

Who we are (verses 14,15)

1. Verses 14 to 16 give the main purpose of Paul's letter to Timothy. Why do you think "behavior" is so important to Timothy and the Ephesian Church? Consider also John 13:35; 1 Timothy 4:12,16; 1 John 2:3-6.
2. How does Paul describe the church (verse 15)?
3. What comes to mind as you think of a "household"? How would you describe a household: the feelings? the relationships? How might this picture of a "household" describe our relationship and conduct together as the church?
4. How does Paul describe God? How does this description help you to understand our relationship with God and our relationship together as the household of God?
5. What does Paul mean by the church being a "*pillar and buttress of the truth*"? What might this look like in the day-to-day experiences of life?
6. Notice the definite article (which occurs in the Greek): "*THE truth*"? Why is that definite article so important?
7. What do you think will happen to "*the truth*" if the church (us) fails as its "*pillar and buttress*"?

What we confess (verse 16)

1. Paul writes that we confess the "*mystery of godliness*" which is the truth of the Gospel (meaning how our relationship with God, which has been broken by our sin, can be restored by God and what it means to live in that relationship now and forever). God alone can explain what is beyond human comprehension, which He does in the Bible. How can we make sure that what we confess is in accord with what God reveals and not merely what we choose to believe?
2. Verse 16 is an example of a creed (from the Latin "credo" meaning "I believe") from the first century church. Creedal statements concisely define what we as a church believe as being truth concerning matters of faith and Christian conduct. Consider the creedal confession of the early church being sure you understand what is being confessed, the significance of each statement, and its importance for your life.

*He was manifested in the flesh,
vindicated by the Spirit,
seen by angels,
proclaimed among the nations,
believed on in the world,
taken up in glory.*

consider also John 1:14
consider also Matthew 3:16,17; John 1:32; Romans 1:4
consider also Matthew 28:2-7
consider also Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Corinthians 1:23
consider also John 1:12; Philippians 2:9-11
consider also Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9

3. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 meaning "really really good") how would you rate Creekside as behaving consistent with what we say we believe? What would it take to move us one digit towards a 10?

Extra Credit

1. Creeds are also a personal acknowledgement of trust in God. One confesses outwardly what one believes inwardly to be true. What would you include in a personal creedal statement?
2. More than a statement of belief, our lives are to be conducted in a manner consistent with what we believe. These days, what does that look like for you?