

**1Timothy 4:1-3 ¶ Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.**

I think one of the first things to note in this section of scripture is that Paul is instructing Timothy according to the revelation of the Holy Spirit in affirmation of the teaching of Jesus.

*Matthew 24:11 "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many."*

This instruction regards problems he will encounter in ministry to the "church," all those who profess their faith in Jesus as Lord. Scripture is clear in telling us that not all who profess Jesus as Lord actually possess or yield to Him as Lord.

*Matthew 7:21-23 "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."*

It is also clear that Paul is instructing Timothy regarding the "latter times." This instruction also implies that Paul expects Timothy to be confronted with these "latter times" problems. Using hindsight we can see that these issues have become increasingly prominent as the time for the Lord's return gets ever closer.

Considering the scripture from both Timothy and Matthew, it would seem that in the last days there will be an increase in the number of people in Christendom who will separate themselves from people of true faith. Faith is an unwavering confidence in the truth of God and His word. As time for the return of Jesus approaches, the moral convictions of professing Christians will become more aligned with accepted cultural morals. They will not hold firm to the truth of faith in Christ Jesus as the only way to salvation. They will not hold fast to the whole of scripture as the inspired word of God.

I think this prophecy is being fulfilled as more and more of those who claim to be Christian are separating themselves from the truth of God's word and embracing mystical practices, distancing themselves from preaching against sin, redefining the truth of scripture to accommodate the morals of our culture and putting the validity of the whole of scripture into question.

Paul goes on to explain that seducing spirits and doctrines of devils will be responsible for this departure from the faith. Obviously these seducing spirits are utilizing human beings that are masquerading as followers of Jesus. What they expound as truth is actually the perverted teaching of demons. They are hypocrites who pretend virtue and a reverence and love of God, but they are actually serving self. They are so convincing because their conscience has been totally desensitized; Paul uses the Greek word from which we get our word for

cauterize. This seared conscience goes hand in hand with a hard heart. These people are impervious to guilt or shame.

I think that forbidding marriage and the eating of meat must have been singled out because false teachers of that day were promoting those specific teachings.

**1Timothy 4:4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.**

According to scripture all meat is acceptable for consumption when received with thanks as part of God's provision for His children. I hadn't really noticed it before, but "every creature" is acceptable as a food source. This is actually supported by the Lord's instructions to Noah.

*Genesis 9:2-3 "And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things."*

**1Timothy 4:6 ¶ If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.**

Just as all creatures are good for physical nourishment of the body, the words of God ("of faith and of good doctrine") are to nourish the believer. Only when we receive the nourishment of God's word are we able to provide spiritual nourishment to others. Paul tells Timothy that he will prove to be a good servant of Jesus if he chooses to share the truth that he learns. The fact that he encourages him to "put the brethren in remembrance" implies that the brethren should already be familiar with this truth but would benefit from being reminded of that truth. Every good parent and teacher knows that learning is an ongoing process and that it is important that we continue to review and be reminded of previous instruction and how to make application to our lives.

Before moving on to the next section, I think it is important to note that good doctrine cannot be discerned apart from rightly dividing the word of God.

*2 Timothy 2:15 "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*

**1Timothy 4:7 But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.**

I really liked the NLT translation of this verse: "Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales. Spend your time and energy in training yourself for spiritual fitness."

I think this is an especially interesting word of wisdom in today's culture. The attack of atheists in particular in society today is especially bold and aggressive against Christianity. This definitely falls into the category of "profane" or "godless ideas." Though we are to be prepared to give an answer as to why we believe what we believe according to God's word, we need to be guard against "casting pearls before swine."

*1 Peter 3:15 "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:"*

*Matthew 7:6 "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."*

I think an excerpt from my study of the Sermon on the Mount applies here:

"This verse clarifies that we are to be discerning about our interactions with others. We are not to share our spiritual treasure with those who won't treasure it. This actually makes me think of the debates that occur between believers and atheists or "pro choice" proponents or those who reject scripture as God's word, etc. Debate for debate's sake accomplishes nothing. It just provides a platform for the believer and the treasure he is defending to be mocked and degraded. On the other hand, we should not decline to be ready "to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." This requires discernment regarding "dogs and swine," those who hate God and His truth vs. those who are seeking the truth."

"I want to be clear that I am not condemning programs that offer an opportunity for learned men on both sides of an issue to be presented in a respectful manner. In such audiences there are true seekers as well as mockers. You don't avoid declaring the truth for fear of attack. Jesus clearly exemplified that truth. I think, however, that participation should be prayerfully considered." [end excerpt]

The Greek for *exercise* was interesting; it stated, "to practice naked...i.e., train...." This seemed to be saying that it should be obvious to anyone who cares to observe that we are training ourselves to be godly, to be like Jesus.

Our culture today is obsessed with looking good and utilizing all types of exercise gadgets and diet programs that will facilitate our achieving that goal. Trying to maintain one's appearance and keeping the body fit are not bad things, but the energy we invest to that end has no eternal benefit; it's only of benefit in this life. Time and energy invested in disciplining ourselves to become more godly benefits us both in this life and our life after death—for eternity.

**1Tim. 4:9-10 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.**

I really like the CJB translation of these verses: *“Here is a statement you can trust, one that fully deserves to be accepted (indeed, it is for this that we toil and strive): we have our hope set on a living God who is the deliverer of all humanity, especially of those who trust.”*

I think the key words in these verses are “living God.” Our God is not an impotent idol; He is the all-powerful, intelligent, creative being that is the very source of life. This is soooooooo different from the “god” of any other religion.

Scripture is everywhere clear that God has provided deliverance from sin for ALL men. It is also clear that only those who choose to accept that provision will be delivered.

*John 3:14–18 “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”*

In these verses Jesus made reference to an incident that happened during the time of the exodus as recorded in Numbers.

*Numbers 21:5–9 “And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said unto Moses, **Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.** And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.”*

I think it is important to note that the Lord made provision for everyone to be healed, but they had to choose to look upon the pole to live. There weren't several options made available through which they could find healing; they were given one way. Only through obedience to God and accepting His provision could they be healed and live.

The principle is the same today; there is only one way to find deliverance from judgment and that is in the person of Jesus Christ.

*John 14:6 “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”*

Every Christian should be of the mindset that this truth is worth dying for. It is a truth that is worth every bit of energy and effort that we exert in declaring this good news to unbelievers.

**1Timothy 4:11-12 These things command and teach. Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.**

Timothy was evidently a young man, but obviously a young man of spiritual maturity. Timothy is a prime example of one whose wisdom exceeded his years. He was blessed to have been raised by a mom and grandma who loved the Lord and imparted that love to him.

*2 Timothy 1:5 "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded in thee also."*

Timothy's testimony was in direct contrast to Paul's; his life wasn't transformed from wicked religious zealot to powerful man of God. Timothy grew up in the faith. Because of the solid foundation laid by his mom and grandma, he grew rapidly into a godly young man of spiritual maturity, wisdom and humility. Paul is encouraging this young man to be confident in the truth he has been taught. Paul knows that others may try to attack him on the grounds that he is too young to provide spiritual leadership. He is telling Timothy that the best way to silence these naysayers is to let his life speak in affirmation of the truth he is teaching. He tells him to work at being an example of the believers in six areas.

"in word" – This is a reference to his speech—what he says and how he says it.

"in conversation" – This is a reference to his conduct—how he lives in light of what he says.

"in charity" – This is a reference to how he acts toward others in light of what he teaches.

"in spirit" – This is a reference to his "mental disposition" (from the Greek)—what is reflected in his countenance as he confronts the ups and downs in life.

"in faith" – This is a reference to the consistency of his convictions in light of what he teaches.

"in purity" – This is a reference to living a life that is honest and chaste—free from worldly influences and pollutions.

**1Timothy 4:13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.**

This verse reminds us that Timothy was providing temporary leadership for this community of believers under Paul's authority. In that leadership role Timothy was to give priority to reading of the scripture, giving exhortation based on that reading and providing instruction as necessary according to that reading.

Making believers knowledgeable about the word of God is foundational to the spiritual growth and effective ministry of each and every believer. The first step to becoming knowledgeable about God's word is to read it. The Greek for the word *exhortation* includes, "imploration, solace, comfort, and consolation." This seems to be emphasizing how to apply the truth of God's word to one's life. In applying the truth of God's word to one's life, one must receive proper instruction concerning the truth of God's word—how to rightly divide it.

**1Timothy 4:14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.**

As mentioned previously, I think this verse ties in with verses 18-20 of chapter 1. This is an area of teaching that has been both neglected and abused in current times. Scripture is clear that God worked through the body of believers in every area of ministry in the early church—encouragement, comfort, instruction, correction, guidance, miracles, commission to ministry and bestowment of gifts. In each of these areas God was providing for the needs of the body through the members of the body. The source of the provision was no less God's through His Spirit; He just allowed the members of the body to serve as the vessel through whom that provision was identified. I personally believe that is how He prefers to work among His people. I believe the only reason that we don't see as much evidence of this type of ministry among believers today is because the devil has succeeded in infiltrating the body with his army of corrupt false teachers. That infiltration has caused many to reason that this type of ministry in the church was unique to the early church. I see nothing in scripture that gives support to such a conclusion.

**1Timothy 4:15 Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.**

meditate = revolve in the mind (Greek); to dwell on anything in thought; to think seriously (Webster)

I think it is important to note that the direction was to "meditate upon these things." The meditation was to have a focus on specific instruction from God's word. It seems that more and more today meditation is being taught as a means of connecting to God instead of as a means of strengthening our understanding of His truth. Scripture everywhere encourages us to meditate on the truth of God's Word and the truth about God as declared in His word. It doesn't promote a formula of how to meditate or a mantra that opens our minds to make a connection.

*Joshua 1:8 "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is*

*written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."*

*Psalms 1:1–2 "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."*

*Psalms 63:5–6 "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches."*

*Psalms 77:11–12 "I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings."*

David is very clear in declaring that meditation should be rooted in understanding—based on intelligence, reason and wisdom (from the Greek).

*Psalms 49:3 "My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding."*

JFB made a pertinent point: "As food would not nourish without digestion, which assimilates the food to the substance of the body, so spiritual food, in order to benefit us, needs to be appropriated by prayerful meditation."

**1Timothy 4:16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.**

This chapter closed with Paul's admonition for Timothy to pay close attention to how he lives his life and what he is teaching. I think we would word it as being careful to practice what you preach. When one is rightly dividing God's word and applying it to his life, he is in effect saving himself from the consequences of sin and giving no reason for those who hear him to reject that truth.