



Truths We Confess – Week 1
“Everyone’s a Theologian”
Group Discussion Questions
Group Leader Guide

Pastoral guidance for Leaders:

These discussion questions are meant to equip and support you, your group, and your discussion. As such, don’t feel bound to get through each of them in the exact way they’re written: *They’re a guide, and they exist for you, not you for them.* What follows in bold red are helpful insights and additional thoughts – *not an “answer guide”* – to help you feel more confidently equipped to facilitate a fun, healthy, and honest conversation that honors the Lord and helps your people grow in their faith. Thanks for all you do!

Bible Passages: Hebrews 4:12, Deuteronomy 6:4-5, 1 Kings 18:39, 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Timothy 4:16, 2 Timothy 2:15, 2 Timothy 4:3-4

1. Chris began with the story of Nicea and mentioning other councils, confessions, and creeds. What has been your perspective on this part of church history? Were you aware of them? How do you think they’ve impacted your faith?

Others mentioned: The Apostles Creed (3rd century), Nicene Creed (325), Chalcedon (mid 4th cen.), Trent, etc. Many group participants will probably say they’ve never really heard of them, and that’s ok – help highlight the “Aha!” “light bulb” moment that even though we’ve chosen to not be aware of history, we all benefit greatly from it, which should motivate us to learn more about it, which can only enhance understanding and faith. If anyone is interested in learning more, direct them to www.ridgelinecc.org/sermons for a comprehensive list and links to further reading and resources.

2. Every Church Council was in response to a theological controversy or crisis – do you see any similar controversies or crisis in the Church or culture today? Instead of seeing them as just *problems*, do you think they could be *opportunities*? Why or why not?

Responses will probably include current issues like gender, sexuality, etc – and that’s on purpose. We want them linking the issues of the day with the need for the Church to respond with clarity. As Pastor Matt Johnson (who preached twice



this summer) has said, *"The Reformation figured out soteriology (how we're saved); what we need now in this generation is to figure out anthropology,"* the doctrine of man ... which Chris will be preaching on in a couple of weeks! But try and direct the conversation towards the perspective that our current problems can be God-ordained opportunities to bring clarity – if we're brave enough to seize the moment.

3. Using your phones or other nearby mobile devices, go to www.thestateoftheology.com. Take a few moments as a group to browse the most recent data – what jumps out at you? What's most concerning? How do you think we as The Church can begin reversing these trends?

Have fun with this one (and try not to lose too much sleep over it)!

4. Chris said that *"Everyone's a theologian – the only question is: Are you a good theologian doing good theology?"* Ask yourself that question: Are you a "good theologian? By what standard did you answer that question?

The goal here is to steer people towards the realization that most of the time, without even realizing it, people will think about / talk about this using language like, *"I think"* or *"I feel ..."* and that reveals the "fly in the ointment" – that language reveals that we're making ourselves the standard: What we *think*, what we *feel*. But neither of those are good standards for determining truth. The point of this series is retraining ourselves away from using this language, and the habits that go with it, towards consciously thinking about our sources of truth – not ourselves, but scripture. *"Who cares what you think or feel? All that matters is what God has said."* - R.C. Sproul

5. Review the creeds that were mentioned in the sermon: Deuteronomy 6:4, 1 Kings 18:39, and 1 Corinthians 15:3-7. What are some common themes you notice about these? How do these contrasts from some popular (mis)conceptions you see in our world today?

The most common thread will be the fact that there is only one God, and He's in charge. This is very obviously the opposite of how our culture wants us to think.



6. God, through much of Paul's writing, clearly commands us to pay close attention to our doctrine and what we believe [1 Tim. 4:6; 2 Tim. 15, etc]. How are you doing in your own life obeying these clear commands? What simple changes can you begin making today in order to move towards more faithful obedience of God's Word and your understanding of it?

People will probably talk about busyness as a major impediment to doing this well – help them to see that busyness is *a choice*, and the only thing we're victim of are our own choices, and the way our choices can often *disorder our loves*, or get our priorities out of whack. The key here is to anchor the conversation in prioritizing faithful obedience to a deeper understanding of the things of God.

*"We don't choose our future. We choose our habits, and our habits determine our future."
- James Clear*

7. Chris said at the end that in re-rooting ourselves in our Statement of Faith, we will be *bold, clear, and joyful*. Why do you think it's important for us as the people of God to be all three when it comes to what we believe and why? And which one of these three will feel the most uncomfortable for you (and what might that tell you about where and how you need to prayerfully focus your own personal growth)?

Boldness will most likely be the most common struggle. If this is the case, take the opportunity to dig into the root causes of why boldness might be the biggest struggle. What are you people fearing? And, are those fears even accurate? Are they afraid of things that are true ... or, are they just afraid of things that may not even happen? And – what is more worthy of our fear: Other people getting mad / offended, or God being offended that we disobey him?

If they struggle with joy or clarity, it may be because they've been conditioned by the world that being straight-forward is "mean" or "arrogant." Help them to see through these lies, and the truth that being joyfully clear is one of the most loving things we can do for people.

Don't forget to close in prayer! And thanks for all you do for our people!