

Standing Firm on God's Truth
1 Timothy 1:3-11

God's Word will change your life.

I. God's Word is law and gospel and both have their purposes so learn both and learn how to use both (1:8-11).

- A. The law is good, it has to be since it came from God, you just have to understand and use it properly (1:8).
- B. Before faith in Christ, the law points out our sinfulness and restrains us (1:9-10a).
- C. The teacher's task is to preach the law *and* the gospel in such a way that God is revealed in his glory as the Blessed One (1:10b-11).
- D. This teaching is committed to Christ's apostles and to his church, which, by extension, means it is committed to us (1:11b).

II. God's Word tells you what is true, not what might be true so embrace it (1:3-4).

- A. Paul wanted Timothy to remain in Ephesus so that he could warn the congregation against listening to and following those who misuse God's Word.
- B. The apostles' teaching (captured in the NT) is how we as believers judge and determine the truth.
- C. Anything that goes beyond the apostles' teaching is speculative at best, harmful at worst.

Application: We Baptists claim to be people of the Word, more so than anyone else, but we often are as speculative as the *DaVinci Code* crowd when it comes to our pet theories and doctrines. We malign others who don't worship or minister as we do and yet we find doctrines about the church or other things that aren't there. In the meantime, we neglect greater issues.

Illustration: Views of Baptist history, church organization, eschatology, Bible translations, that cannot be substantiated from Scripture yet we set them up on the same level as Scripture. I know people who claim they can defend certain views of church organization from Scripture and they set these views up as a test of fellowship yet they can't explain why church is important to begin with. Some can tell others how to live good, moral lives, but they can't tell someone what it truly means to be a Christian. Still others can argue for a Bible translation but can't tell an unbeliever why the Bible is truthful and reliable to begin with. All of this leads to legalism and arrogance, which has no place before the Lord. Jesus faced down some who were just like this.

Matthew 23:25-36

III. God's Word will produce holiness and love rather than uselessness and emptiness so love it (1:5-7).

- A. The purpose of the law for a believer is to produce love: for God and neighbor (1:5; cf. Matt. 22:34-40: the two greatest commandments).
- B. Those who have abandoned God's Word for other authorities don't really understand God's Word at all (1:6-7). Cf. 2 Cor. 5:10.

Illustration:

Application: When you abandon the authority of God's Word, you have abandoned God's authority. Love for God is obedience to God's commands (John 14:15); love for neighbor is... The church's commitment to God's Word is vital because only God's Word brings new life. [Note that this has enormous implications for biblical church growth.] When the church abandons the authority of God's Word, the church is no longer the "pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim 3:15) because the church's authority comes from God's Word. Instead, it becomes just another club, or an organization or support center.