

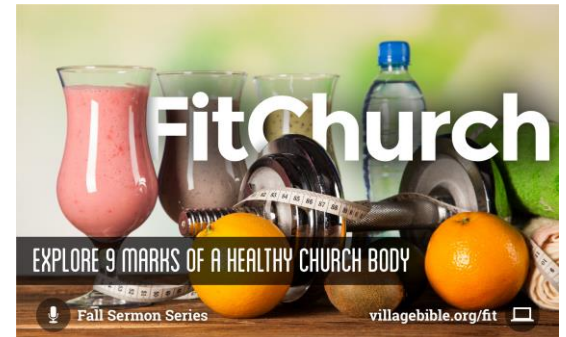


**VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH**  
SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

# God's Positioning System

**FitChurch: 9 Marks of a Healthy Church Body, Part 2**

**Steve Lombardo | September 28, 2014 | 1 Timothy 6:11-16**



Good Morning. My name is Steve Lombardo. I am the pastor of discipleship and community life here at Village Bible Church. I'm the new guy and I am so thankful and excited to preach God's Word here. If you're a visitor and after this service you think, "Well, this service really stunk," the lead teaching pastor is Tim. He's really good, so come on back. We're excited to be in a series looking at "9 Marks of a Healthy Church." What does it mean to be healthy as a body of believers? Last week we looked at preaching and this week we'll be looking at theology. Our passage today is 1 Timothy 6:11-16.

Let me ask you a question. What does "GPS" stand for? Global Positioning System. GPS was developed for military operations in the 1960's during the Cold War. It used only three satellites. Those satellites could send signals to each other and to an object on the earth in order to locate its position. Today, GPS operates over 30 satellites at any one time. It's considered accurate in determining specific locations. In many cases, GPS can locate an individual or an object within one meter horizontally, and under a meter-and-a-half vertically. It is an incredible thing. Our military uses this technology to drop bombs, literally, on the heads of terrorists worldwide.

There's a less violent use of GPS: getting directions. The phrase, "I got lost," is no longer a part of our vocabulary. You don't use that anymore because most of us have GPS on our phones. You type in a destination and it tells you where to go. If you get off track, it recalculates, tells you how to get back on track, and gets you to your destination.

Today, we're talking about good theology. Theology is essential for the church. It is God's Positioning System. What is theology? Theology is the study of God. It's not just for the super-spiritual. It's not just for the seminarian or the Bible school student. It's not just for the learned professor sitting in his ivory tower. Theology is for everyone. Everyone has a theological viewpoint.

Many years ago at a funeral, I was talking to a guy afterwards. He was a tough looking guy with a bunch of tattoos. I know everyone has tattoos these days, but these were tough tattoos, including a skull on his face. I talked to him about the gospel and about the Lord. We were talking when he abruptly ended the conversation. He said, "I'm okay with God, and the Old Man Upstairs is okay with me." Then he walked away. This guy wouldn't say that he had a theology. He wouldn't say that he had an understanding of God, a theological framework, but he did. It was deism. "God is the Old Man Upstairs. He created things. He put them into motion, but then He's gone out of creation. As long as you do more good than bad, He's good with you and you're good with Him."

Another example is the faith healers, or prosperity preachers. You know those guys? They would say, "As long as you have enough faith, God will heal you. As long as you give generously, God will give back to you." Many of these people would say they don't have a theology; they have an experience. They stay away from theology because they think it's dry stuff for other boring people. They have their experience. However, they really do have a theology. "If you're good enough" – meaning if you give enough – "God will bless you back." That's their theology. That's Who God is for them. If you have enough faith, God will heal you.

When my wife Stephanie and I first got married, we did some crazy things. One of the crazy things we did was go to one of the faith healer's crusade. It was in Chicago. I won't mention his name, but it rhymes with "Henry Binn." We went to the crusade and as we walked in to the United Center, there dozens and dozens of wheelchairs lined up. Many of the people who came put their wheelchairs aside and somehow got into the auditorium. As we were leaving the crusade, I saw all of those people wheeling back out of the crusade in their wheelchairs. The thing that they heard in the crusade was, "If you have enough faith, God will heal you." As they rolled out of the United Center they thought, "I don't have enough faith." That's theology.

What does your theology look like? Theology is the study of God. Good theology is Biblical theology. Last week Tim talked about preaching. Good preaching is Biblical preaching. Good theology is Biblical in its understanding.

Let's go back to those examples. The guy at the funeral had a bad theology because God in His Word is intimately involved in His creation. The Bible says that God loves and cares for people. Do you know that God loves and cares for you right where you are today? Whatever specific situation you're in, God sees you and knows you and cares for you. In Psalm 56:8, God stores your tears in a bottle. Jesus says that the Lord knows the number of hairs on your head (Matthew 10:30; Luke 12:7). Isaiah 41:10 says, "*Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*" The guy at the funeral had a bad theology because it wasn't Biblical. The Bible says that God loves people; He cares for people; He desires to have a relationship with people; and His care and love extend to all of creation. He loves people so much that God stepped into the world. "*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory*" (John 1:14). That's Jesus. God stepped into the world to save sinners like you and me. Good theology is Biblical theology.

With the other examples of the faith healers and prosperity preachers, God is not a genie in the sky. He's not limited to working according to what we do. That's bad theology. God is sovereignly in control of every single atom in the universe.

- In Psalm 135:6 we read, "*Whatever the Lord pleases, he does in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps.*"
- Proverbs 16:33 says, "*The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord.*"
- Proverbs 19:21 says, "*Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.*" God is in control and He does love us, but nowhere does He promise that we won't have trouble in this world.
- Jesus said, "*In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world*" (John 16:33).

Jesus doesn't promise to heal us if we have enough faith, but Jesus promises to get us through because He's overcome sin, death, and the devil. Good theology is a Biblical theology.

Now let's look at 1 Timothy 6:11-16:

*But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.<sup>12</sup> Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.<sup>13</sup> I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession,<sup>14</sup> to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>15</sup> which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords,<sup>16</sup> who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.*

In this text today, we will see some things that good theology does for us, both as individuals and for the church universal.

## 1. Good Theology Guards Against All Sorts of Trouble | verse 11

Paul is writing to Timothy. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, this letter comes to us. Paul loves the church. He helped start this church in Ephesus where Timothy is, assisting other Ephesian elders run the church. Paul has left to do another work; or he might be in prison at this time. You can read about that in Acts 20:17-38. Paul had worked with the church for three years; then he had to leave and turn over the work to Timothy and the elders. Timothy was the chief shepherd. Paul loves Timothy and this church. The whole letter of 1 Timothy gives instructions concerning the church. In 1 Timothy 2, Paul tells Timothy the characteristics for leaders. He talks about the church that he loves because he loves the Lord Jesus Christ.

He says this first of all, "*O man of God, flee these things*" (1 Timothy 6:11). What things are we supposed to flee from? You have to go back up to 1 Timothy 6:3-4, "*If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing.*"

## Good Theology Guards against Different Doctrine

You see it in the text in 1 Timothy 6:3. Paul was concerned that the church in Ephesus would get off track. In Acts 20:17-38, he had warned the others that wolves were coming and they would attack the church. Paul wanted the church to be protected. Good theology guards against this trouble of different doctrine. In Paul's day, some of the teachers of this different doctrine were called "Judaizers." They believed in Jesus, but they also believed that you had to keep the Mosaic Law. This was a different doctrine that Paul had to fight in the church in that day. Judaizers would say, "You have faith in Jesus, great! But are you circumcised? You believe that Jesus died on the cross for your sin and rose again on the third day? Wonderful! But are you still eating pork chops?" It was Jesus plus keeping the Law.

Remember, good theology is Biblical theology. Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus says, "*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast*" (Ephesians 2:8-9). It's not "Jesus plus something;" it's Jesus only! We have lots of different doctrine out there today. It would take too long to go through an exhaustive list here. Let me just give you a couple:

- Mormonism is a different doctrine. When I was in seminary, I was up late one night working on a paper and I had the TV on. There was a commercial about getting a free copy of the Book of Mormon. I didn't have a Book of Mormon in my collection of books so I called the number. I wasn't interested in becoming a Mormon, but I wanted to have a Book of Mormon. They asked where I was so that they could deliver it to me. Those guys tracked me down even though I just had a box on campus. They didn't know where I lived; they just came to the box. They were walking around campus trying to find me. I finally got in touch with the guy because he started calling me. I asked him, "Do you want to meet somewhere? Let me buy you lunch." We went and got lunch together and talked about the faith. I just shared my testimony. As we were getting ready to eat and one of them said, "Let's pray together." I said, "Okay, I'll pray. Heavenly Father..." I prayed. I wanted to direct our time together. But at the end of that time, I could see despair on their faces. I asked them, "Can you ever be sure of your eternal destination? Can you ever be sure of your standing with God?" Their answer was, "No." That's why they went door to door. That's why they pursued someone at an evangelical seminary. They had to hope that at the end of the day, their good works were going to make a difference with God Almighty. That is false teaching.
- Islam. Islam isn't even Jesus plus good works. It's just good works.
- The Social gospel. The church is supposed to help people, and our church does. However, the social gospel folks seek to diminish the message of the gospel and the blood. That's a different doctrine. Paul writes, "*For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures*" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

## Good Theology Guards Against Dissension

Look at 1 Timothy 6:4-5. These are the things that Timothy is supposed to flee from: "*He is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind.*" I am sorry to say that in my relatively short time in the church, I have run into people who are like this. They love dissension in the church, and friction, and hardship, and trials, and debating. Good theology guards against dissension. You are to live peaceably with one another. You are to get along with people, as far as it depends on you (Romans 12:18). Speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), but without dissension. Good theology guards us from that.

## Good Theology Guards Against Damaging Desires

Paul goes on from 1 Timothy 6:6:

*But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.*

Good theology guards us from these damaging desires. Paul writes here about the desire to be rich and the desire to have stuff which can take over a person's life. The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil (1 Timothy 6:10).

## Good Theology Guards Against Destruction

Bad theology leads to ruin and destruction; good theology guards against that. My brother is in the protection business. He got into that after he got out of the Navy where he served as a Navy Seal. (I like to tell people that because I'd like others to think that I'm tough like that. I'm not, though. I'm just being honest.) He got into the protection business and he had guarded Bill Gates' family but now he is with another billionaire. He goes to different places all around the world where he has to hire drivers. He called me up last year and said, "Can you be my driver? We're flying into Rochester, Minnesota. Can you be my driver for a week?" I said, "Sure. This is going to be exciting." After I hung up the phone, I started thinking about things that could potentially happen. My brother is a trained guy; he knows what to do and I don't!

I was talking to a friend of mine about this scenario: If I'm driving, my brother is in the passenger seat, the people he's protecting are in the back, what if someone pulls up next to us and starts firing on our car? My brother Joe will go into action. He knows what to do. I'm going to get out of the car and run for cover. I'm going to sit there sucking my thumb and Joe will be doing the guarding and protecting. In that illustration, I would be bad theology and Joe would be good theology. Good theology guards against all sorts of trouble. Bad theology won't sustain you when the doctor comes in and says that you have cancer. Bad theology won't sustain you when you lose your job and you don't have any savings. Bad theology won't help when your marriage crumbles and falls apart. Bad theology won't help when your mom is diagnosed with dementia. Bad theology won't sustain you when you stand next to the fresh grave of your children. The only One Who will is the Lord Jesus Christ. He will sustain you. He will help you. He will get you through. He will provide a way. Jesus Christ will. Good theology guards us.

## 2. Good Theology Guides to the Good Confession | verses 12-14

Look at 1 Timothy 6:12, "*Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*" Paul says, "Timothy, you made that confession. You confessed Jesus Christ as Lord. Take hold of that. That is eternal life." Good theology leads us to this good confession.

### Confess Jesus as Savior

Have you confessed Jesus as your Savior? Jesus died for your sins on the cross. He paid the ransom. He paid the debt that you owed to God Almighty for all of your sins. God made Jesus Who knew no sin to be sin for you so that you could have the righteousness of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21). When you stand before God, He won't see your rottenness or sinfulness; He will see Jesus' righteousness. That's what Jesus Christ has done on the cross. Have you confessed Him as Savior? Jesus is our Savior.

Jesus is also our example. Paul says that in 1 Timothy 6:13, "*I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession.*" You remember this in John 18:36. When Jesus was before Pilot, he said, "My Kingdom is not of this world." Then later, "I have come into the world to bear witness to the truth" (John 18:37). Jesus is the Truth. He is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). Jesus made the good confession. Have you made the confession? Have you repented, turned from your sins and embraced Jesus Christ by faith as your Savior?

Jesus loves you just the way you are. You know that? Jesus loves you as a sinner. That's what we read in Romans 5:8, "*But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*" Jesus didn't wait until you got good to love you. Jesus didn't wait until you got all cleaned up to die for you. Jesus died for you as a sinner. However, when you're saved and you come to trust in Him, He loves you too much to leave you the way you are. He begins to do a work in your life. He begins to change you. He begins to mold you into His very image. That's who you were created to be. You were created in the image of God Almighty. He begins to shape you and form you.

### Confess Jesus as Lord

Look at 1 Timothy 6:14. "*To keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Keep it. Keep on keeping on. Pursue holiness. Pursue righteousness. Get rid of sin in your life. That's part of "the good confession." It's not that you won't ever sin again; it's pursuing righteousness. Remember those verses in Ephesians 2:8-10? "*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in*

*them.*" This doesn't mean that you won't sin again. You might sin grievously, but the trajectory of your life is one of "onward and upward" in greater obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Two years ago I took my family down to the Ozarks in southern Missouri. We broke up the trip by stopping in St. Louis and thought it would be fun to stay downtown near the Arch. We got there kind of late but got the kids in bed and then we were just hanging out. I tried to go to sleep but couldn't. I dozed off for a little bit and woke up again. It was 1:00 in the morning. I thought, "I'm hungry. We're in St. Louis. There's got to be a diner around here." I got up, snuck out of the room and walked the streets of downtown St. Louis. I didn't know where I was going.

A taxi pulled up and the driver said, "Hey, you need a ride?" I told him, "No. That's okay. I'm fine." He said, "No. Where are you going?" "I'm looking for a place to eat." "Oh, I know of a place to get something to eat. Get in!" So I got in the front seat. Then I noticed something was different about this taxi. It didn't have a timer in the middle. The spot was there, but the meter was gone. We were talking and the guy seemed nice enough. He took me to a diner and dropped me off. I went into the diner and ate a healthy, nutritious, greasy meal.

I went back out and I was just going to look for another taxi to go home and the same guy pulls up again saying, "Get in!" So I got in and we started talking about things of God, things of the Lord. He was talking about Jesus. He was talking about the Lord. I started thinking to myself, "Maybe this guy's an angel." The Bible says that we entertain angels (Hebrews 13:2). The other thought was, "Maybe he's an escaped mental patient." These two ideas were battling in my head. I didn't know what to think. He drove me to a church and said, "I have to show you something." It's 2:30 in the morning. We went to this church and he started telling me the history of this historic church which was pretty cool. We get back in his taxi and drove back to the hotel. I just kept thinking, "Who is this guy?" I started walking into the hotel and he said, "Hey." I turned around and he said this (I wrote it down when I got back to the hotel), "What a man does proves what he believes." Now that didn't come from that guy – whether he was an angel or a crazy person – it came from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus said it this way, "You're called to bear fruit. By bearing fruit you prove that you're My disciples" (John 15:8). That's what we're called to. The good confession is to be saved and to live for the Lord. Good theology helps us. It guides us this way. Good theology is Biblical theology. It guards us against all sorts of trouble. It guides us to the good confession.

### **3. Good Theology Glories in the One True God | verses 15-16**

We find this in 1 Timothy 6:15-16, "*Which he (Jesus) will display at the proper time – he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.*" What does it mean to glory in something? What does it mean to glorify someone or something? In the church we use these terms a lot. I think that sometimes we don't know exactly what we're saying. It means, "to exalt or worship." What does worship mean? Worship means, "To give something or someone first place." There is someone or something that gets first priority in your life. Your love, your attention, your time. Good theology glories in the One True God.

#### **In His Activity**

Our text says we glory in God because of what He has done. Paul is talking to Timothy and says that Jesus is coming back and "*he will display at the proper time.*" Jesus will come back for the victory. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords. There is a time coming – it may be soon – when Jesus Christ will be displayed. He will be revealed. He will take over. He is the King of heaven and earth and He will be with us in the New Heavens and New Earth. That day is coming. We worship Him because of this truth. In that day, Jesus will put an end to sin, suffering and death. What a great day that will be!

When I first became a pastor, I was a young, naïve guy. I will always remember an older couple I visited from time to time. They believed in Jesus. They loved the Lord. They always talked about Him. One day, the husband fell and broke a hip. He was 91 years old. He went to the doctor's office and they discovered that he had an inoperable brain tumor. They fixed his hip and then sent him to a nursing home to die, where he died eight months later. I would go and visit him and his wife Ruth would be there. I would come into the room and he would be on his bed suffering, sometimes having been sitting in his own excrement for hours. He was there suffering and his wife Ruth would turn to me and say, "Isn't Jesus so good? Isn't Jesus so wonderful? Doesn't He love us so?" I'm a pastor. I should have good theology, but I'm thinking, "How in the world is this lady saying that?" She's able to say that because she knows how the story ends. The story doesn't end in the nursing home. The story ends with Jesus Christ, Lord of

lords, King of kings putting an end to sin, death, suffering and the devil. That's how the story ends. It's in that we can rejoice. It's in that we glory. We glory in the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's how we can agree with Ruth. So we glory in His activity.

## In His Attributes

Paul gives a magnificent list here:

- He is blessed
- The only Sovereign
- King of kings
- Lord of lords
- Who alone has immortality
- Who dwells in unapproachable light
- Who no one has ever seen or can see

Do we know the One we serve? The One Who loves us so is the King of heaven; He's the Creator of the universe. He's also the Creator of your soul. He has made every provision for you to be forgiven and saved and have a glorious future. He has made a way for you. He didn't have to do it, but He did because He loves you.

Good theology leads us to worship. We worship God in our theology. Our world is filled with idol worship where we worship created things rather than the Creator God Who is to be praised. We worship food. We are thankful for the chef, but we forget Who made the food. God gives us all good things to enjoy. However, He gives them to us so that we would worship Him in it. We see good food and say, "Thank You, Lord, for this food that You have given to me. You are such a good God." But we distort this in our sinful world where sinfulness and food become a god. There are problems associated with food.

There are also problems with sex. God has given that for the enjoyment of a husband and a wife in marriage. We distort that in our sin. There's lust and pornography. There's adultery. Sex should be something that makes you turn to the Lord and say, "I'm thankful, Lord, for that!"

We are blessed with money and possessions. When we receive these things, we should freely give back to God's work because God has given us so much. Instead we focus on the stuff; we worship the stuff. Good theology makes us see everything God gives us and glorify Him because He is the One True God Who should be worshiped and glorified forever. Good theology leads us to worship Him. Do you worship the Lord today?

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All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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