



TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



A publication of **DISCIPLE**, the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —*Psalms 145:11*
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —*Joshua 22:5*

Questions for Community Group Discussion

- Tell us about something—big or little—that you've changed because you were disappointed in yourself. How long were you aware of the problem before you decided to change? How hard was it to change? Did you have any "false starts" or "wrong turns" in the change process? Tell us how it unfolded. Was sheer will power enough? If not, what else helped you succeed?
- Read Galatians 4:19. Paul labored among the Christians in Galatia "until Christ was formed in them". Specifically and concretely, what do you think it means for "**Christ to be formed**" in a person? What would that look like? In what ways do you see "Christ being formed" **in you**?

- You've probably heard someone say, in the wake of a particularly foul act or word, "*That's not like me!*" Read Matthew 12:34-35. Pastor Doug noted that humans **never** really act "out of character". **Why** do you think we usually "keep the lid on" the foulest thoughts/words/deeds that are in us?

What would it take to **become** "a good man who brings out of his good treasure what is good" (v. 35)?

- Read Ephesians 4:17-19. Paul is commanding **believers** to not live like **non-believers** (v. 17)! What are the implications of the fact that Paul **needed to do this**?

Read Galatians 5:19-22. Have you ever struggled with any of those "deeds of the flesh"?

Creating "God Space": "God Space" is where cynics, skeptics, and spiritually curious people can safely raise their questions, reservations, & doubts because we have listened well and demonstrated love in practical, authentic ways.

- Non-believers often criticize us for not resembling our Lord very much—and too often we deserve it! Who do you know who's made that critique? Do they deserve an apology from you for something? From today's sermon, how else would you respond to them regarding life-change among Christians?
- How might 1 Timothy 4:7b relate to your on-going struggles?

Need help getting started?
Write to:
BiblicalHopeAndHelp@gmail.com

Application-Challenge

- If you have not done so, receive God's forgiveness in Christ. You **need** a new heart.
- Decide to give God first place in your life (Colossians 1:18c). Anything else is idolatry.
- Memorize and meditate on 1 Timothy 4:7-10. (See enclosed memory verse card.)

Sermon Summary

Key Passage: 1 Timothy 4:7-10

As a pastor I have conversations with lots of people. One thing I've learned is that most of us are disappointed with how things have turned out in life. We're disappointed that we haven't done a better job preparing for retirement, that we haven't been a better husband or wife, father or mother, son or daughter, neighbor or friend. We all know that we could be much more disciplined, more loving, more compassionate, more patient, less critical, less demanding, less manipulative, more available, and more involved. We've tried to change, but mere self-effort isn't enough.

Our problem is rooted in our sin nature. Much of the pain we experience in this world is a result of our collective failure to love one another as we should. We reap what we've sown (Galatians 6:7-10). The kind of change we need—heart change—cannot be achieved by self-effort (Matthew 12:34-35). Our actions reveal the condition of our hearts (Galatians 5:19-21). We cannot change the human heart; God must give us a new heart (Ezekiel 36:26). The secret to real change isn't found in the human will. It doesn't come about by trying harder. Genuine, substantive, heart level change really is possible (Galatians 4:19; Ephesians 4:11-13). Change is not possible without the new birth, but change progresses by imitating Jesus' lifestyle (1 Corinthians 11:1).

The God-appointed means to "growing God's way" involves a prayerful, consistent imitation of Jesus' lifestyle in the power of the Holy Spirit. We need to practice the private spiritual disciplines which were so central to Jesus' walk with his Heavenly Father. (Everyone would love to achieve LeBron's success, but his public success is not just the result of his giftedness; it is inextricably tied to his disciplined life.) The same is true for our spiritual lives (1 Corinthians 9:24-27). Spiritual maturity is not automatic (Hebrews 5:12-13). It is a process (2 Peter 3:18). It requires discipline (1 Timothy 4:7). You cannot be a disciple without being disciplined. The more disciplined you become, the more like Christ you will become. The more like Christ you become, the more God can use you. One of the marks of a disciple is cross-bearing (Luke 9:23)—doing whatever it takes to give Christ first place in your life. You become a disciple by developing a disciple's habits.

A habit is a continual, often unconscious, inclination to do a certain activity, acquired through frequent repetition. It is an established disposition of the character. The consistent development of habits, in reliance upon the Holy Spirit, leads to real life transformation. That is how we become more like Jesus.

Talking To God About This Week's Message

"Heavenly Father, today I want to be a 'doer' of the Word, and not just a 'hearer'. Amen."

Take One Step: What is one small, concrete step of obedience you will put into practice this week?



Talking To Others About This Week's Message

If a neighbor or friend at work asked you, *"What kind of stuff do they talk about at your church?"*, how would you summarize the most important elements of this week's sermon and the key lessons you intend to apply to your life? Can you explain it in **plain language** anyone could understand?

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

*"Five Question Bible Study" (see page below) is a simple way to study any passage.
We can use it to explore how to have confidence and growth in the Christian life.*

Monday— 2 Peter 1:1-3

Tuesday— 2 Peter 1:2-4

Wednesday— 2 Peter 1:5-8

Thursday— 2 Peter 1:5-7, 9

Friday— 2 Peter 1:10-11

Saturday— ***In preparation for worshipping your risen Lord tomorrow with your church family,*** study Psalm 19:7-10.

Need blank copies for doing more
"Five Question Bible Study"?
e-mail: Dan.Clement.TCC@gmail.com

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) is it found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text?