



WEEK 1

Ready to Identify the Enemy

Paul writes to Timothy like a commanding officer giving orders to a young soldier. In this opening section, Paul's main concern is clear: false teachers are spreading lies that confuse and harm God's people. Just like a soldier must know the difference between friend and enemy on the battlefield, Timothy must learn to spot false teaching. Paul explains that God's law has a good purpose, but some people twist it and use it wrong. Before Timothy can fight any spiritual battles, he needs to get really good at telling the difference between God's truth and Satan's lies. Being "fight ready" starts with knowing who the real enemy is.

THE SCRIPTURE: 1 TIMOTHY 1:1-11

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, ² To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. ³ As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, ⁴ nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith. ⁵ The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. ⁶ Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, ⁷ desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions. ⁸ Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, ¹¹ in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS: WEEK 1

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever been deceived by something that seemed true but turned out to be false? What was the result?
2. When you hear the phrase “spiritual warfare,” what comes to mind? Is this concept helpful or concerning to you?

DIVING DEEPER

3. In the text on the previous page, make an effort to highlight or circle all the ways in which Paul characterizes the false teaching happening at Ephesus.
4. In verses 3-4, Paul warns against “different doctrine” and “myths and endless genealogies.” Using the text, what specific problems do these false teachings create in the church?
5. According to verse 5, what is the “aim” of Paul’s charge to Timothy? Using the chart below, list the three components of this aim. Why do you think each is essential for spiritual readiness?

<i>Component</i>	<i>Why is this essential?</i>

6. Verses 6-7 describe those who have “wandered away” from the truth. What characterizes these false teachers, and how can we avoid becoming like them in our own teaching or influence?
7. Whether they were a teacher or not, have you ever known someone who has “wandered away” from the truth? What did their life look like just before this happened?
8. What kinds of things would fall into the category of “vain discussion” (v6) today? What makes them qualify to be categorized as such?
9. Paul discusses the proper use of the law in verses 8-11. How does understanding the law’s purpose help us identify false teaching? What does this teach us about being “ready to identify the enemy”?
10. Notice the list of sins in verses 9-10. How do these behaviors reflect someone who is unprepared for spiritual battle? Are there any you are surprised to read? Which of these challenges do you see most prominently in our culture today?
11. The passage emphasizes “sound doctrine” (v10). How can we develop discernment to distinguish between sound doctrine and false teaching in our daily lives?