

# 1 Timothy

## I. Introduction

- A. **1 Timothy 1:3-7** . . . As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, [4] nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith. [5] But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. [6] For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, [7] wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.
- B. We will be looking at vs 3-4 today, but to help you keep them in their context, remember the words of vs 5 as we work through vs 3-4, “But (*in contrast to strange doctrines, myths, endless genealogies*) the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”
- C. Pray

## II. Dealing with bad, false, and misleading teaching

- A. [3] As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia,
  - 1. **Remain on at Ephesus** –
    - a. Apparently Paul was aware of individuals in the church or in some way connected to the church who were presenting or promoting bad, false, or misleading teaching.
    - b. And so, in an effort to prevent such teaching from leading the believers astray or diluting the truth he had taught them, he urged Timothy to remain in Ephesus and deal with this problem while he went to Macedonia.
    - c. Apparently, Timothy’s efforts bore good fruit because we read in **Revelation 2:1-7**, that God commended the believers in Ephesus for not tolerating evil men (*within the church*), and for putting to the test those who call themselves apostles, yet aren’t, and then exposing them as false.
  - 2. In remaining in Ephesus, Timothy was to **instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines**,

- a. We don't know how many people were involved in teaching or promoting the strange doctrines, but apparently the number was large enough that Paul referred to them as "certain men" rather than naming them.
  - (1) What is sad about this is that from the earliest days of the church – believers and would be believers brought deception, self-exaltation, misleading, and false teaching into the church – which is why the church has needed, and still needs, godly leaders and sincere followers to defend and protect the truth.
  - (2) Even sadder is that fact that it is as much or maybe even more of a threat in our day as it was in Paul's day.
- b. In fact, it is my opinion that this problem is greater than most Christians think.
  - (1) Consider all the denominations, all the non-denominational or unaffiliated churches (*like us*), pastor led churches, parent churches with numerous satellite churches under their authority, house churches, and the ever growing list of new startup groups that seek to propagate their own style of doing church, form of worship, and brand of theology.
    - (a) You have only to attend several churches or listen to various teachers on Christian radio and TV or read current Christian literature to know that there are significant variations and even contradictory theological differences within Christianity. In other words, the idea of a single theology giving direction to the teaching within the Body of Christ is non-existent.
    - (b) When faced with this reality, most ask, "Who is right?" For me, the important question is "What group or church is able to support their theology, form of worship, teaching, selection of leaders, and church government by an honest understanding and practical application of the Word of God?"
  - (2) In talking to folks who have left a church and settled into one of the many options out there, it is my experience that the majority say they choose the church because they like the worship or the teaching or the people or the programs – or all four.
    - (a) Yet when asked what they like about the worship, it rarely has anything to do with the substance and almost everything to do with the style.

- (b) When asked about the teaching, they talk about the current or recent topics or the book in the Bible that is being studied. But what they either don't know or won't talk about is if the teaching is biblically sound.
  - (3) The point of this is simply that biblically unsound and unsupported teaching is a larger problem within the church than most Christians think.
- 3. With this in mind, I want to use God's word to point out some of the problems associated with bad, false, and misleading teaching.
  - a. **1 Timothy 6:3-5**, "If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with **sound words**, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the **doctrine conforming to godliness**, [4] he is (1) conceited and (2) understands nothing; but he (3) has a morbid (*sick, unhealthy*) interest in (A) controversial questions and (B) disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, [5] and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of (*personal*) gain."
  - b. **Acts 20:29-30**, "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; [30] and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse (*deviant, contradictory*) things, **to draw away** the disciples after them (*gain a following for themselves*)."
  - c. **Romans 16:17-18**, "Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances **contrary** to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. [18] For **such men are slaves**, not of our Lord Christ but **of their own appetites**; and by their smooth and flattering speech **they deceive** the hearts of the unsuspecting."
- 4. These scriptures ought to make us ask the question, "Who bears the responsibility to protect the church from unsound teaching?"
  - a. The first and foremost answer is, the church leadership. Paul makes this clear when he exhorts Timothy (*the leader*) to instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines.
  - b. The second answer is the church members. And though there are several places in scripture that support this answer, we will look at just one.
    - (1) **Jude 1:3-4**, "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that **you contend earnestly for the**

**faith** which was once for all handed down to the saints. [4] For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.”

- (2) So who bears the responsibility to protect the church from bad, false, and misleading teaching? We all are.
  - c. I know you’ve heard all this before, but the truth of the gospel is so important to the well-being of individual believers, the overall health of the church, the testimony of Christianity in the world, and the glory of God that it is worth repeating.
- B. [4] nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith.
1. nor to pay attention to **myths** –
    - a. At the time Paul wrote to Timothy, myths were common within Judaism and the surrounding cultures. And apparently some were promoting myths in the church.
    - b. If we combine Webster's 1913 Unabridged Dictionary definition of a myth with how myths were used in Paul’s day, then we can define a myth as a story of unknown age and origin that is treated as a factual account or true explanation of some historical phenomenon, which is then used to give guidance to how we ought to live today.
    - c. An example in our culture is the story of George Washington and the cherry tree – which is used to promote honesty and gaining approval by admitting when you’ve done something wrong.
    - d. A possible example within the Christian culture of our day is the Big Bang Theory coupled with the scientific defense of evolution.
      - (1) These two explanations of a past phenomenon have influenced some Christians to interpret the creation account in **Genesis 1-2** accordingly.
      - (2) And regardless of how often or long Christians speculate, debate, and argue about the Bible’s creation account, such conversations do nothing to purify our thoughts, build godly character, produce mature Christians, or promote unity in the church.
    - e. Though the end times are not a myth, it too brings about similar kinds of speculation, debates, and arguments that produce no

observable difference in how Christians love God or love their family, neighbors, friends, and fellow believers.

- f. My final example deals with the way some churches, church leaders, and individual Christians talk about national and local politics.
  - (1) In my opinion, it is shameful the way church leaders and their followers include speculation, unsubstantiated claims, exaggeration, misrepresentation, demonizing, and name calling when teaching or talking about politics.
  - (2) Such rhetoric may stir passions, but it does not stir the soul to hunger and thirst after righteousness.
- g. The point of this is, empty teaching, misguided Bible studies, and careless conversations done in the name of God and under the banner of Christianity work against what God is doing and wants to do in you and in the church.

## 2. and **endless genealogies**

- a. As I have said in the past, the Jews kept careful genealogical records in order to identify who belonged to which tribe, what role each Levite would have at the Temple, who was in line to be High Priest, and whose family the Messiah might come from since he had to be from the tribe of Judah.
  - (1) In other words, a lot of pride and positions of importance came with knowing your genealogy – which is a focus contrary to what both Jesus and Paul taught.
  - (2) For example, when the disciples began talking and arguing about which one of them was the most important, Jesus said, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over those under them; and those who have authority are called ‘Benefactors’ (*a label that showed their importance in contrast to their patrons*). But it is not this way with you, for the one who is the **greatest** among you must become like the **youngest**, and the **leader** like the **servant**” (**Luke 22:24-26**).
  - (3) Paul wrote in **Romans 12:16** that we are to be of the same mind toward one another. We are not to be haughty in mind, but rather we are to associate with the lowly. And finally, Paul said, we are not to be wise in our own estimation.
  - (4) And James reminds us that God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble (**James 4:6**). In other words, humility is God’s condition or prerequisite for receiving His grace – while pride brings God’s opposition.

- b. It is unlikely that any of us are researching our family history or genealogy to find a way to be considered important in our church. But what is in your heart? Do you desire to be seen as important, or as a servant? Do you want others to think well of you, or do you want God to think well of you? Do you want praise for being a godly Christian or do you want God to get the praise?
  - c. Pride is a sinister evil that easily hides just below the surface. In fact, pride is like high blood pressure, it damages your body and eventually kills you without you being aware of what it is doing.
  - d. It is my hope and prayer that being seen as important is not important to any of us.
- C. Paul points out that studying genealogies to see “Who’s Who” gives rise to speculation – and as you can see, I add pride – rather than furthering the administration or the intentions and work of God in the church and within individual believers.
- 1. At the start of today’s teaching, I encouraged you to keep **vs 5** in mind, which says, “But (*in contrast to strange doctrines, myths, endless genealogies*) the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”
  - 2. Preaching, teaching, group Bible Studies, and the like are to have a God-given purpose, or goal – and the goal is to:
    - a. continually purify your heart – because it is the source of who you really are,
    - b. cleanse our conscience – so it works as it ought,
    - c. build your faith – so you live as those who genuinely trust God,
    - d. and bring you into a life ruled by love – so that you love God as He deserves and those around as you ought.
- D. Therefore, I am urging you to run away from preaching, teaching, Bible studies and the like whose goal is to entertain you, or make you think you are a Christian when you’re not, or tickling your ears with religious information that leaves you in the same spiritual condition you came in with, or intrigue you with speculations about the end times or what heaven is like or what the mysterious portions of God’s word mean.

### III. Conclusion

- A. In **2 Timothy 4:2**, Paul charges Timothy to “preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.”
- B. And I am exhorting you to seek out pastors, teachers, and Bible study leaders who do these things – for your sake and the sake of a spiritually healthy church.