

## Going Deeper - Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide (Rooted in The Word: 1 & 2 Timothy)

(November 7, 2021)



“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, love, and self-discipline” 2 Timothy 1:7

When Bill and I lived on the Navajo Reservation, we lived in the high desert where it was free range. There were many shepherds and owners of livestock, so it wasn't uncommon to see sheep out grazing. What was uncommon was for sheep to be unafraid of anyone who was not their shepherd, sheep were very skittish. I often went running, following dirt roads to be alone and pray in the vast untouched landscape. Until one day...I was out miles into the lonely desert when I heard a rumbling sound and a faint bell. I looked to see a cloud of dirt rising from the desert floor advancing towards me. My pounding heart was soon settled once I saw a small herd of about 10 sheep running towards me. The flock surrounded me and came to a very slow trot, leaning their bodies into my legs and staying with me no matter which direction I went. This became such a common occurrence, they would follow me back to our apartment, where Bill would be waiting, camera in hand. They stayed so committed that they would follow me up the stairs to our second level apartment and try to come in. This poor confused flock followed the wrong shepherd, actually someone who wasn't even a shepherd at all!

When Paul writes 1 & 2 Timothy, he is writing to a young pastor who is pastoring a church where there were “false teachers” trying to lead people astray. There were people who wanted to be teachers of the law, teaching false doctrines, they were abandoning their faith, following deceiving spirits, they had turned to legalism and were putting a yolk different from the teachings of Jesus on the people Timothy was pastoring. Paul encouraged Timothy to have nothing to do with the “godless chatter and meaningless talk” but to keep his foundation firm in Jesus, the true Shepherd, and to maintain the truth of the Word of God that Timothy was rooted in since childhood.

So, how do we know we are following sound doctrine and not being led astray? Jesus said in John 10:27 “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me”. Jesus also said in Matthew 7, anyone who hears his words and puts them into practice, they are like a wise man who built his house on the rock. We have to know Jesus, really know him, know him through the Word, through intimate prayer and through the fellowship of his bride- the Church, which Paul says is God's household, church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of truth! Without a deep, authentic relationship with our Shepherd, we too are like sheep gone astray and so easily deceived.

**So, Consider:**

1. What practices need to change or be added to your life in order to cultivate a deeper, more authentic relationship with Jesus, our Good Shepherd?
2. The agape love of God is foundational to sound doctrine, which is not motivated by feelings but by love in action. What places in your life do you need to choose agape love over feelings?
3. How do you see the same situation happening today? Paul encouraged Timothy to respond in gentleness, purity and love. What responses need to change in your life so that when you are in a conversation with someone you disagree with or you need to have confrontation with, you do it with kindness and purity of heart?

**Take Action:**

- After consideration of the above, make a plan to make real, life giving changes in your life. Share this with your community group or with friends you are pursuing Jesus together with.
- This week, choose to engage with someone whom you feel you have not engaged in agape love towards and make a choice to forgive, be curious, hear their side of the story, act in humility and reconcile if possible.

May the Lord bless you and keep you,  
*Julie Briley*