

# STAY FOCUSED ON THE WORD

## 1 Timothy 4

In our study this morning the Apostle Paul acknowledges that some Christians will be deceived and will abandon the faith. His instructions in 1 Timothy 4 teach us how to respond to this problem. The main idea of 1 Timothy 4 is this:

Believers are best protected from deception and apostasy when their church leaders stay focused on teaching and modeling the Scriptures.

In 1 Timothy 4:1-5, the Apostle Paul acknowledged that some believers will walk away from Jesus. Some believers will be deceived by false teachers and will leave the faith. The main idea of 1 Timothy 4:1-5 is this:

In every generation of the church, some believers will be deceived by false teachers and will leave the faith.

**1 Timothy 4:1-2** The later times is the church age. The Apostle Paul acknowledged that during the church age, some believers will be deceived by false teachers and will abandon the faith. At that time in Ephesus, some believers were lured away by the promise they could experience a deeper spirituality through asceticism.

*Asceticism* is severe self-discipline and avoidance of all forms of indulgence, typically for religious reasons.

**1 Timothy 4:3-5** Some strands of Greek philosophy taught that there are two realms: the spiritual and the physical. They taught the spiritual realm is pure and the physical realm is evil. By restricting one's participation in the physical realm a person could reach a higher level of spirituality. This may be the basis of prohibiting marriage and some foods. This lie directly contradicts the creation story in which God declared all that He had made in the physical creation was good. We can see how the source of this lie is demonic. The truth is that everything God created is good and to be received with thanksgiving as a good gift from our loving heavenly Father.

Some born-again believers believed this lie and *departed from the faith*. The word *depart* is the word from which we get *apostasy*. To *depart* means *to abandon a former relationship or to dissociate*. False teachers outside the church, will deceive some believers and influence them to abandon the Christian faith. How many Christians have been led to abandon the faith by Mormon missionaries or Jehovah Witnesses' representatives? The reality is that in every generation of the church some Christians will be deceived by false teachers and will abandon Christianity. What is to be done?

When a false idea begins affecting believers,  
church leaders are to refute it and move on.

**1 Timothy 4:6-10** What are "these things" Timothy is to put before the church family? The truths of verse 4: that everything created by God is good and nothing God has created is to be rejected, but received with thanksgiving. Marriage and food are good creations of God that are to be received, not rejected. What are the "silly myths"? False ideas like asceticism. What is "godliness"? "Godliness" refers to living a God-centered, God-honoring life. Training one's self to live a God honoring life leads to a deeper spiritual of maturity and fruitfulness, not asceticism with its emphasis on the physical.

Though asceticism as a means of spirituality is wrong, Paul acknowledges that physical training such as exercise and eating healthy are beneficial, but not nearly as beneficial as pursuing a God-honoring life. A God-honoring life *holds promise for the present life*. A God-honoring life has health benefits in this life as it teaches us to care for our bodies as temples of the Lord. Godliness benefits us as we walk in the Spirit and bear His fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Godliness improves our relationships. Godliness gives a purpose in this life. Godliness leads to fellowship with God. Not only does godliness benefit us in this life; *godliness holds promise... for the life to come*. Those who pursue godliness in this life will be commended at the Judgment Seat of Christ and will receive reward and authority to serve Jesus in the Messianic Kingdom. In verse 9, Paul emphasized that the value of godliness in this life and the next is a rock solid truth to be believed and pursued.

To what end are we to toil and strive? To live a God-honoring life.

What is the content of our hope which is set on the living God? That God keeps His promises and will fulfill His promise such that we experience the benefits of godliness in this present life and in the life to come.

In what sense is God the Savior of all people? "Savior" means "the one who delivers or rescues". How does God deliver all people including unbelievers and believers? Through His good creation. What the lying teachers claim is bad, namely marriage and some foods, are in fact good gifts given by God to all mankind, not just believers. As unbelievers and believers receive God's good gifts of marriage and food they have been delivered from a lot of bad. Marriage delivers all people from extinction, from loneliness, from sexual disease and premature death. Food delivers all people, unbelievers and believers alike from starvation and death.

By this statement the Apostle Paul further refuted asceticism. Through marriage and food, God has done good to all humanity. And if marriage and food have delivered unbelievers from bad things how much more will they deliver believers who know the love of God and obey His Word regarding marriage and food?

With this, the Apostle Paul completed his refutation of asceticism. Now that that was done, Paul directed Timothy to get back to teaching and modeling God's Word to the church family in Ephesus.

The main idea of 1 Timothy 4:11-16 is this:

Believers are best protected from deception and apostasy when their church leaders stay focused on teaching and modeling the Scriptures.

**1 Timothy 4:11-16** Notice the balanced emphasis on teaching the Scriptures and living them out. Verse 16 sums it up: "Keep a close watch on yourself" refers to Timothy conforming his life to the truths and principles of Scripture and "Keep a close watch... on the teaching" refers to Timothy maintaining the highest standard of interpreting and teaching the Scriptures.

These two things: teaching and modeling the Scriptures will save (deliver) both Timothy and his hearers from what? Going to hell when they die? That can't be it because Timothy and his hearers possess justification salvation. From what will teaching and modeling the Scriptures save Timothy and his hearers? From being deceived and departing from the faith (4:1-2).

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**Application:** This passage applies to us today. Christians are constantly falling prey to false teaching and leaving the faith. The best way to protect believers from being deceived is for our church leadership to stay

focused on teaching and modeling the Scriptures. This is a call for our Elders, Deacons, Staff, Ministry Leaders, Home Group Leaders and Bible Study Leaders to stay focused on teaching God's Word well and to personally apply the principles of Scripture to our own lives.

- We must continue to teach the Bible according to a historical, grammatical, literal hermeneutic.
- We must strive to apply and obey the truths and principles we discover through our study of God's Word.
- Our lives should reflect the love, the wisdom and the goodness of God's truth in such a way that fellow believers will want to live according to God's Word.

There is another matter in this passage that needs addressing.

What happens to those Christians who are deceived and depart from the faith? Do they lose their justification salvation? Short answer: no. Justification salvation cannot be lost. The gift of salvation is exactly that, a gift. Justification salvation is not earned by our works nor is it maintained by our works (Ephesians 2:8-9). Justification salvation cannot be lost. But those who abandon the faith risk rebuke at the Judgment Seat of Christ and loss of reward (2 Timothy 2:10-13).

This is one of the aspects of God's grace that makes it so amazing. Even if we don't live lives faithful to Him, He will remain faithful to His Word and promises to us. But what a loss in this life and the next not to pursue a life of godliness, a life that honors God.

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**- Easter services are family services. Only Nursery and Toddler care available.**

**- Elder Candidate Evaluations on behalf of Eric Benson and Nick Lowther.**

Evaluation forms are available in the foyer and online. Please return today!

**- VOM Needs for March: 1) Bath Towels 2) Floss 3) Combs**

**- Walk for Life sign-ups on the patio.**

**- Women's Night of Worship, Friday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-8:30PM**