

# 1 Timothy

## I. Introduction

A. **1 Timothy 4:1-10** . . . But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, [2] (*led astray*) by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, [3] men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. [4] For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; [5] for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer. [6] In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following. [7] But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; [8] for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. [9] It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. [10] For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

B. Last week we looked at four of the more common factors contributing to mediocre Christianity. After that, we began considering the fact that everything created by God is good – which is important to know so that you cannot be taken in by anyone claiming that the way to a superior spirituality or more mature Christianity is down a rigid and restricted yet biblically unsupported path of so-called spirituality.

C. Pray

## II. All that God created is good

A. **Vs 3** tells us that there are, or will be, people in the church who will misuse and misrepresent the word of God. And the two examples given are the forbidding of marriage and abstaining from eating certain foods which God created to be gratefully shared in by those **who believe and know the truth**. The phrase in **vs 3** that we will focus on for the next few minutes is: “**who believe and know the truth.**”

1. It is not enough to believe the truth if you do not take the next step of getting to know the truth well enough to live according to it.
  - a. Getting to know the truth requires pondering its meaning, making a worthy effort to understand its application, getting help if you cannot gain a workable understanding on your own, and putting forth the effort required to apply it to your life in sensible and practical ways.
  - b. One of the results of knowing any specific, God given, biblically based truth to the point of living accordingly is that you grow in understanding, insight, and wisdom regarding that truth,
    - (1) which in turn increases your ability to apply it more fully and extensively to your life,
    - (2) which in turn helps you better discern when someone is living or proclaiming something different or contrary to the truth,
    - (3) which then enables you to help others do the same.
2. Though most false teachers know what the Bible says, their focus is not on understanding its truths properly, nor are they focused on teaching others how to apply God's truths in sensible and practical ways to their lives.
  - a. Their focus is self.
    - (1) For example, they want to be seen as someone important – as shown by their efforts to gain a following.
    - (2) They want to be powerful – as shown by requiring or urging their followers to submit to them.
    - (3) And they want to accumulate worldly riches – as shown by selling their religious wares and promoting the financial rewards of giving to their ministry.
  - b. These are the kinds of reasons or motives that compel false teachers to twist and misuse God's word.
3. It is these kinds of teachers that Paul is dealing with here in the beginning **1 Timothy 4**. The false teachers of his day were using the OT law to promote a restricted Christian life-style that was not supported by the word of God.
4. This raises the question: How are we to protect ourselves from the false teachers and false teaching of our day?
  - a. The place to begin is to believe that the truths found in God's word are perfectly, completely, and therefore dependably true.
  - b. Next, get to know those truth by pondering them and considering how to sensibly and practically apply them to your life.

- c. And finally, live according to the truths you know.
  - (1) When it comes to living according to what you know, I believe it is important to understand that you do not have to know all you need to know or all there is to know in order to start living according to God's truths that you do know.
  - (2) Think of it like going to school. You start by learning basic truths and, over time, work your way up to learning complex truths that require an advanced education to understand and apply in sensible and practical ways.
    - (a) And of course, you cannot gain an advanced education by neglecting to use what you learned in the lower grades.
    - (b) Therefore, growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ takes time – so put in the time and as you make progress, continue living up to what you know at every point along the way.
- 5. These three actions – believing the truth, knowing the truth, and applying the truth – provide a great deal of protection from false teachers and their misleading teaching **when coupled with** the Holy Spirit's work of leading you into all truth, and plenty of praying for God's help in knowing how to sensibly and practically apply the truth you know.

B. [4a] **For (or because) everything created by God is good:** As stated last Sunday, the phrase "everything created by God" qualifies or sets the boundaries around what is good so we can easily determine what is and what isn't good.

- 1. Our culture, salesmen, those in power, those with an agenda other than God's agenda, and the devil are all working to get us to believe that what is bad or self-destructive or evil – according to God and His word – is good.
- 2. God condemned those who twist the truth in **Isaiah 5:20-21**, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! [21] Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight!"
- 3. This kind of condemnation ought to awaken us to the threat in our own day, promote discernment when reading or listening, and motivate a church-wide cautiousness so that none of us fall prey to such efforts.

C. Therefore, because everything created by God is good [4b] **Nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude**

1. Bear in mind that Paul is primarily talking about food at this point, though it is reasonable to apply this principle to marriage and to everything else God created.
  - a. However, there is cause for a warning when applying this principle to food or other things created by God. We need to be careful that we do not take things God created for good and use them to meet real or imagined needs in ways that are self-destructive and relationship damaging.
  - b. Take food for an example. We can misuse food by eating more than we need just for the enjoyment of eating, or to find some measure of comfort when facing difficult times, or to soothe our emotions after dealing with a difficult person, or to dull the pain of loss.
  - c. In such cases, we are taking what God created for good and using it in self-destructive, relationship damaging, and spiritually weakening ways. This isn't good.
  - d. Therefore, though everything God created is good, it is possible to misuse what He has created, and in so doing bring about an outcome that isn't good.
2. A second concern when partaking of all the good things that God has created comes from **Romans 14**. The principle established in this chapter is necessary because of the Christians who are in various stages of spiritual growth.
  - a. There are new Christians, teenage and young adult Christians, immature but growing Christians, Christians whose way of thinking does not include critical thinking, mid-life and older Christians, mature Christians, and those who though mature, press onward in order to continue growing in the knowledge of God and the application of that knowledge to their lives.
  - b. Within this broad range of believers there are sure to be some differences of opinion, conviction, values, and beliefs about God, His word, and how to apply the word of God to everyday life.
  - c. **Romans 14** affirms that we are free to enjoy all that God has created, **YET** because of the various stages of spirituality, we are to exercise our freedom within the boundaries of a loving concern for the spiritual well-being of everyone in our church – from the newest and youngest believer to the oldest, most mature Christian.

3. Returning to **vs 4**, and taking into account the two qualifiers we just considered, we can trust that everything created by God is good, and nothing (*such as food and marriage*) is to be rejected or restricted if it is **received with gratitude**, that is, gratitude toward God for creating it and providing it.
  - a. To receive with gratitude something God created is to –
    - (1) acknowledge it came from God,
    - (2) be confident that it is good,
    - (3) and be grateful to God for giving it to you for your benefit and enjoyment.
  - b. To summarize, nothing God created for our good is to be restricted or rejected as if restricting or rejecting it can make you more spiritual. The only qualifications for partaking in what God created is the qualification of misuse, and **Romans 14**.
4. Does this mean you cannot be a Christian vegetarian or a Christian celibate? **NO!** What it means is you cannot make either of these kinds of choices a requirement for some or all believers. And you cannot treat them as proof of superior spirituality.

- D. [5] **For it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.**
1. For something to be sanctified by the word of God means that God has either directly or through the scriptures given permission to enjoy it or make use of it.
    - a. We saw this in relation to food in **Genesis 1:29**, Then God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you.”
    - b. And in **Genesis 9:3**, “Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant.”
  2. To sanctify something through prayer means expressing gratitude and thanksgiving to God for creating it and giving it to us for our use and enjoyment.
  3. But notice, sanctifying what God created requires **BOTH**:
    - a. a God stated permission,
    - b. and our gratitude – as expressed to God through prayer.

### III. Conclusion

- A. All that God has created for us to use and enjoy is good.
- B. God has explicitly given us the freedom to use what He created for us to use.

- C. You cannot become super spiritual by restricting or rejecting the use or enjoyment of something God created for our use – so don't be taken in by those who say you can.
- D. You can misuse what God has created. So be careful not to use anything He created for our use and enjoyment in ways that are harmful to you personally and to those around you. And be careful to use or enjoy what God has created within the boundaries of a loving concern for the spiritual well-being of everyone in our church – from the newest and youngest believer to the oldest, most mature Christian.
- E. If unsure about using or enjoying something, search the scriptures or ask someone who knows God's word well enough to give you a biblically sound answer.
- F. Finally, give thanks to God, day after day, for all the varied things He created for your use and enjoyment. Surely, He deserves such praise and thanks.