

To Tell The Truth

64 Days of Truth, Day 64: Doctrinology

Discussion Guide

1. What is the definition of "doctrinology?"
2. In the sermon it was said "*People live by what they **truly** believe, not by what they **say** they believe.*" Discuss what that means, and give examples.
3. Does doctrine divide, or does it unite? Explain.
4. There are many things we like (or maybe dislike!) about church. But looking beyond our friendships, what are our "marching orders" from God? Include the Scriptures used in the message. Do you know others that reinforce the same ideas?

5. What are "healthy joints" in the body of Christ? What's the Scripture reference?

6. Review the memory verses from all nine weeks.

7. Please do Jim a favor . . . Discuss as a group what you liked about 64 Days of Truth. Include comments on what you think could be better about it, things you thought didn't help, and things you would like to see added to it. Make a list, and give it to Jim.

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"the belief that the doctrines of the Bible are crucial to the health of every church."

2. In the sermon it was said "*People live by what they **truly** believe, not by what they **say** they believe.*" Discuss what that means, and give examples.

If what you claim to believe does not show up in the way you live, you don't believe it in the sense of genuine faith; it's only intellectual. Examples are abundant, such as claiming to believe in the attributes of God, but wallowing in worry; Claiming to believe that church is important, but not committing to it. Make your group think of others.

3. Does doctrine divide, or does it unite? Explain.

Doctrine divides, because it separates truth from error and it separates people loyal to God's truth from those who reject it. Doctrine unites in the truest sense, because the true unity of the body of Christ is wrought by the Holy Spirit, and is anchored in sound doctrine (Ephesians 4:1-6). "Unity" at the expense of truth is not the unity of the Spirit.

4. There are many things we like (or maybe dislike!) about church. But looking beyond our friendships, what are our "marching orders" from God? Include the Scriptures used in the message. Do you know others that reinforce the same ideas?

Preach the word (2 Timothy 4:1-2); speak, rebuke, and exhort with all authority (Titus 2:15); be the pillar and support of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15). Others: 1 Timothy 1:3—stop people who teach strange doctrines. Jude 3—false teachers creep in unnoticed. "There are two kinds of people in the church—pillars and caterpillars. Pillars support the church; caterpillars just crawl in and crawl out."

5. What are "healthy joints" in the body of Christ? What's the Scripture reference?

Connections between people which allow the body to function smoothly and without pain. Ephesians 4:16.

6. Review the memory verses from all nine weeks.

2 Timothy 3:16-17, Catechism on God, Philippians 2:10-11, Galatians 5:16, 22-23, Genesis 1:27 & Romans 3:23-24, Ephesians 2:8-10, Romans 12:4-5, Hebrews 1:14, 1 John 3:2-3, 2 Timothy 4:3-4.

7. Please do Jim a favor . . . Discuss as a group what you liked about 64 Days of Truth. Include comments on what you think could be better about it, things you thought didn't help, and things you would like to see added to it. Make a list, and give it to Jim.

Speak the truth in love!

Your Hope

64 Days of Truth, Days 57-63: Eschatology

Discussion Guide

1. What is the definition of "eschatology?"

The doctrine of "last things." Comes from the Greek adjective *eschatos*, meaning "last."

2. What key passage was used in the sermon as the starting point for understanding Bible prophecy? To whom is it addressed? Have all the things predicted happened? (If you haven't already, you will study this passage more thoroughly in your devotions this week.)

Daniel 9:24-27. Addressed to Israel through the prophet Daniel during the Babylonian captivity. Everything through Christ's first coming has happened, but not the rest. Unless this portion of the Bible is not true, it will happen just as described.

3. What two passages most clearly describe the rapture? According to them, what will happen?

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52. Every living believer at that moment will be instantly changed into a glorified body (without dying) and will be taken to be with the Lord forever.

4. Put these events in proper sequence on the time line below. Don't worry about it being to scale for the number of years between events; just put the events into the proper order by writing the numbers below the letters in the correct sequence.

1 Christ Born	2 Exodus	3 Abraham	4 Flood	5 Rapture
6 Millennium	7 Adam's Fall	8 Heaven or Hell for All	9 Captives Return	10 Christ Ascends
11 Creation	12 Final Judgment	13 Captivity	14 Church Age	15 Second Coming
16 King David	17 Tribulation	18 Holy Spirit Comes	19 Tower of Babel	20 Law of Moses

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
11	7	4	19	3	2	20	16	13	9	1	10	18	14	5	17	15	6	12	8

5. Review the memory verses from all nine weeks

2 Timothy 3:16-17, Catechism on God, Philippians 2:10-11, Galatians 5:16, 22-23, Genesis 1:27 & Romans 3:23-24, Ephesians 2:8-10, Romans 12:4-5, Hebrews 1:14, 1 John 3:2-3.

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Speaker: Jim Harris

Scripture Text: Various

Date: 4-24-19

Father, how we thank You for this brief journey through the great doctrines from Your Word, that we have been able to share together. We ask You to bless our time tonight, that we might better understand why this is so very important. So we grant You access to our hearts—as if You need our permission. But please, teach us and encourage us tonight, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, we've done this 63 days now—nine major doctrines, nine weeks, teaching on Wednesday and then six days of devotions to follow that up. There is no week of devotions to go with this one, because Day 64 is the grand finale. We will have our discussion groups; I hope you'll be able to participate in one of those, and that will wrap up this edition of "64 Days of Truth."

If you were paying attention, about the time we were headed to church on Sunday morning, the news was rolling in from Sri Lanka—those gruesome headlines and those horrible images from Easter Sunday, when suicide bombers slaughtered over 300 people and injured hundreds more. They were *specifically targeting* Christians—at least those who *professed* to be Christians; a lot of them were Roman Catholics, and many of them Protestants as well. The news media didn't like saying the word "Christians." It took them *days* to say the word "Muslim" when talking about those who were behind it. But as sickening as those images are, how very timely to serve to prove the point: *Theology is important! Doctrine is important!* Those coordinated attacks—and *every other act* of terrorism in the world—*always* are the result of *bad doctrine* put into practice. That's what 9/11 was about—it was a *theological* issue! Now, most of the people who died didn't care about the theology, but that's what it was.

As interested as we might be in the things that are going on in our culture and in our world, it is very obvious that our world and our society are continuing to unravel morally—but that's not what concerns me. I don't *like* it unravelling morally, but that's not the most important issue. What concerns me most is the state of the culture of *professing Christians* in America.

My friend John MacArthur has been the pastor, since 1969, of the first church that I ever attended. Once I became a believer, I went there as a six-day-old Christian in 1967. The name of that church is: "Grace Community Church." There was a group in another state that named itself "Grace Community Church" about 15 years ago. There are a number of "Grace Community Churches" not affiliated, but it's a worthy name—people have chosen it. But this particular group was *way off base*; they were into what was known then as the "Emerging Church," which is an amorphous collection of nebulous ideas that have been essentially repackaging classic theological liberalism into new forms. The "Emerging Church" was a movement that was actually Postmodern Philosophy applied to the Church, so it's *anti*-doctrinal; it's *very soft* on sin; it uses very bad methods of interpreting and applying the Scripture. At a "Q and A" session, someone asked John MacArthur if it offended him that that group hijacked the name "Grace Community Church." John gave one of his excellent off-the-cuff responses; he said it didn't bother him *at all* that they called themselves "Grace Community," but it offended him *deeply* that they called themselves "Church."

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That's what's going on! We have a whole bunch of "stuff" called "church," and a whole bunch of people who call themselves Christians *who don't believe the things that make a church!* That's why we did "64 Days of Truth." What God requires of a church is *not ambiguous*—it's *very clear* in the Bible! And it's also clear that many Christians—and I would dare say, the *vast majority* of people in our country who *profess* to follow Christ—don't understand what the church should be...*or they wouldn't put up with* most of the things that are called "church"! And it appears that even many who *should* understand it *don't want it!* That's *really sad!*

In First Timothy Chapter 3, Paul was writing late in his life to his understudy Timothy. He said, in Verses 14 and 15—"I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long"—he wanted to come where Timothy was; he had left Timothy in Ephesus, so he was hoping to go there—"but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth." (NASB, and throughout, unless otherwise noted) I daresay: among Christian leaders in America, it is an ever-shrinking minority who *actually stand* for what the Scripture requires us to be and to do. No wonder the people in so many churches are so badly informed, and so weak in their commitment to truth—because people tend to follow their leaders (1 Kings 14:16; Jer. 5:31; 23:13).

Every week in our course, I have given you a fancy word for the Doctrine of the Week. You have learned the terms Bibliology—Doctrine of the Bible; Theology Proper—Doctrine of God; Christology—Doctrine of Christ; Pneumatology—Doctrine of the Holy Spirit; Anthropology and Hamartiology—Doctrines of Man and Sin; Soteriology—Doctrine of Salvation; Ecclesiology—Doctrine of the Church; Angelology and Demonology—Doctrines of Angels and Demons; and Eschatology—Doctrine of Last Things, or, Bible Prophecy.

The title of this message for today is: "To Tell The Truth." Soon, you'll know what the point is; but there's no word, that matches those other nine words, for the subject of this message. Those words are time-tested—therefore, I invented a word; I invented it in 2006, when I first did "64 Days of Truth." The word is: "Doctrinology." You have to have something that ends in "ology" to say this. "Doctrinology" is the word that means: "The belief that the doctrines of the Bible are crucial to the health of every church." You *cannot* be what God wants you to be if you don't *believe* what God has revealed and told you to believe! So the phrase "to tell the truth" is not merely an idiom, or an old-time television gameshow; it's the *purpose* of the church! (see Matt. 28:19-20; 2 Cor. 4:2)

Paul called it "the pillar and support of the truth." The word that is translated "pillar" means literally: "an upright shaft or a structure that is used to support a building." You know what a pillar is. It's used figuratively in the New Testament for the people and the teaching that upheld the early church—the Church which is "the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12). The word that is translated "support" is literally: "a defensive wall," or, it can be translated "a bulwark"—the problem is, nobody today knows what a "bulwark" is, unless they sing "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," and then they just *pretend* that they know what it is.

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The most essential purpose of the Church—the most *crucial calling* of the leaders of the Church—is to teach and proclaim the truth of the Word of God, and to defend it from all attacks (2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:9; cf. 2 Tim. 2:25). It's the "pillar and support." That word "pillar" occurs only four times in the New Testament—there, and then the time that it refers to leaders in the early Church (Gal. 2:9), and twice in the Book of Revelation (3:12; 10:1). The word that is translated "support" there in First Timothy 3:15 occurs only once, in that place. So it's very clear that the Holy Spirit intended those words to be very precise descriptions. Proclaim the truth, teach the truth, and defend the truth against attack.

The primary reason why churches are weak, the primary reason why there is so little effective evangelism going on, the reason so many people lack commitment to the truth of the Word of God, is because they're *just not being taught*. Here is an axiom you can take to the bank: People live by what they *truly* believe, not necessarily by what they *say* they believe. (cf. Jn. 8:31; 14:23-24; 1 Jn. 2:4; 5:3; cf. Titus 1:16; Jas. 1:22) Follow a person around, see what they do, hear how they talk, see how they spend their time, see how they spend their money, see who they associate with, see what's important to them—and you'll find out what they *really* believe, no matter what doctrinal statement they may have signed.

We need to eliminate that gap, that difference between what people *say* they believe, and what they *truly* believe (Jn. 13:17)—and that's why we're doing this series. Thousands and thousands of people in church after church *say* they believe the Bible. Sadly, though, many don't even know *the Gospel*, or how to *articulate* the Gospel—how to tell an unsaved person what their spiritual need is, and what God has done about it (1 Pet. 3:15); and the basics of how to understand the Bible as God intends it to be understood...it's *foreign* to most people! They treat the Bible like it's a collection of cute sayings, or a whole bunch of fortune-cookie fortunes strung together—rather than understanding "what it really is" (1 Thess. 2:13).

There are people *all over* who claim that God speaks to them apart from Scripture! How can that be? (see Heb. 1:1-2; cf. Lk. 10:16; Acts 2:42; 1 Thess. 4:2; 2 Pet. 3:2) Well, why do we believe that pastors and elders who are armed with the Word of God and empowered by the Holy Spirit are told that they're not really qualified to counsel the "real" problems that require medical "experts" outside the Church? Well, that's because they don't believe the Doctrine of Bibliology! (2 Tim. 3:16-17) They don't believe that the Bible really is the powerful "living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword...word of God" (Heb. 4:12).

Why are so many people in so many churches *mired* in anxiety and worry and fear? Why do they fret so much over things like the outcome of elections, or about politics in general? (Ps. 118:9) That's a reflection of the fact that they don't *really* believe the Doctrine of Theology Proper (Dan. 4:35); they act as if God isn't in *control*! (Ps. 103:19; Eph. 1:11) That's just bad theology, gone to seed.

Why do people profess Christ, but they're so shy to stand up for Him and to proclaim out loud that He is their Lord, regardless of the consequences? They don't *really* believe the Doctrine of Christology, so they waffle in their lack of commitment. (Jn. 16:33; Phil. 1:27-28)

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Why do people profess Christ, but lack the power and the resolve to serve Him tenaciously? Well, they don't really believe the Doctrine of Pneumatology, so they don't understand and demonstrate the power of the Holy Spirit—because they don't know what it means to "walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16; cf. Eph. 3:18; 5:18).

Why do people profess Christ, but also believe that "evolution" is true—or, at least partly true? (contra Ex. 20:11) Why are there so many who are unwilling to confront sin in their own lives, and in their own churches? Well, it's because they don't really believe the Doctrines of Biblical Anthropology and Hamartiology—Man and Sin—so they let sin and compromise go unchecked. (1 Cor. 5:12-13; 9:27; 1 Tim. 4:7-8; 2 Tim. 2:19; Titus 3:8-10)

Why do so many people profess Christ, but they say that you can be saved *without* Him being your Lord? (Acts 2:36; cf. Matt. 7:21-23; Lk. 6:46; Phil. 2:9-11) Why is it that so few Christians can explain what the difference is between what they believe and what Mormons believe about Jesus? They don't really understand the Doctrine of Christology, so they're wishy-washy on who He is. They don't understand the Doctrine of Soteriology, so they don't really understand who He is and what He has done for us. (Jn. 1:1-3, 14, 29; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 3:18)

Why do so many people claim to belong to Jesus Christ, but they won't commit to a local church? They don't *believe the Bible*—the Doctrine of Ecclesiology—so they wind up *crippling* the Body of Christ. (Prov. 18:1; Heb. 10:24-25; cf. Eph. 4:15-16)

Why do so many people claim to belong to Jesus Christ, but they're so easily swept into New Age nonsense about angels, or swept into believing that they have to confront demons through "ritual prayers"? (Eph. 6:10-17; 1 Pet. 5:8-9) Well, they don't understand the Doctrines of Angelology and Demonology, so they're easily taken in by stuff that *sounds* good.

Why do so many people act as if they expect the Kingdom of God to arrive on Air Force One, rather than by the miraculous bodily return of Christ? (Matt. 25:31; Rev. 11:15-17) They don't really know and understand what the Bible teaches about Eschatology, so they're weak in their faith (1 Thess. 4:13-18), and they're easily confused (2 Thess. 2:1-2), and it's easy to get them sidetracked from our real "hope" (Titus 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:13).

Now, in case you haven't thought of it: Why are there people who are willing to strap bombs to themselves and murder innocent people? It's because they have *terrible theology* (1 Jn. 3:15), and they *believe it* to the point of *commitment!* It's *theological*.

I want to make a suggestion to you: Part of my daily habit—if I'm in the car enough, anyway—is to listen to "The Briefing." It's a daily podcast by Dr. Albert Mohler, President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. I highly *commend* it do you! You can go to albertmohler.com—he has a website that has a *whole bunch* of things on there, some really good articles; and also albertmohler.com/the-briefing. You can subscribe to the podcast; if you have a smartphone, and you're smart enough to *use* your smartphone, you can actually have it automatically download the podcast, and you can listen to it whenever you like to.

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I happened to hear today's podcast, and it is *outstanding!* I thought, "He *surely* must have known that this is Day 64 or '64 Days of Truth'! He devoted *most* of it to a book—a secular book by a secular journalist, analyzing the theology and the practice of Joel Osteen. Osteen, who supposedly has 50,000 people in his church, is a bestselling author; he lives in a ten million dollar mansion; the advance for his last book was 13 million dollars; every one of his books has a full picture of *him* on the cover—and he is *quite the theologian!* If you want to know what to believe about *every single one of those doctrines*, find out what Osteen believes *and flip it upside down!* He is *awful* on twisting Scripture (2 Pet. 3:16). He has a *totally* different definition of man, a *totally* different definition of sin, a *totally* different definition of Christ, an *absolutely upside down* gospel that is *totally* man-centered! And he is the most popular "Christian" preacher these days, at least in America. *That's* why we're doing this! I probably come across as pretty exercised over this, *because I am*—because the beautiful Bride of Christ is getting stuff splattered *all over her!*

So: "To Tell The Truth"—that's what we're all about. Here's where we're going tonight: Number 1—Do You Know What Time It Is? Number 2—Do You Know Our Marching Orders? And Number 3—How Are Your Joints?

First of all: Do You Know What Time It Is? The time in which we live is very well-described in the New Testament. I had you memorize this when we started "64 Days of Truth"—it's the last two verses of Second Timothy 3—"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (vss. 16-17). We've already been there; I'm not going to preach on those two verses again, but with them in mind, I would like you to ignore a very unfortunate chapter division and keep reading to the next two verses.

They're addressed to people like me, and to the rest of the elders of the church. Second Timothy Chapter 4, Verses 1 and 2—"I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom"—here's the solemn charge—"preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction." You cannot say it more forcefully than that, and you can't give a clearer instruction than that!

What should the preaching of every shepherd of the flock of God be devoted to? "Preach the word." Don't preach *about* the Word—preach what the Word says (Jer. 23:22). "In season and out of season"—that means: when it's popular, and when it's not; when people ask for it, and when they don't; when it's well-received, and when it's not (Job 21:14-15; Is. 30:10-11). Nothing should *ever* shake our commitment to proclaiming, explaining, and applying the Word of God—that's the *fundamental duty* of the church when it's gathered together (1 Tim. 4:13).

We are not called to test the wind before we act or speak, decide how we think it's going to go across (Ezek. 2:7). We're not called to identify "felt needs" and address them—but that's what is being taught in most *seminaries* these days. We're not called to identify popular fads and fashions, and adapt our message to them. We're not called to try to be "cool" in the eyes of

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the world. We are ordered by God—and look at how he charges them: by God, Christ Jesus, the threat of judgment, belief in the Second Coming, and the glory of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ...Based on *that*: "Preach the word"!

"Reprove, rebuke, exhort"—point out sin; call it what it is; help people turn to Christ to overcome it (Jer. 23:22; Rom. 6:4-14). Exhort believers to stay on "the paths of righteousness for His name's sake," to use the words of Psalm 23 (cf. Acts 11:23; 26:20).

Now, here's the part that I don't like...well, here's the part that sometimes makes it hard: We're ordered to do it "with great patience and instruction." What is "patience"? It is not getting flustered; it's not getting mad; it's putting up with people (Matt. 17:17). If that's what "patience" is, what is "*great* patience"? "Great patience and instruction." I don't know about you, but *sometimes* I've had to be taught things twice—before the third time, and the fourth, and the fifth; and then learning from the mistake, and finally getting it right. It requires hard work, *constantly* working to shape the thinking of people by bringing them under the authority of Scripture (Jer. 2:31). Friends, I don't have any *authority* over you (2 Cor. 1:24; 1 Pet. 5:3). I am to be a *mouthpiece* for the One who has ultimate authority over you (Heb. 13:17). I am to speak what God says. Save that thought; we're going to come back to that a little bit later.

The question I pose under this point is: Do You Know What Time It Is? We live in a time very specifically described by Scripture. Possibly, our time fits this description more than any other time in the history of the Church, and *especially* in America. And it's in the next two verses after Second Timothy 4:1-2; they are cleverly numbered Second Timothy 4:3-4. What time? Paul says this: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths."

That's the time we live in! We live in a time when "sound doctrine" is *unpopular*. When many people these days even *mention* doctrine, they always say: "Doctrine *divides*! That's irrelevant! That's not how people think these days!" I know—*that's the problem*, because they have so many teachers that *don't teach them to think* according to what the Scriptures actually say to us! Can you think of more picturesque words than that? "But wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires." Walk into almost any so-called "Christian" bookstore these days, and you'll see *a whole lot* of ear-tickling stuff.

Do you see the contrast between what we saw in Verse 2, and what's there in Verse 4? It's either "the word" or "ear tickling." It's either what is commanded by God, or "in accordance to their own desires." *That's* what time it is, my friends—it's not "Howdy-Doody Time," although I think he's preaching a lot of sermons these days. It is "Ear-tickling Time." And what happens when people seek out and follow teachers who tickle their ears and reinforce their own desires? Well, by and large, people in the church go astray (Matt. 15:14). They "turn away their ears from the truth" and they "turn aside to myths." That's where we live! That's the dominant culture of the church in America.

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I did a little bit of theological battle, about 25 or so years ago, against some of the things that we talked about in the Angelology and Demonology section; we called them "Christian Ghostbusters," going around looking for demons, telling people: "You have to be delivered from demons," and all this stuff. One of my pastor-friends had the same thing come up in the circle of churches that his church was involved in, because the leaders were promoting a man whose books and whose teachings *flagrantly* contradict Biblical Angelology and Demonology. He contacted me, and I sent him a paper that I had written for a pastor-gathering that I had been asked to teach about that, and I dusted it off and updated a couple of things and added a few more footnotes, and I gave it to him.

And I said, "I can tell you what the responses are going to be." He got *exactly* the same two responses I got when the battle was on my turf. By the way—the bulk of the paper was in two columns: "Here's what the Bible says, here's what Dr. Neil Anderson says—and they are *mutually exclusive and contradictory!* Which one do you accept?" We both got the same responses—*mostly from pastors*—who said, Number 1: "Well, many people are blessed by his ministry." A lot of people are "blessed" to watch the Rose Parade on New Year's Day—that doesn't make it correct. The second one is: "Oh, you're being narrow-minded." Yeah! Very narrow-minded when it comes to truth! I mean, how much more narrow-minded can you get than: "I am *the way*, and *the truth*, and *the life*; *no one* comes to the Father but through Me" (Jn. 14:6; cf. Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5; 1 Jn. 5:12)? That's a *very narrow statement!* And if that's not where your *mind* is, you're not narrow-minded *enough!* (see Matt. 7:13-14; cf. Prov. 14:12) Do you see the problem? The frame of reference for most people in evaluating theology these days—doctrine—is *their* personal experience, *their* feelings, and *some idea* of "open-mindedness." We've lost a whole generation of people who won't just say: "But what does the Scripture say?" (Is. 8:20; cf. Ps. 119:128; Jer. 8:9)

During the four years that I taught at the Master's College—now, the Master's University—we had a new guy come to the faculty who had been teaching for a long time; he had a *very good* classroom demeanor, and he *really* drew in the students. College kids—believe it or not, they have some questions, and they sometimes have *silly* questions. Somebody would say something like, "Well, I believe in the free will of man," and he would say, "Well, okay, but what does the Scripture say? Which *verse* are you quoting?" It would usually take about two or three weeks, and then anybody in his class would know: if they asked a question, he would say, "What does the Scripture say?"

Why don't we *do that?* "What does the Scripture say?" What *does* the Bible say is the way to lead people to salvation? It's: "*Preach the Gospel!*" (Rom. 1:16; 10:17; Eph. 1:23) Tell them in plain language that we are sinners (Ecc. 7:20), we're separated from God (Is. 59:2), "Christ died for our sins...He was buried...He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3-4). That's "the gospel" (1 Cor. 15:1). Tell them that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23), and "the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). It's not hard to understand what to do! But a lot of people who even *say* they believe it *just don't like to do it*. "Somebody might get mad if I do. Somebody might get offended if I do."

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Instead, many in the church, including bestselling authors, have the *insane* idea—and I know, if you hang around at Heritage Bible Church, you may not be all that aware of this, but the insane idea is that we can win people to Christ by making our music sound more like the world, by doing drama skits, and by preaching lightweight messages on "felt needs," rather than preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

But look: however you win a person into a church—if you're going to keep them, you've got to give them *more* of that! And if you win them by appealing to emotions and feelings and some sort of amorphous make-you-feel-better-when-you-go-home mindset, rather than *the truth*, you have to give them *more of that!* So it just keeps snowballing.

I'll call this one my pet peeve for the day: Every time a movie comes out that even *remotely* touches on a Biblical theme, Christians go wild. I get these promotional packets telling us that "it's coming, and it's only going to be in the theater for a certain number of days, and you can get this number of tickets for your church, and this is just going to bring *so many people* to Christ, people are going to come to Christ in droves"—and it *never, ever happens!*

Now, *could* someone make a movie that includes the Gospel, and somebody see that movie, and hear the Gospel, and repent, and come to Christ? Yes! But not because it's a *movie*—because it's the *Gospel!* And why not save the millions of dollars of producing the movie, and go tell ten friends about Christ? What an insane idea *that* would be! Movies aren't what God uses. And by the way: "social media" is not God's *primary* way of spreading the Gospel.

Now, I would rather have good movies than bad ones. I'd rather have movies that deal with uplifting things, and moral things rather than immoral things that glorify sin. I *do* appreciate it when people actually post on social media about *truth*, rather than just an opinion, or what they had for lunch. But *that's* not what is going to reach our world! It's the Word of God proclaimed (Rom. 10:14, 17), "speaking the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15)—*that's* what brings people to Christ (see Acts 16:14; Eph. 1:13; 1 Pet. 1:23).

So, as you learn the word "Doctrinology" today, and I beat it into your thinking for the last time in these "64 Days" to tell the truth, I'd like you to memorize two more verses. Here they are—you've seen them recently: Second Timothy 4:3-4—"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths."

So, Do You Know What Time It Is? It's the time when we are in a *minority*—even in the Christian world! You're in a minority if you believe and live by and proclaim sound doctrine "with great patience and instruction." (Matt. 7:14; Rom. 10:16)

Now: Do You Know Our Marching Orders? Let's go back to the two verses before our memory verses—Second Timothy 4:1-2—"I solemnly charge you"—that's a strong phrase—"in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus"—those are two pretty good witnesses to call to

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observe how you do with this charge—"who is to judge the living and the dead"—so this is under the threat of judgment—"and by His appearing and His kingdom"—which is our "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13)—"preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction." Is it *really hard* to understand that?

Now, who wrote that? The Apostle Paul. I can't tell you for sure that he was the next-to-last to die before John, but this was late in his ministry. He's in prison for the second time. He knows he's about to die (vs. 6). He is encouraging his understudy, Timothy, who is serving as a shepherd of the flock in Ephesus, after he had traveled extensively with Paul during his ministry. These are the words of a *dying man*. "Who is going to carry this on? What's *the most important thing* I could tell you?" "Well—Preach the word."

Let me tell you two other parts of our marching orders for the Church, to tell you the truth. I already showed you this: First Timothy 3:14-15. And by the way: If it seems like I'm kind of going over the same stuff a few times this time, *that's because I am*—because this is where we want this ship to dock. This is *First Timothy*, a few years before *Second Timothy*. At this time, Paul has only been in jail *once*; he's going to go *back* there and write *Second Timothy*. "I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth."

He puts three things parallel to each other, right in that, in First Timothy 3:15: "the household of God" equals "the church of the living God," which equals "the pillar and support of the truth." If you're a Christian, you know from Soteriology: you're adopted (Gal. 4:5); you're part of the family—you're in this "household" (Gal. 6:10). If you understand Ecclesiology, you know that this household—this family—is "the church," like "the body" (Eph. 5:23); this is the expression of "the living God" in tangible flesh-and-bones demonstration on Earth, right now. And what is this "family," this "bride," this "body" all about? Being "the pillar and support of the truth." Therefore, every person who visits a church, who visits *our* church, who watches what we do, who watches how we live, based upon what we believe...they should know that we are uncompromisingly, *unapologetically*—"with great patience and instruction," mind you—committed to being "the pillar and support of the truth." (see Phil. 2:15-16) And as Jesus said to the Father: "Your word is truth" (Jn. 17:17; cf. Ps. 12:6; 119:128, 140, 160; Is. 45:19).

Years ago, I heard about a unique ministry. A friend told me that he heard about an outreach that, frankly, I've never been a part of; but it was an outreach to take the Gospel to women involved as actresses in the pornography industry. Now, I have a pretty good idea that people in that world need the Lord, so it sounded good. And not surprisingly, this project was began by, and led by, women who had come out of that wretched, demeaning lifestyle themselves. So, I very carefully checked out their website, to make sure that it wasn't some cover for "the other side," if you will. I checked their website—I found out, it's legitimate. But then I read a little bit further, and it said: "We don't tell women that they have to get out of the industry, we just tell them about Jesus Christ." So, we're nonjudgmental.

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So, think that through logically. "I'm a *Christian* professional fornicator!" "I'm a *Christian* professional pathological liar!" "I might be a mass-murderer, but I'm a *Christian* mass-murderer!" Do you understand: *Doctrine matters!* You can't get *saved* and just *keep doing* what you've done when you are totally under the control of the flesh! (Rom. 6:1-2; Gal. 5:24)

The other verse I want you to think about, under the category of "Our Marching Orders," is this one: Titus Chapter 2, Verse 15—a short one: "These things"—now, you have to understand context, because you've been through "Bibliology," and we'll tell you what he's referring to—"These things speak and exhort and reprove"—does that sound like something you've seen recently?"—with all authority. Let no one disregard you." Now, you can be extremely cool on Sunday, because I'm going to tell you now that this Sunday, I'm going to preach on Titus Chapter 2, Verse 15—because it's part of what I'm going to be teaching in Romania and Moldova and Russia for the next few weeks; and I can't do *too* many things at once, so I'm going to share a little bit of what I'm going to do there. But, at the risk of stealing some of my own thunder, I want you to look at it quickly now.

"These things"—what's that referring to? Well, everything in Titus, up to that point. Oh, yeah, and by the way: everything in Titus *after* that point. "These things" is everything in that letter—which, if you read the beginning of Titus, is all about *getting it right* in the local church! Hence, those same words: "Speak"—this is what you should talk about (Deut. 6:7). "Exhort"—that's when you come alongside someone and you help them to understand (Ac. 8:30-31; 18:24-26); and you encourage them to obey (Heb. 10:24); and you support them as they walk, even when they stumble (Ecc. 4:9-10; Gal. 6:2). "Reprove"—that means that you show each other your error from the Scriptures (Matt. 18:15), so that you can help them get back on the right path when they go astray (Gal. 6:1).

Now, there's a wrinkle here that says something in a little bit different way than what we saw over in Second Timothy. In Second Timothy, we saw that, "I *solemnly* charge you" (4:1)—here, he puts it this way: "Let no one disregard you." Now, isn't that an interesting thing to say? I have *absolutely no control whatsoever* about somebody disregarding me! They can call me names, call me narrow-minded; they can make false accusations. How do you control somebody disregarding you?

Well, what he means is: In the context of the church, those who are in the church, but *refuse* to submit to the authority of the Scriptures, need to be *removed* (Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:4-5, 13). If they're not changed by the speaking and exhorting and reproof from the Word of God, "with great patience and instruction," we need to do what Paul tells Titus in the earlier chapter; in Chapter 1, he says, "I sent you over there to Crete"—that's where Titus was, on the island of Crete, when Paul wrote this—"to put some things in order, and strengthen what remains."

And then later in Chapter 1, he says, "There are some people who *need to be put to silence!*" (see vs. 11) What does that mean? Well, you can't make somebody shut up, but you can take away their *forum*, if they're doing something contrary to what Scripture says the church is all about (1 Cor. 5:11; 14:37-38; 2 Thess. 3:14; Titus 3:9-11).

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So, Do You Know What Time It Is? Well, it's the time when we are in that minority (Matt. 7:14; Rom. 9:27), even in the Christian world (Prov. 20:6; Matt. 7:22-23)—believing, living by, proclaiming *sound doctrine*. (1 Tim. 4:6; 6:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1)

Do You Know Our Marching Orders? Well, it's not really complicated: Steadfastly, boldly, lovingly, tenaciously preaching and living by the Word of God (Ezra 7:10; Titus 2:10), and doing it "with *great* patience and instruction." (cf. Prov. 3:3; 2 Tim. 2:24-25)

Here's what I want to leave you with; I want to ask you the question: How Are Your Joints? And you'll see how we're going to connect this to the Scriptures. I have a few joint problems. My right knee had a partially-torn anterior cruciate ligament; pretty well healed, but still sort of snaps, crackles, and pops, occasionally. You know I had that devastating injury to my left leg almost two years ago; it's a lot better now, but I discovered that it now enables me to predict when the weather is going to change—and I'm told that will probably be a lifelong calling. My left wrist was shattered in a car crash a long time ago; it's pain-free, but in one direction, I only have 50 percent movement, and it gets a little sore when I overuse it. My right elbow had extensive surgery; that's because I used to be an athlete—I just wasn't a very *good* one, apparently. It works okay, but I can't straighten it completely; sometimes, after exercise, it hurts a little bit.

Now, those joints in my body—they're pretty important. They don't function like they're designed to, so I have to know my limits, and I have to make do. At the time that I originally injured them—you know what it's like when you've just injured something: it's *only one joint*, but it's your *total preoccupation* because it *hurts so much!* And you're incapacitated; you can't function for a while. Or if you live with arthritis, you know: those first 50 steps in the morning—Oh! Ow! Ow! You know what I'm talking about. If just *one joint* in your body is out of commission, you're unable to function normally! At *best*, you're inefficient, and you're in pain. At *worst*, it really can be incapacitating, and somebody else has to take care of you.

Now I want you to look at Ephesians Chapter 4. In Ephesians Chapter 4, starting at Verse 11, the subject is about how Christ puts together "the church," which is His "body" (Col. 1:18, 24). Let's pick it up at Ephesians 4:15. Trust me: it's about how the church is supposed to be put together; but don't *just* trust me, be like the Bereans: go and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:11); spend some time in Ephesians 4—you will *love* it! Ephesians 4, Verse 15—Paul says: "But speaking the truth in love"—that's another way of saying: Even if you aren't the preacher, "speak the truth" (Zech. 8:16); because the church is all about telling the truth (Prov. 12:19; 21:28). "Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ." So, if *my job* is to "preach the word," *our* collective responsibility, as a church, and our individual responsibility as Christians is: by speaking the truth in love, to grow up ever more toward maturity in our faith (2 Pet. 3:18), so that we are more and more like our precious Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 13:14). Now look at the next verse: Ephesians 4, Verse 16—He says: "...even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by"—here's the phrase—"what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."

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Now, remember the analogy: The Church is like a body, so you can take the analogy from the human body and find a spiritual analogy in the Body of Christ. In your physical body, the joints of your body are the places where one part is connected to another. In a different twist of the same metaphor that Paul used in First Corinthians 12, he says that not only are you like a part of a body, you are *also* like a *joint* in the body, because the joints are the *connections*!

We grow up by being intentionally, seriously *connected* to each other within the Body (Rom. 12:4-5). And for us to function as a body...in other words: for us to be a healthy church—indeed, for us to be *the* Church, as it's meant to be—we have to keep all our connections working. The joints are the interactions *with each other*; it is our choices to join together.

So, what do you call a person who claims to be a Christian, who is not *radically* committed to being connected to *as many people as possible* in a local church? Well, I hope you "call" them *often*, and invite them where they need to be; because you *can't practice* Christianity—now, did I make that clear?—*You cannot practice Christianity*—it is impossible, *utterly impossible*, to practice Christianity apart from being connected in the local church! (see Prov. 18:1) Now, *might* you have individual faith in Christ? Okay! But, as James says: show me your faith by your works (Jas. 2:18-23). Or, as I heard a famous theologian say: People live by what they *truly* believe—not what they might say they believe (Jn. 8:31; 1 Jn. 2:4).

So, at the end of "64 Days of Truth"—which I've been beating on you with to build your life on the truth (Matt. 7:24-27; cf. Prov. 10:25)—I just want to ask you: Is your life anchored in the truth? You're the ones who least need to hear it, because you're the ones who have been here hearing it! But what do we need to do? Well, we have about a third of Heritage Bible Church, numbers-wise, which has been here faithfully during "64 Days of Truth," and I've *loved* this fellowship; I'm *always* happy to do things like this.

What do we need to do? "Speaking the truth in love...building up" one another. So, look at the empty chair next to you—or, some of you have the unfortunate problem of sitting in a row where there are nine empty chairs next to you. Who belongs there? How are you connected to them? How much truth is flowing through that connection? Would people look at you and say, "Wow! She has *great patience* as she instructs and encourages and prays and helps."

If you pore over Ephesians 4—which is a really good thing to do—you would learn that we *don't lack unity* in the Body of Christ. We have it! We have it *supernaturally* (see Jn. 6:37-39, 44-45; 1 Cor. 12:13; 2 Tim. 2:19). But, we *mess it up* when we act according to the flesh, rather than walking by the Spirit (Gal. 5:13-17, 26; cf. Jas. 4:1). That sounds a lot like Pneumatology and Ecclesiology, kind of rolled together, doesn't it?

Our instruction, which is in Ephesians Chapter 4, Verse 3, is that we need to be "diligent"—do you know what "being diligent" means? *Working hard!* Making it your priority! Never letting up! We need to be "diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." And you would also learn, if you were to pore over Ephesians Chapter 4, that to do that requires "forbearing one another in love" (vs. 2, KJV; cf. Prov. 19:11).

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And if you'd like to know what "forbearing" means, it means "putting up with" each other (Matt. 17:17). It means that we're the "pillar"—we *stand* for the truth (Phil. 2:16); and the "support"—we defend the truth, together with each other (Phil. 1:27). It means not judging each other, in the sense of superiority; but it means calling each other to submit to Scripture (Ps. 141:4; Matt. 18:15; Rom. 15:14; Gal. 6:1; Col. 3:16; Heb. 10:24). Sometimes it means challenging what somebody might say (Prov. 9:8-9; Acts 18:24-26; Gal. 2:11; 2 Tim. 3:16). It means looking for opportunities to "support" (2 Cor. 8:4), to "encourage" (1 Thess. 5:11; Heb. 3:13), to forgive each other (Col. 3:13).

Most of you are veterans at Heritage Bible Church; some of you are relatively new, and I want to tell you—especially if you're new: if you stick around Heritage Bible Church for very long, *someone* will disappoint you, or *grieve* you, or *offend* you—even *sin* against you—or just rub you the wrong way. Have you discovered that God doesn't ask your permission when He saves some people who you know of to be jerks? And you know what? They probably think *you* are! How will you do when that happens? How *are* your joints?

The joints of our body are *every* connection that we have—or *should* have. It's the people who usher, who serve Communion, who lead music, who teach a class, who come to your class if you teach; it's the elders, it's the deacons; it's all the volunteers on that volunteer list that we put out every few months; it's all the people who serve the snacks, or lock up the building, or clean up the parking lot, or take out the trash, or mow the lawn, or hand out bulletins and greet you when you come in. How are your joints? Is your life showing an abundant and growing evidence that you *really do believe* "sound doctrine," and that you're *anchored in it*? Or do you just *say* you believe those things? Now, with everybody—*all of us*—I promise you, there's a gap between what we say we believe, and our obedience. I get that. But we need to be, "with great patience and instruction," *diligently* working on *always* closing that gap! (Phil. 3:12-14; cf. Ps. 84:7; Prov. 4:18; 2 Cor. 3:18)

When I had been a Christian just a few years, and I was starting to teach, and people were asking me about how you grow in your faith, I came up with it one day—kind of on the spot, in answer to a question—and I said: "You know, I've been a Christian a few years now, and you know what? I sin less than I used to, and I sin *less flagrantly* than I used to. I used to do the *whoppers*, and I came to Christ, and the whoppers got smaller and smaller, and further and further apart. But you know what? The less I sin, and the less *spectacularly* I sin, the more I see Jesus clearly; and the more clearly I see Jesus, the more I hate my sin than ever. So I sin less egregiously, and I sin less often—and I *confess* sin more often than I ever did, when I first started." Do you get it? (cf. Prov. 16:6b)

You're likely to hear somebody say: "Doctrine divides!" That's true—it divides those who *believe* it from those who *don't* (Jn. 3:18-21; 8:24; 10:26-27; 18:37; 2 Cor. 6:15; 2 Thess. 2:12; 1 Pet. 2:7; 1 Jn. 4:6; 5:10). But it's *also* true that doctrine *unifies*. It is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:5)—you have to get that stuff right. And the *only true unity*—which is "the unity of the Spirit" (Eph. 4:3)—is the unity that is built around that which the Spirit of God inspired for us, which is the Bible, which is the inerrant Word of God (see Jn. 8:47; 17:14-17).

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So, that's my best shot, for nine weeks and a day. May God grant our unity to be evident in abundance by *how we live* (Jn. 13:35), and how we walk in the truth (Ps. 60:4; 145:18; 2 Jn. 4; 3 Jn. 3-4)—because, what is the church here for? Well, to tell the truth: it's *to tell the truth!*

People are won when the Word of God penetrates their heart (Col. 1:5-6; 1 Thess. 2:13), and they respond to the Spirit of God convicting them of their sins (Jn. 16:8; Acts 2:37; 16:14), and they're given the gift of repentance (2 Tim. 2:25), and they become "born again" (Jn. 3:3)—something they *cannot* do on their own (Deut. 30:6; Jer. 24:7; Ezek. 36:25-27; Jn. 3:5; Acts 16:14; Titus 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:3, 23)—into new life in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17; cf. Rom. 8:2).

Heavenly Father, have Your way among us, we pray. Make us "diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." And may You be the One that is glorified—not only here at Heritage Bible Church, but wherever we may have the privilege to speak Your truth in love. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.