

## 1 Timothy 4:1-5

**Subject: False doctrines**

**One Point: Let your conscience be your guide**

To get the full background go to the refuel website: [www.usfbc.com/refuel](http://www.usfbc.com/refuel)

Purpose of 1 Timothy: 1. To direct Timothy to give vigorous personal opposition to the false doctrine developing in Ephesus (1:3). 2. To instruct Timothy about the kind of behavior that should characterize Ephesian believers as members of "God's household. (3:15)"

Last week: **Live so you do**

Maury talked about God's standard for leadership in the church because false teachers were trying to skew that view. Then Paul ends chapter 3 with a hymn affirming the essential truth of what we believe, the person and work of Jesus Christ. So now, Paul begins to deal directly with the false teachers themselves, focusing on their origin and content. This whole section is attacking the fact that any tolerance of error is dishonoring to the God of truth. Anyone who is doing this should be publicly rebuked!

### 4:1-5

v.1 – This verse has so much information in it because of what was happening at Ephesus. This is the only place in the Pastoral Epistles that talks about demons, the devil is an imitator and deceives people– 2 Corinthians 11:13-15

"These people are false apostles. They are deceitful workers who disguise themselves as apostles of Christ.<sup>14</sup> But I am not surprised! Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. <sup>15</sup> So it is no wonder that his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. In the end they will get the punishment their wicked deeds deserve."

He has his own ministers and doctrines and seeks to deceive God's people and lead them astray 2 Corinthians 11:3

"But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ."

1 Peter 5:8 "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."

Abandon *aphistēmi* – Apostasy – a desertion or departure from previously held principles – was used of Israel's unfaithfulness to God in the OT.

People who said they were Christians were falling into the lies and deception.

Paul is repeating what he had told the Ephesian elders in Acts 20. He said that the Holy Spirit, through the Scriptures, had warned of the dangers of apostasy that would be coming. (Matthew 24, 2 Thessalonians 2, Hebrews 3, 2 Peter, etc.)

Latter times – talks about the time from when Christ came to when he comes again. Apostasy will exist during this time until Christ returns.

Paul was calling the false teachers demons because if you aren't for God you are against and the Bible tells how they were being used by Satan. Deception was a leading trait of the errorists. Satan's ability to enlist Judas to do his will shows his competence to influence belief and behavior.

The “some” Paul was referring to were professing Christians. However, “a mere profession of faith does not guarantee actual possession of eternal life.”

Basically, saying you have faith does not mean you have faith – You must believe it and live it out. Many people are swayed because they say they have salvation in Christ alone but when something more enticing comes they are misled, just like the false teachers were doing here: Telling people they have to do certain things to be saved from their sins. They were advocating a works based righteousness. However, we know that we can't do anything to be saved except answer to God's call on our hearts and have faith that believes (Gospel). That is the foundation of our faith. This is what was being rocked at the church in Ephesus. We understand that our faith will get tested but we will not veer off of Christ as our foundation.

v. 2 – Hypocritical liars - False teachers preach one thing but practice another. They tell their disciples what to do, but they do not do it themselves. This is very common with false teachers even today. Many will require you to give all your money and be poor when they are rich, they require you to pray for hours in order to get a blessing, they tell you to do this and do that without being willing to do it themselves.

Hot iron – ironing my clothes – warning- don't iron when you are wearing your clothes – I have thought about trying it, not gonna lie. But can you imagine how much that would hurt. Have you all seen the movie Home Alone? When that hot iron hits his face and it leaves a giant red mark with not really blemished skin? Makes me think of Madeira and how she throws hot grits on people in her/his movies.

Seared with a hot iron –*Kaustēriazō* – two possible translations:

1. A medical term that explained the consciences of the false teachers. Basically, he was saying that their consciences have been desensitized and that's how they can teach all these lies. We see this in Ephesians 4:19 – “Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.”

2. To mark by branding - whose souls are branded with the marks of sin// who carry about with them the perpetual consciousness of sin

“By teaching what was actually false, they had been branded by Satan as his possession and therefore did his will. This shade of meaning emphasizes that the false teachers were willing tools of Satan.”

Basically, this statement by Paul was very strong in order for Timothy to understand the severity of the situation. He wanted Timothy to understand that he has a serious responsibility as do all ministers of the Gospel...with a title and without.

v. 3 – The false teachers were placing singleness on a higher degree of holiness. They placed the celibate life on a higher spiritual level than the married life. The abstinence from foods most likely came from the Mosaic Law between clean and unclean foods since these false teachers were basing things off of Judaism. Paul addresses this in Colossians 2:21-23. Jesus also addresses this in Mark 7:14-19: “Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. <sup>15</sup> Nothing outside a man can make him ‘unclean’ by going into him. Rather, it is

what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean.'<sup>17</sup> After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. <sup>18</sup>“Are you so dull?” he asked. “Don't you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him 'unclean'? <sup>19</sup> For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body.” (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods 'clean.'”

What's wrong with abstinence from food? Nothing is wrong if you aren't doing it as a result of a mistaken notion. The false teachers of the day were proclaiming that all created matter was evil. They claimed that the less contact the believers had with this evil physical creation, the better and holier. Paul makes the point that God's creation was good in the next verse. Even though it was marred in the fall, its essential goodness remains.

What's really interesting was how this was a twisting of Scripture. In 1 Corinthians 7 and Matthew 6 singleness and fasting are commended. However, the false teachers were saying these were required in order to be saved...which is a way to tell a false doctrine. Anything you add to the Gospel creates a false doctrine. Jesus + nothing = everything...not Jesus + singleness, Jesus + cleanliness, not Jesus + going to a certain church, not Jesus + a pastor, nothing.

I think it is funny that they were saying marriage and food are bad – we kind of need both of them for life.

Paul ends this verse with the proper response to the question of eating foods, especially bacon, and that was to eat after having expressed thanksgiving through prayer.

v. 4 – verses 4 and 5 are a response to the reason Paul is opposing theologically based asceticism. (The doctrine that through renunciation of worldly pleasures it is possible to achieve a high spiritual or intellectual state.)

First – he affirms that God's creation is good. Genesis 1:31 – God declares His creation as good. Romans 1:20 “For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.”

Second – We must receive everything with thanksgiving – this is why we give thanks (say grace, ask for a blessing, thank the Lord for making bacon, whatever you call it) before we eat as Jesus did in Mark 6 and 8. Paul's words suggest that a thankless heart can transform even good food into unacceptable food. This doesn't mean you can be a drunk or glutton because you thanked God for it!

v. 5 – The emphasis in a minister's life should be on “the Word of God and prayer” Many times ministers get so busy with menial tasks because the ministry expects the ministers to do everything and keeps the pastors so busy that they hardly have any time for God's Word and prayer. (Acts 6:1-7) (Divided up the ministry so the pastors could study)

Consecrated/sanctified – made holy and set apart. The way this is done is through thankful prayer and an understanding that the Word of God set aside temporary Mosaic dietary restrictions (pre-Christ).

1 John 4:1-6 – test the spirits, start with Jesus

“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. <sup>2</sup>This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, <sup>3</sup>but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. <sup>4</sup>You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. <sup>5</sup>They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. <sup>6</sup>We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.”

Christ condemned the doctrine of the Pharisees because it was of human origin. Then we see Christian doctrine becoming systematized in Acts 2:42.

The basic doctrine we see of the Christian church is this:

1. Jesus was the Messiah, the Christ
2. God raised Him from the dead
3. Salvation was by faith in His name.

One of the marks of a true servant of God is his honesty and integrity (be above reproach?). They practice what they preach. This does not mean being sinlessly perfect but sincerely seeks to obey the Word of God. You try to maintain a good conscience (1 Timothy 1:5, 19; 3:9) Paul constantly brings up Timothy’s conscience and compares it to the false teachers’ conscience.

### **Let your conscience be your guide**

Blue Fairy to Jiminy Cricket and Pinocchio –

However, your conscience here is truly the Holy Spirit.

v. 1:5 – Good

v. 1:19 – Good

v. 3:9 – Clear

Keep your conscience good and clear by doing the right thing and holding on to Jesus Christ. Hebrews 12:2 – “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Then your doctrine will not be swayed as it says in James 1 like someone who is being swayed left and right like waves of the sea. You will stand firm.

Let the Spirit guide you.

Many times we don’t get swayed from the Spirit immediately. This is kind of like cooking a live frog. If you put it in a pot of boiling water he is going to jump out. I know I would! However, if you put him in water, and slowly raise the heat, the frog gets comfortable; he feels the heat but then gets used to it because it doesn’t hurt as much when he gets used to it, then the frog eventually dies as he just stays there.

If we deliberately ignore our conscience (what the Holy Spirit is telling us) we eventually get hardened to what we know is right. Our hearts ignore what we know what the truth is. Paul explains that when this happens our faith is shipwrecked and we start following false doctrines – some that we make up ourselves or doctrines that others tell us.

A believer cannot discover new doctrines – Solomon said there is nothing new under the sun. You need to remain true to what you know and what your conscience (the Holy Spirit) is telling you based on what you have studied in the Word. You must know what the enemy is teaching but not be influenced by it. A chemist may handle poisons but will do whatever it takes to make sure they don't get into his body.

#### Questions:

Do you think apostasy is prevalent in the church now? Why does it happen?

What are some false teachers you have heard of in the past? Why did people follow them? (Bin Laden, David Koresh)

What are some clues that help us discern whether or not a leader is a false teacher? What would be a biblical approach to take if you were concerned about the doctrine or behavior of a church leader?

What makes it difficult to differentiate between good and bad doctrine?

What is the best advice you have ever received? How did it help you?

Why do people abandon their faith in God?

Why is gratitude for what God has given us so important in fighting false teaching?

What specific actions are you engaged in to train yourself to be godly so you won't succumb to false teaching?

What kind of acceptance and tolerance do you think the Bible advocates? How does this compare to USF's brand of tolerance?

What role does the enemy play in propagating false doctrine in 2 Peter 2:1 and Revelation 12:9? What end awaits both Satan and false teachers?

Resources for false teachings 4truth.