

Fighting the Good Fight

A Study in First Timothy

LESSON FOUR

Prayerfully read through 1st Timothy, chapter four.

1. Paul begins this chapter with a stern warning from the Holy Spirit, that needed to be seriously heeded by Timothy, and needs to be heeded by us and every pastor in our time as well. From **verse 1**, write down what this warning is.

2. “**....some will depart from the faith...**” This first statement in the warning given by the Holy Spirit is a **departure from the faith**. The Greek word for “depart” can be translated as remove, revolt, desist, desert, draw away, refrain, withdraw, or **apostasy**. “The faith” is the context of sound doctrine; the **fundamental truths** of the Gospel. This is certainly as prevalent today, or more so, as it was in Paul’s day. Look up **2 Timothy 4:3-4** that speaks of this “departure.” Write down the verse below.

3. The second statement tells us one of the ways this departure will happen, by “**...giving heed to deceiving spirits...**” The following Scriptures speak about this “**deception**” that the Spirit of God warns us about. Look them up and record them below.

2 Corinthians 11:3 -

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 -

2 Timothy 3:13 –

4. The third way of this departure Paul speaks of is by giving heed to “... **the doctrine of demons.**” This is a warning against “**false teachers.**” David Guzik says in his commentary: “**It is hard to say if there is more false teaching today, or if it is merely a case of modern technology being able to spread the lie better. But the old saying is certainly true today: a lie travels at top speed while the truth goes on foot – and more people within the church are following these doctrines of demons.**” What do these verses say concerning false teachers?

Romans 16:17 -

Colossians 2:8 -

2 Peter 2:1-2 -

5. In **1 Timothy 4:2** Paul gives a description of those who depart from the faith. Write that description down.
6. Look up the word “hypocrisy” in a dictionary and record the definitions you find.
7. Record Jesus’ words about hypocrites in **Matthew 15:8-9 & 23:13.**

Matthew 15:8 & 9 -

Matthew 23:13 -

8. Paul continues his description of these hypocrites in **1 Timothy 4:3.** Write the verse down below.

9. This is a description of **legalism**. Legalism comes in many forms, including those who forbid marriage and look upon the choice to stay single as more spiritual. In all its forms, it is a dangerous doctrine. Although it tries to disguise itself in piety, it's true face is a form of spiritual pride. David Guzik states, **“There have always been those in the church who regard themselves as more spiritual than God Himself, and have a stricter set of rules for living than God does.”** Jesus spoke about this in **Matthew 15:11**. Look this verse up and then record his explanation in **Matthew 15:17-20**.

10. What further things does Paul say about this in **Colossians 2:20-23**?

11. The statements Paul makes in **1 Timothy 4:4 & 5** are statements specifically **regarding food** and our diet. What we eat may affect our health and physical wellbeing, but it does not affect our status or “righteousness” before God. God has declared **all foods acceptable** (sorry, vegetarians!) and they are to be received with thanksgiving. *Good news for this steak lover!* The dietary laws God gave to Israel were to set them apart from the other nations. His original intent in creation is found in **Genesis 9:3**. Look it up and record the verse below.

12. God made clear to Peter in **Acts 10:10-15** that all foods are “clean.” He used this as an illustration to Peter that he was no longer to look at the Gentiles as “unclean,” but Paul reiterates this in **Romans 14:14** concerning food, saying, **“I am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself...”** Look up **1 Corinthians 10:31** and write down what our attitude should be towards these things.

13. In **1 Timothy 4:6** Paul describes the attributes of a good minister of Christ. What does he say those attributes are?
14. There are **three important things** Paul points out to the one who wants to be a good minister. First, he says **instruct the brethren**. The primary job of a good minister is **instruction**, whether in or out of the pulpit. The **KJV** says, “Put the brethren **in remembrance** of these things.” The **NIV** and **NASB** says “...**point these things out** to the brothers and sisters.” The **NLT** says, “**explain** these things.” All speak of the importance of **instructing** the church in the truth of God’s Word and sound doctrine. Record the words of Peter in **2 Peter 1:12**.
15. The **second important point** Paul mentions in **1 Timothy 4:6** is actually **the way** in which a good minister **is able** to accomplish this call to instruct the flock. He says he needs to be **nourished in the words of faith and good doctrine**. You cannot adequately instruct others if you have not received that instruction yourself. Paul uses the word “**nourished**.” It is more than just reading about something to gain a knowledge of it. Look up the word “**nourish**” in a dictionary and record the definitions you find.
16. One of the definitions in **Webster’s 1828 Dictionary** is “**to feed on to cause growth**.” In Psalm 1:2 David speaks of the one who **meditates** on God’s Word, day and night. Record what he says the **result** of that mediation is in **Psalm 1:3**.
17. Record what Paul says to Timothy in **2 Timothy 3:16 & 17**.

18. The last part of **1 Timothy 4:6** gives us the **third important point** Paul makes concerning a good minister. Speaking of good doctrine he states, “...which you have carefully followed.” A good minister is to **instruct**, by being **nourished in the Word** and by **living out** that Word through the **example of his lifestyle**. What does Paul say in the following verses about being an example that others can follow?

Philippians 3:17 -

Philippians 4:9 -

1 Peter 5:3 -

19. Looking at **1 Timothy 4:7** Paul tells Timothy to **reject profane and old wives’ fables**. Fables, of course, are things not based on facts. Paul gives a clearer description of these things in the following verses. Record them below for more clarity on what Paul is saying to reject.

1 Timothy 6:20 -

2 Timothy 2:23 -

Titus 1:14 -

20. What does Paul state in **1 Timothy 4:7** to do instead?

21. The Greek word for “**godliness**” means holiness or piety. The Greek word for “**exercise**” can also be translated as “train.” There are a number of references on this subject we could turn to, but I think **2 Peter 1:5-8** gives the most beautiful description of exercising ourselves towards godliness. Look it up and record those verses below.

22. **1 Timothy 4:9** tells us that **verse 8** is another “**faithful saying, worthy of all acceptance.**” Write down the faithful saying of **verse 8** below.

23. Paul states that godliness is profitable for both **this life** and the **life that is to come**. Look up **2 Peter 1:2-4** that speaks of the **advantages** godliness adds to **this life**. Write down all the advantages listed in these verses.

24. Look up and write down the promises of **Galatians 6:8** and **1 Peter 1:3 & 4**, which speaks of the benefits in the **life that is to come**.

Galatians 6:8 –

1 Peter 1:3 & 4 -

25. What does Paul say the reason is for why they **labor and suffer reproach** in **1 Timothy 4:10**?

We **labor** in our efforts to preach the truth of the Gospel, and we suffer **reproach** because of that very faith in the Living God which we proclaim and desire to be made known. The trust we have in Him is also the reason why we are willing to labor, even knowing we will suffer reproach. Commentator **Albert Barnes** notes: **“The sentiment is, that the belief that God has revealed a plan of salvation for all people, and invites all people to be saved, will make his friends willing to “labor” to make this known, though it be attended with reproaches.”** Paul adds that He (Christ) is the Savior of **all men, especially those who believe**.

26. What do you think he means by this? Explain in your own words.

27. In **verse 11** Paul tells Timothy that “these things” (all he has told him up to this point) he is to **command** and **teach**. As we look at **verse 12** we can see at least one of the **challenges** Timothy was facing. What does the first half of this verse say?

28. What does Paul say is a sure remedy for this challenge in the second half of **verse 12**?

29. In **verses 13 through 16** Paul gives Timothy some important instructions that will assure his success in the ministry God has called him to. What are the first instructions given to Timothy in **verse 13**?

30. All of these have to do with his attention to God’s Word. This is **essential** to being a **good minister**. How very sad it is that so many churches are veering away from God’s Word to use the pulpit as a platform for personal agendas. They are not ministers of God if they are not ministers of His Word. That begins with the **personal study** of God’s Word. Record Paul’s instruction to Timothy in **2 Timothy 2:15** below.

The KJV says, “**Study** to show yourself approved unto God...” Note that the verse says to be “a **worker** who does not need to be ashamed...” It takes **diligence**, it takes **effort**, it takes **time**, it takes **commitment**. But the **end result** is being able to **rightly handle** or **rightly divide** the word of truth.

31. Looking back at **1 Timothy 4:13** we see how important it is to first **study** (give attention to **reading**) so that you are able to attend to exhortation and doctrine. Look up and write out the words of Paul in **2 Timothy 4:2**.

32. In **1 Timothy 4:14** Paul continues his important instructions to Timothy. Write down the instruction Paul gives in this verse.

Do not neglect... It is sad that we have all received so much, and so often **neglect** what God has given us. Each one of us has been given gifts from the Holy Spirit. Each one of us has a call to some form of ministry. God has prepared for each one of us good works for us to do. And each one of us is called to use the gifts given to us to perform those works and to edify the church. We often think we need some kind of public platform in order to use our gifts, but that isn't so. Some of the most vital and important gifts in the church are those that go unnoticed and are often unseen. Gifts of encouragement, gifts of hospitality, gifts of intercession, gifts of mercy, of giving and of "helps." That is just a partial list.

33. Are you using yours? Share how you are using your gifts, or how maybe you are aware that you've been neglecting them.

34. Look up **Romans 12:5-8** and record those verses below.

35. Write out Paul's instruction to Timothy in **1 Timothy 4:15**.

Meditate... Some translations say **be diligent in** or **practice**. The idea is to think upon; to consider, to make it of key importance. Concerning this verse, **Albert Barnes** states, **“Let your mind be deeply impressed with these things; make them the subject of profound and serious thought.”**

36. Paul goes on to say **“give yourself entirely to them.”** That is often the problem. We don't **give ourselves entirely**. **David Guzik** states, **“Often we fall short of all we can be for God because we are *passive* in our Christian life; we simply do not give ourselves entirely. Jesus warned against this passive attitude in the parable of the talents, where the servant who did nothing was severely rebuked.”** In contrast, look up and record Paul's attitude in **1 Corinthians 15:10**.

37. Paul's final instructions to Timothy in this chapter are found in **verse 16**. What are the **two things** Paul tells Timothy to **take heed** to?

38. These **two things** are **essential**. Sound doctrine must be **taught**, and **exampled** by a **lifestyle** that walks worthy of God's calling. How often we see ministers who are lacking in one or the other, or even both of these two essentials. Paul exhorts Timothy to not only heed them but to **continue in them**. This is a calling for the long haul. It's a calling to **persevere** and **endure**. Look up and the following verses.

Galatians 6:9 -

Hebrews 10:35 & 36 -

Hebrews 12:1 -

39. Looking back to **1 Timothy 4:16** what does Paul say the result will be in **continuing** to **give heed** to your lifestyle and doctrine?

“Throughout this epistle Paul had been advising Timothy concerning his private life and public ministry. He was to keep a sharp eye on both, persevering in the instructions Paul had offered in the two realms. In so doing, said Paul, **you will save both yourself and your hearers.** Ultimately only God can save, of course; yet in a secondary sense the New Testament speaks of a person “saving” himself and others. Paul’s words are a pointed reminder of the awesome burden of responsibility that congregational leaders carry.” **Bible Knowledge Commentary**

40. What was your greatest take-away from Lesson Four?

This study was written and prepared by Shawn Van Hook, 2023