

## How to Have an Impact in a Deteriorating Society

Timothy: Faithful and True


2021.10.31



# TALKING WALKING POINTS

## Leaders' Guide



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

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

- 1 Triangle Community Church aims to be a "transforming church". We exist to be used by God as He transforms ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Jesus Christ. TCC believes not only that life-change is possible—but that it is to be expected. Growth is God's will for his people. But transformation does not happen by accident. It requires intentional, intelligent, action. 1 Timothy 4:7 instructs us to "discipline ourselves for the purpose of godliness." "Talking Points, Walking Points" is useful both for individual reflection and for group discussion. The section entitled "Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time" helps us continue to grow and change throughout the week, and prepares us to gather again as a family on Sunday.

### Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- 2 When you observe the degradation in American society, are you more immobilized or more energized? Which current issue in American society most alarms you? Why that one?
- 3 Review Pastor Doug's **five marks of the person who makes an impact on a deteriorating society** (see [Sermon Summary](#)). Tell us about someone you know who demonstrates many of those traits. What do you know of the process they went through to become a person of impact?
- 4 { What changes occurred in their sphere of influence as a result of their character?  
What changes occurred in you personally as a result of their influence?
- 5 { Which of the five traits of the impactful person feels most "out of reach" to you? Why that one?  
Which of the five traits of the impactful person feels most "within reach" to you—and why?
- 6 Pastor Doug illustrated secular culture's disconnect with reality as similar to a person who suffers from anorexia nervosa believing that he/she is fat. In the case of the issue in society which you find alarming, what similarities and dissimilarities do you see to the phenomenon of anorexia?
- 7 What might be some components of a loving intervention for a person who suffers from anorexia? List the interventions in the escalating order you would apply them if the situation did not resolve.
- 8 In this series on how to have a positive impact on a deteriorating society, Pastor Doug identified competence (Daniel), courage (Esther), and faithfulness/truth (Timothy) as necessary traits.

How can these traits help **you** have a positive impact on that issue which you find alarming.

### Application-Challenge

Pursue God and be willing to sacrifice personal comfort  
in order to genuinely love people from the heart.



- 1 It's been a while since we reviewed what TCC aims to do in the lives of our congregation. Ask a group member to read the content in this yellow box, then as if anyone has any "questions"—questions or comments. Take a few moments to discuss TCC's discipleship aims.
- 2 This series of questions can be asked together. Try to get an answer from each group member. Later, you'll choose one of these issues as the basis for questions 6, 7, and 8, so do some thinking about which of these issues will be most fruitful for in-depth investigation.
- 3 A straight-forward question. Try to limit the extraneous details (*"It was while I worked for Texas Instruments...I was in the Dallas office...oh my, those were the glory days for TI..."*). You're trying to get a brief "character sketch" of a person of influence, and then you're trying to isolate pertinent factors that helped him/her become a person of character and influence. You need this brief character sketch in order to make question 4 meaningful.
- 4 Here you're looking to summarize the impact they had on their context, and then on you personally. You can either ask and answer these questions together, or in sequence. (I'm not sure which is better.)
- 5 These are simple "opinion" or "perception" questions—no "right" or "wrong" answers. You're just helping your group grapple with these traits (and you're gaining insight into your members).
- 6 Be extremely careful and compassionate in asking this question. Those who suffer from anorexia grapple with a horrible situation. But the point is, they are out-of-touch with reality. In a similar sense, this question is asking, without characterizing or belittling any situation, "How is this issue 'out-of-touch' with reality—ie, **God's perspective** on this issue?"
- 7 Now you're going back to the real condition of anorexia nervosa. You're acknowledging (1) it is right and loving to intervene when someone's destroying their life, (2) you begin with the least "invasive/coercive" measures, but (out of love) you escalate the actions if the lesser interventions do not meet with a positive response. Ultimately you'll have to answer the question: "What is the ultimate amount of "pressure" I'd be willing/authorized/obligated to go to in order to save my friend?" The answer to this question varies—if it is your own child who suffers from anorexia, you'd be willing to have her involuntarily committed to a hospital in order to save her life, but it is your co-worker, your interventions will have to stop well shy of that. You can look at the "anorexia nervosa" article at wikipedia in order to get ideas on how to answer this question, but the main purpose of this question is to set you up for answering the final question, regarding what measures you might take to engage with the current issue that alarms you, which you identified in 2.
- 8 This question asks you to bring together the idea of choosing to make an impact in our deteriorating culture, with the question of what traits you will need in order to do so. You will need to have chosen just **one** of the issues identified in 2 in order to go into the sort of concrete, specific depth this question is getting at. So choose the issue that resonates with the majority of your group members.

# Sermon Outline

What kind of a person does God use in a deteriorating society? This is the important question to ask ourselves as followers of Christ in the 21st century as we are now living in a post-Christian America which totally leaves God out. The naturalistic worldview defies reason and degrades people, both morally and spiritually. People are struggling because they've thrown reason out the window. Friends, that is the world that we find ourselves living in today. A Biblical worldview based upon objective realities leads us to very different conclusions. According to the Bible, we have been created in the very image of God and therein lies our dignity. Today we study a young man who made a positive impact in his deteriorating society: Timothy. He grew up in a culture much like our own, with many competing worldviews. He was from Lystra, a commercial city on a major trade route. He was from a family of diverse religious faiths—a godly Jewish mother and a more secular Greek father. On his first missionary journey, Paul passed through Timothy's city and he embraced the good news of the Christian gospel. A few years later when Paul again passed through Lystra on his second missionary journey, Timothy had made much progress in his Christian faith and had developed a sterling reputation in the church. In Timothy, we observe **five marks of the person who makes an impact on a deteriorating society.**

**I. Timothy intentionally pursued God and, as a result, grew in his faith.** Although he'd only been a Christian for two or three years, he'd made tremendous spiritual progress (Acts 16:1-2). Too often people come to faith in Christ only to remain spiritual babies for years. That's what happened to many other believers (1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 5:12-14). It's not strange to see an infant drinking from a bottle. That's normal, that's healthy. But a teenager? Something is wrong with that! How about you? Spiritually speaking, are you immature past your time? Are you still drinking from a bottle? Have your senses been trained by the standards of the Word of God to discern good from evil? Or... are you allowing our culture to set your values? If you pursue God, you will grow. If you don't, you won't! It is as simple as that.

**II. Timothy had a good reputation.** He was influential among his peers. People liked being around Timothy. Do people like being around you? If not, why not? I'm not talking about a personality type: extrovert vs introvert. It appears that Timothy was, by nature, shy and introverted (1 Corinthians 16:10-11), so Paul instructed Timothy, "Focus on the things you can control, and people will see Jesus in you" (1 Timothy 4:12). I suspect that there were times when Timothy felt like giving up and going home, so Paul encouraged him to soldier on (2 Timothy 2:1, 3)! And Timothy was faithful (1 Corinthians 4:17). When Paul needed a job done, He sent Timothy. Timothy was trustworthy.

**III. Timothy sacrificed personal comfort and freedom to reach others for Christ** (Acts 16:1-3). Timothy submitted to circumcision so that his effectiveness would increase among the Jews. Timothy literally had skin in the game—how about you? What personal sacrifices are you making that others might come to know Jesus? We have been saved to serve! Have you found a place to serve here?

**IV. Timothy loved people and invested in them.** Timothy's heart for people really shines through (Philippians 2:19-22). Could that same assessment be made of you? Are you more self-centered or others-centered? Do you consistently consider others' interests above your own? Do your actions and choices demonstrate that? God has called us to be salt and light in the world. He has called us to be his ambassadors—to embody the gospel message to a dark and rapidly decaying world (Acts 1:8). This is our commission. Have you accepted the assignment?

**V. Timothy was committed to Biblical truth** (1 Timothy 6:20-21). Paul had entrusted the truths of the Scripture with his young friend Timothy. Only the Scriptures reveal where we came from, how it all went wrong, and what God has done about it in Christ. Only the Scriptures reveal what is right and what is wrong, what is honorable and what is dishonorable, what is loving and what is unloving. Apart from the Scriptures, we would be just as lost and confused as the world in which we live.

Church, God wants us to have an impact in the world. And if we will pursue God and are willing to sacrifice personal comfort in order to genuinely love people from the heart, God will do through us more than we can ever imagine.

## 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 live faithfully in a deteriorating society...*

**Monday**—Read Luke 16:10–13. What is the connection between how we live now and what we experience in eternity?

**Tuesday**— Read Hebrews 10:19–25. What is the connection between Jesus' faithfulness and ours?

**Wednesday**— Read Ephesians 2:8-10. You are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for...*what?*

**Thursday**— Read Revelation 2:10–11. What will enable you to be faithful rather than fearful?

**Friday**— Read 1 Corinthians 15:51–58. What is the "therefore" there for (v. 58)?

**Saturday**—*In preparation for worshipping the risen Lord with your church family,*  
read **John 4:1-42.**

Bible Text: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is 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? [and what was their response?]





**SATURDAY**



The Biblical Counseling Ministry of  
Triangle Community Church  
invites you join us for

**“Biblical Perspectives on Gender Identity”**

Saturday, November 6, 2021

9am til noon



Our seminar speaker, **Dr. Jim Newheiser**, is the director of the Christian Counseling program at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte and serves as a board member of both the Biblical Counseling Coalition and the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors.

For more info: **TCC.org** Keyword: **Gender**