

Tour 7 Themes

Tour 7 - The Vision - Engaging With Truth

Questions for Reflection

1. **Read 2 Timothy 2:24-26 and 1 Peter 3:15. What do you think it means to engage others with Truth as well as with Grace and Wisdom? How can you “gently instruct” someone who shows opposition or hostility to the message you’re trying to convey?** (To engage with Truth is to engage with a *goal or purpose* in mind. Just as Truth needs to be tempered and balanced with Love, so Love needs to be focused around Truth if it’s not to degenerate into mere sentimentality. Real Love [*agape*] seeks the *true good* of the neighbor; and *true good* is defined by Truth. This Truth is the “Ought” which Dr. Tackett discussed in Tour 1. Without it, we have no way of knowing up from down, right from wrong, good from bad.

NOTE

A caveat is in order here, because engaging with a goal or a purpose in mind – seeking the shalom of another – is not the same thing as engaging with an agenda. Christians who are simply out to “convert” their neighbors will quickly be labeled as “salesmen.” “Gentle instruction” entails a willingness to listen patiently to the objections of skeptics.

It’s a matter of responding to people with sensitivity to their unique backgrounds and individual needs rather than doggedly sticking to pre-determined “talking points.”)

2. **What does Dr. Tackett mean when he says that Truth needs to be spoken through the layers of Wisdom and Grace? How do you think this idea might impact the methods you use in presenting the Truth of the Gospel to a friend or neighbor?** (This concept is illustrated by way of a diagram consisting of concentric circles: Truth stands at the core, surrounded by a layer of practical *Wisdom*; and the entire ball is encased in an outward facing shell of loving and caring *Grace*. The point of the graphic is obvious: the Truth that sets people free is the point of everything. Without it nothing hangs together. But there’s a sense in which it can’t be presented “raw.” Truth without Wisdom (the skill to customize the message to fit individual needs) and Grace (sincere love winsomely communicated) can be hard. It can even hurt. This is why Peter exhorts us to speak “with gentleness and reverence” [1 Peter 3:15]. This is what Paul means when he says, “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person” [Colossians 4:6].)
3. **Throughout the Engagement Project we’ve been seeking answers to such questions as “Why did Jesus leave?” and “What does He want us to do in His absence?” At the Last Supper, Christ told His disciples that if He did not go away, the Holy Spirit would not come (John 16:7). A few verses later, He expanded on this theme by naming this same Holy Spirit “the Spirit of Truth,” adding that when the Spirit comes, “He will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13). What role does the Holy Spirit play in our fulfillment of the *Royal Vision*?** (This is one of the most crucial points communicated in Tour 7. When Dr. Tackett says that “we already have everything we need” to carry out the Royal Task, he is actually referring to the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who interprets God’s Truth for us, helping us understand the “rightness” and “oughtness” of the message with which we’ve been entrusted. It is also the

Spirit who, by means of the “Fruit” described in Galatians 5:22-23, equips us with the Wisdom and Grace required for the job. Finally, only the Holy Spirit can prepare the ground to receive the planted seed (Luke 8:5-8). He alone is able to grant the gift of repentance and belief to those who hear the message of God’s Truth [2 Timothy 2:24-26].)

4. **Do you get excited about sharing Truth with your neighbors? Or are you the kind of person who gets frightened at the prospect? What are some of the drawbacks associated with each of these perspectives? What can we do to bring them together and achieve balance in the way we engage with non-believers?** (Those who are too eager to present the Truth to the people around them – who actually *enjoy* the intellectual challenge of a debate – run the risk of trampling on the feelings and sensibilities of the very people they’re trying to “save.” By way of contrast, those who are too timid to speak the Word of Life to their neighbors forget that God is with them to strengthen them for the task. *He* is the one who equips His servants with the right words at the right time. Therefore, we have no reason to be afraid; “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and sound judgment” [2 Timothy 1:7]. In the final analysis, the bold apologeticist requires some of the sensitivity of the person who is reticent to “step on the toes” of others; whereas the meek, mild, and retiring disciple needs the courage of the confident evangelist.)
5. **Dr. Tackett says that Jesus *could* have commanded us to “Love God and *evangelize* our neighbors.” Instead, He made it abundantly clear that the two Great Commandments are *both* predicated on the centrality of Love: “Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love your neighbor as yourself.” Why do you think He stated the matter in precisely these terms?** (When all’s said and done, the message of the New Testament is clear: *Truth* and *Love* are part of a single “ball of wax.” The one can’t exist without the other; they are inextricably intertwined. Therefore, to *Love* one’s neighbor is to give him the gift of God’s *Truth*; and to speak Truth to one’s neighbor is to Love Him from the heart. To emphasize the one apart from the other is to present the world with a disfigured caricature of the true Nature of God.)

What is God showing you specifically through this tour?