

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Prayer

- Break off into groups of 3 or fewer for 10 minutes of prayer.

Introduction

- This week at River Oak, we are beginning a new series on how to be a healthy church! We will look to 1 Timothy as our guide.
- *What is the healthiest church you have ever belonged to? What made it strong?*
- *What are clues that a church is healthy?*

Read 1 Timothy 1:1

- This Sunday, Pastor Blake spoke about Paul's past as a persecutor of the church. *What does Paul's story teach us about grace?*
- Context for the word, Apostle: "An apostle possessed authority to represent Christ directly—a power that could only be granted by Christ himself.² When the early church replaced Judas, they sought someone who had witnessed the risen Christ in person, a requirement Paul considered essential to the apostolic office.² Since the apostolic office functioned as foundational to the church's establishment, this understanding restricts it to the first century. ¹ More significantly, some theologians argue that while the formal office may have ended, the church's fundamental nature remains "apostolic" in the sense of being "sent"—a missional character rooted in God's sending nature and the church's creation for mission." ¹ *Angie Ward and Jerry E. White, Beyond Church and Parachurch: From Competition to Missional Extension (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2025), 106–107.* ² *Mark A. Snoeberger, "Tongues—Are They for Today?," Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal Volume 14 (2009), 14:10–11.*
- *How would you explain what an apostle is to a Child at River Oak?*
- *What persuades you that the writings of the apostles are God's word?*

Read 1 Timothy 1:2

- *Who has been like a spiritual parent to you?*
- *Who in your life can you adopt as a child in the faith?* Leaders, use this as a moment to introduce Summer 757 Groups (Registration will launch in the Summer): https://docs.google.com/document/d/1arq-E8JsQ1dcXrDBeQVkov4YF_cThjB-ApKzYT2gxtw/edit?usp=sharing
- *How can we make church feel more like family?*
- *Which of these words do you need to embrace the most in this season? Grace, mercy, and peace.*

“One-Anothering”

- Each discussion guide this year will feature one of the scriptures' "one another" statements. These instructions guide us on how to love one another.
- *Do not grumble against one another. (James 5:9, ESV)*