles? How can we avoid doing that?
7. Of Sunday's six guidelines for disagreement, which one do you most need to practice?
 - (a) Know what deserves a closed hand—and what deserves an open one.
 - (b) Let Scripture form your conviction—not somebody else's outrage.
 - (c) Don't interpret the Bible alone.
 - (d) Hold your conviction as tightly as Scripture warrants.
 - (e) Never turn a preference into a principle.
 - (f) Disagree like you're talking to someone Jesus died for.
8. Pastor Brian challenged Lifehouse to become a “learning church.” What is one area of the Christian faith you'd personally like to understand better?

9. What's one step you can take this week to become a better student of the faith? Read Scripture more intentionally. Study a question you've been avoiding. Read a trusted Christian book. Ask someone a theological question. Take notes. Learn some Church history. Whatever it is—choose one next step.

Prayer Prompt: Father, thank You for the faith entrusted to us. Give us a hunger for Your Word and a desire to know You more deeply. Help us recognize truth and error, hold firmly to what matters, remain gracious where Christians disagree, and never allow our preferences to divide Your people. Make us humble, teachable, mature followers of Jesus who faithfully guard, live, and pass on the faith we have received. Amen.