

Amen, take your copy of God's word and turn with me to the New Testament book of 1 Timothy. 1 Timothy chapter one this evening. 1 Timothy chapter one, beginning in verse eight. Hear now the word. the living God. But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers, fathers, and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers. And if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. This is the word of the living God. And we say, thanks be to God. Amen. Please be seated, brothers and sisters. Let us ask the Lord's blessing on the preaching of his word. Living God, we pray now that you would indeed grant that your spirit would cause your word to come alive in us, that your food that you've given to us this Lord's Day evening from your word would be a meal upon which our souls would be nourished. Convict us, guide us, comfort us, exhort us, we ask. And we pray this in Jesus' name, amen. I want us to turn our attention this evening, yes, to this entire text, but really to one particular phrase in 1 Timothy 1, 8 through 11. Paul writes, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine. This is kind of like Paul's startling way of connecting how we live our lives to that of sound, or you may translate it healthy doctrine. I say startling because it's not necessarily what one may think when you consider doctrine. We may arrive there in our thinking eventually, but a lot of times when we think about doctrine, we think about studying the things of God's word. We think about this doctrine, the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine of salvation, creation, and on and on it goes. But how often do we consider doctrine as being about how we live? But notice what Paul does. He mentions the law of God in our passage and then lists a series of sins. which, I just have to tell you, I believe corresponds nearly one for one with the Ten Commandments or the Decalogue, the moral law of God. And he states that these and anything else contrary would go against sound doctrine.

Brothers and sisters, perhaps if we were to summarize this evening's journey in the world, we could do it this way. Doctrine is about how we live our lives. In all that we've said thus far, it's crucial that we see that the aim of Scripture is not simply knowing facts. Doctrine is not simply knowing facts for the sake of head knowledge. Systems for building our minds alone but that our lives are changed as by the Holy Spirit, the truth of God's word transforms how we live. Notice again, Paul

lays out these sins and then he says, if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine. Now, it may be worded slightly differently depending on what your English translation may be, but notice what he's doing. He's saying, if you live in these ways, it's against sound doctrine, and if you live in other ways that may be against sound doctrine, that are contrary to it. In other words, the sins that he lists are contrary to sound doctrine. Now, Paul, in this letter, is writing to his spiritual son, Timothy. with instructions on the pastoral charge, the pastoral work. We won't get into all of the chapters of 1 Timothy tonight, but he charges him in verse three to charge others to do something. And he uses the same word doctrine. Look there, verse three. As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine. Then he says in verse 4, Notice he says his focus is godly edification, which is in the faith. But then, notice he mentions that some have departed from the true doctrine and turned aside to other things. It's at this point that Paul moves into our part of 1 Timothy this evening. Let's see several things. Firstly, I want you to see the law and the gospel as doctrine. The law and the gospel as doctrine. Notice in verse eight, he says, but we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully. We know that the law is good He describes the goodness of the law and the right use of the law. Now, it shouldn't surprise us so much if we're familiar with what Paul has written elsewhere because in a variety of places, he talks about the law being good. You know, we often think about the fact that the law condemns us. The law is that revealed will of God, as it were, which demonstrates that we are sinful. But if we follow Paul's logic in multiple places, he actually says the law of God is good. Let me give you a couple of examples. Romans 7, verses 7 through 12. You can turn there or just listen as I read it. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not. On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, you shall not covet. But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law, sin was dead. I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. Therefore the law is holy. and the commandment holy and just and good. Or how about Galatians 3, verses 19 and following? What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made. And

it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not. For if there had been a law given, which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been given by the law. But the scripture has confined all under sin that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. Continues and finishes in verse 24, therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ. And we might be justified by faith. You see, Paul says in our text and elsewhere that the law is not evil or against the purposes of God. Rather, it is good and has a particular use, back to our text, its particular use is there if, if one uses it lawfully. Matthew Poole writes of this phrase, using the law lawfully. quote, and as the law has an intrinsic goodness in its nature, so it is good to men when it is used for the end to which God gave it. Well, how is the law to be used? Well, it's meant to reveal what sin is. It's meant to point people to their need for Christ. Paul then speaks to a person, verse 9, who lives in a lawless way or lives anti-law. What does that look like? To live against the law or to live against that which is in keeping with sound doctrine. Well, he lists a number of sins, all of which have direct connection to the Ten Commandments. Now, it's at this point that we need to look at the text for a moment. You may say, well, the Ten Commandments aren't mentioned there. But just walk with me through this text for just a moment. So at this point, we're saying the law is good. People will sin in a variety of ways. This sin is contrary to sound doctrine, both of the law and as we'll see towards the end, the gospel as well. But notice the sins. The law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners. General statement. It's made for lawbreakers. Then he gives a list of particular kinds of sins. Firstly, for the unholy and profane. Now, what does it mean to be unholy and profane? How do we find a definition of that? Do we come up with that in our own strength? Do each of us sit down and say, well, here's what I think it means to be unholy. And here's what you think. Let me just develop a list of all of our thoughts on what's unholy and profane. No. I would submit to you that we are to understand what is unholy and profane by the first four commandments of the Ten Commandments. We profane God's name, God's day, God's worship. We are unholy when we dishonor God in these ways. But notice the very next thing. For murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers. Now, it's interesting. Murder is the sixth commandment,

but who is mentioned here? Fathers and mothers. What would it look like to dishonor your mother and father? It would be a breaking of the fifth commandment. What's the very next sin? For manslayers. Well, if we're going in order, profane and unholy is one through four. Murdering mother and father is five. What's the sixth commandment, boys and girls? Just think about it. You don't need to say it out loud. Think about it. The sixth commandment is, thou shalt not murder. What's the seventh commandment? Well, it has to do with sexual sin, committing adultery. What does he list here? Four fornicators, four sodomites. What's the eighth commandment? Well, it's stealing. Which sin does he list next? The stealing of people, kidnappers. What's the next commandment? The ninth commandment, speaking the truth. What does he list? For liars and perjurers. I would submit to you, and I'm not the only one, but I would submit to you that 1 Timothy 1, verses 9 and 10 is really Paul's way of walking us through the law of God. according to the way that the law of God is actually given in the Decalogue. But again, our focus is what he says next. And if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine. Well, what are these things, definitionally? Well, they are sin. Thus, we are right to assume that sound doctrine is about how we conduct our lives. This is the greater perhaps grander focus of the passage, is it not? Remember that Paul began this entire thing with a concern that some would turn aside. He was concerned that some would turn aside from sound doctrine. And now, the passage provides us with a picture of what it looks like when we depart from sound doctrine. But notice too, that this healthy doctrine, or sound doctrine, that Paul speaks about, he mentions as law. But then in verse 11, this sound doctrine, he says this, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust. So sound doctrine is and accords with the law of God. And it is and it accords with the gospel which Paul proclaims. The message that Christ has come and kept the law in the stead of sinners. That he died for sins. That he was raised on the third day. That all those who are united to him by faith will have everlasting life and forgiveness of sins. It's important for us to remember Probably the chiefest way that the Reformers saw it to as the recovery of the true message of the Scriptures was revived again during the Reformation. The chief way that they laid out the Scriptures was law and gospel. And here, right in the midst of it, Paul, discussing law and discussing gospel, says that this has to do with sound doctrine. Listen, when you live in a way that goes against the law of God, you're living contrary to sound doctrine. Doctrine is not simply what I

know with my head. Doctrine is about how I live my life. John Gill. Writing on this passage says this, the law lies against it, takes notice of it, charges with it, condemns and punishes for it. By sound doctrine is meant the doctrine of the gospel, which is in itself pure and incorrupt and is the cause of soundness and health to others. It is health to the navel. and marrow to the bones. Its doctrines are the wholesome words of Christ, and by them souls are nourished up unto eternal life, when the errors and heresies of men are in themselves rotten and corrupt, and also eat as do a canker. Here it may be observed that there is an entire harmony and an agreement between the gospel and the law, rightly understood and used. What is contrary to the one is also to the other. The gospel no more countenances sin than the law does. And whatever is repugnant to the gospel is liable to be punished by the law." Now, I know that's a long statement. You see what he's doing there? This discussion of sound doctrine is in keeping with the law and the gospel. Well, I don't think I have to convince you that people who are born-again believers have a responsibility to live a life pleasing unto the Lord. I don't think I have to convince you that there is actually sin to be mortified, that the gospel doesn't free us from the commands of the law, but rather, it frees us from the penalty of the law. Sinclair Ferguson, when speaking about the believer's relationship to the law in his wonderful book, Devoted to God, which I would commend to you, He says this, and he uses marriage kind of language. He says, we are no longer married to the law, but to Christ. But he is the one who both loved the law and embodied it. Marry him, and we become connected to all that is his, including the law given by the Father. Thus, the New Covenant believer's relationship to the law comes through marriage to Christ. It is a faith relationship. Furthermore, we now share in spirit with our husband, Jesus Christ, and he enables us to love what our husband loves. Who can forget the precious word of the psalmist? Oh, how I love your law. Before we move to our second point, just simply remind you that we began tonight by saying that sound doctrine has to do with law and gospel. And that doctrine, doctrine is connected to how we live our lives. But if the implication is correct that Paul goes directly to the Ten Commandments for his list of sins, We need to think a little bit about how the Bible is put together. For Paul, this would clearly be exactly what he would do. That the law of God, which was given to Adam and Eve, written on their hearts, was broken when they chose to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. I know many of you have heard me or others say this, but we often think about the sin of the garden being simply, God told me not to eat

this piece of fruit, and that's the piece of fruit I want to eat, and so the whole thing revolves around a piece of fruit. But that positive law, that law for that place in the garden, was simply an outward command. Adam and Eve had the entire law of God, the moral law of God, written on their hearts, and they broke it when they chose to rebel against God. We could walk through each of the commandments if we had time and just see how, in choosing to go against God, each of those commandments was broken. Very quickly, what happened, boys and girls? God promised that he would send Christ from the seed of the woman. But that law carries throughout the Old Testament. We don't get to the Ten Commandments until Exodus 20. But from the garden to Exodus 20, every one of those commandments finds expression to include honoring the Sabbath. And we trace all the way to the time of Christ, when he not only teaches on the law and corrects the religious leaders' misinterpretation of that law, but dies, dies to uphold the souls who have broken that law. Think about it. If the law can be changed from Old Testament to New, what really is the basis of sin? Christ was credited with your law-breaking, your list of sins found in 1 Timothy. And he bled so that you may be forgiven. But then the scripture says that that very same law is given to us as a guide. So I want you to understand that the law of God runs from Genesis to Revelation. But Paul gives us an extra picture here, doesn't he? That when we think about doctrine, it's about how we live our lives. When we are holy, I mean unholy and profane, when we are murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, when we are manslayers with our deeds or with our words or our thoughts, and on and on the list goes. These things are out of step with sound doctrine. So we ought to remember when we think about doctrine that doctrine is about how we live. But secondly, I want us to see living out of sound doctrine. What does that look like? Do we think of our own learning of doctrine as that which will impact how we live? In one sense, some may be tempted on one side or the other. Ah, doctrine, it's kind of an academic exercise, disconnected from my heart. I know this group of Christians likes to talk about doctrine, but it's so heady, I just wanna deal with practical, day-to-day living. Paul boldly says that following God's ways is in accord with sound doctrine here in our text. And when we say that doctrine could be disconnected from our hearts, that's one group. The other group is, I love doctrine. And they stay in a very heady place, very academic place. They don't really stop for a moment to think, wait a minute, the scripture talks about doctrine, yes, encompassing the many wonderful things that we learn about God and his word, but doctrine also

has a very street-level, day-by-day application. It's how we live our lives. Doesn't Paul say as much? When we sin in one or all of these ways, it's contrary to sound doctrine. Doctrine and how I live are connected. Doctrine is about the heart. It's about the heart. Well, what is our heart? Puritan John Owen helpfully defines our heart in this way. The heart in the scripture is taken for the whole rational soul. Not absolutely, but as all the faculties of the soul are one common principle of all our moral operations. Herman Bovink, the Dutch theologian, a couple hundred years later, says this, the heart thus determines the direction of a man's life. It is the source and motive power of his consciousness and desire, his intellect and his will. All the mental functions and activities of a man have their center in the heart. Out of it are the issues of life, the life of the intellect, the feeling, and also of the will. So our hearts are meant to be central, and doctrine is used to grow the Christian, yes, intellectually, but it's also in the fruit of the Christian's life before the Lord. So I guess from our text this evening, I want you to see thus far two things, that the law and the gospel or doctrine, that living out of step contrary with sound doctrine would cause a person to be living out of step with the law of God. Secondly, we should see by implication that we are to live out of sound doctrine. If Paul again can say that these sins and any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine are things that we are to avoid. and that these things accord, verse 11, with a glorious gospel, then we want to learn doctrine. Not so that we can fill our minds with facts, not so that we can wow people with our knowledge, but so that our lives are in step with a healthy teaching of scripture. Well, how does this work? How does this work? Humanly speaking, how does this work? And for that, let me just take you finally this evening to our third and final point. That is the internal impact of doctrine. The internal impact of doctrine. In Romans 12, verse two, Paul says these words. I'm sure many of you could quote it from memory. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Part of the change in the Christian is for his or her mind to be renewed with the truth of God's word, with sound doctrine, with healthy words, with the ultimate impact that his or her life looks different. It no longer follows in the sins of 1 Timothy 1, 9 and 10, but rather, Living in line with sound doctrine, there is a new pattern of life. Now this is a work of the Holy Spirit. Well let's think just for a moment of the human side of things. Let's consider spiritual growth

and the fighting of sin in the following way. If sound or healthy doctrine is the way that we ought to live, how does this work? How does hearing a sermon preached, listening to a lecture on the doctrine of God, reading my Bible in the morning, how does that really work to change my life? Well, our minds grow in sound doctrine. And as our intellect is informed by that doctrine, our will follows on. as the intellect informs our will. Now this gets really heavy for a moment, but let me go about it in this way. The Bible speaks to the human being as an individual that has various powers. Theologians call them faculties of the soul. You have various powers. Most theologians speak to two main powers, the intellect and the will. I would submit to you that as you consider learning doctrine, the following happens. Guided by the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer, your mind takes in sound doctrine. You hear it preached, you read it in the Word, you listen to a lecture on Monday night about the doctrine of God, And as you hear that sound doctrine, your intellect is informed. And as your intellect is informed, it puts before your will that which is desirable. And you desire and move in different ways than you used to. You see, we read Romans 12 too, and we say, do not be conformed to this world. Okay, I think I know what that means. I don't have that done perfectly. I think I know. But be transformed how? by the renewing of your mind. Okay, yes, I know my mind needs to be renewed, but how does that work? Well, we can go one step further.

You hear sound doctrine preached, hopefully, taking that information in By the grace of the Holy Spirit, your intellect is now informed, and that intellect informs your will, and your will moves in ways that it didn't used to move. John Calvin writes this, quote, the intellect is to us, as it were, the guide and ruler of the soul, that the will always follows its back and waits for its decision in matters of desire. We actually believe in free will. Our confession speaks to it. When we make a decision, it's not as though our intellect forces our will. We actually choose things, even in our lostness, we choose things. As the Spirit regenerates us and saves us, our mind is renewed. The means that the Lord uses to renew us is doctrine, sound, healthy words of Christ. We hear those words. And in varying degrees and in varying levels with everyone else, those words inform our intellect. And our intellect informs our will. Such that eventually we say, what is more desirable is the glory of the God that I just heard of. My Sunday school teacher, my pastor's book that I'm reading taught me that God is unchanging, that he's impassable, that he's all-knowing, that he's everywhere at the same time. I begin to take that doctrine in, and as I've taken it in, my intellect is enlarged, and

as my intellect is enlarged, it informs my will, and my will sees a greater treasure over here than over here. No longer is fornication the greatest desire of my heart. No longer is sodomy or manslaying or lying the greatest desire of my heart. Rather, my mind has been renewed, my intellect has been enlarged, and now my will moves, as Calvin says, because the intellect is guiding. You ever wonder what Paul means in Romans 12 too when he says, be transformed by the renewing of your mind? Sound doctrine is about how we live our lives. While we will not be able to parse out the entire step-by-step process, humanly speaking, of spiritual growth, there is at least some basic things that we can say about how we live our lives as Christians. Doctrine. is about how we live. Doctrine informs how we live. I know I've given you a lot of quotes from a variety of people, but let me give you one more. In his great work, The Christian's Reasonable Service, which I would also commend to you, Dutch theologian Willemis Abrakel says this. The will is a blind faculty. which can only will that which is comprehended with the intellect. Presenting the matter here and now in its desirability, necessity, and profitability. The will is thus also free and cannot be compelled to will something. It cannot be compelled to do something except the matter be embraced by the intellect. is presented, and here it is, as being desirable. You want to know what it looks like to be transformed by the renewing of your mind? The living God gives you doctrine, which accords with his law and his gospel. And as you hear that, your intellect is informed, and now your will moves to that which is of greater desire to you. You wanna know how to increase your desires for God? Study his word. Hear his word preached. Think deeply on what you hear preached. Think to yourself, okay, I can't track everything that I heard, but I just heard the minister preach today that God's covenant is something that God doesn't ever forget. That means what? That means my standing before God as a member of his covenant because of Christ is secure. That there's never a single moment when I cry out to the living God, And in that moment, he neglects to remember that I'm a member of his covenant. There's never a time when God's promise of covenant blessing is uncertain concerning me. The only thing of eternal value that is absolutely unchanging is my God. And you dwell on that, you meditate on that, and you begin in that moment to have your intellect enlarged in such a way by this healthy doctrine that you begin to will, and you move towards something that is desirable, God. As our minds grow in understanding the God who saved us. And in understanding his truth

and his ways, we grow in our desire to live lives. Yes, failingly, but to live lives increasingly that are pleasing to him. It's not by mistake that Paul

lists the law of God and then says, if we live out of step with God's law, we live contrary to sound doctrine. Because Paul's desire in every single letter is for people to hear doctrine. and then to live differently. Brothers and sisters, in all of our love for the doctrines of God's word, let us never forget its ultimate goal. Doctrine is about how we live. Let's pray. Living God, we pray

that you would help us, help us to see the importance of our minds, our intellects being informed by your spirit, the doctrines of your word, that as we hear law and gospel proclaimed, as we hear the glorious truths of the voice of Christ, that we may not simply store this up in our minds as a treasure of knowledge alone, as a trophy of how much we know, but as a path for the renewing of our minds by the spirit that we may live no longer in contrary ways to sound doctrine, but in ways that accord with your law and your gospel. We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen.