

Sermon or Lesson: 1 Timothy 4:6-8 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Reject Deviant Ways To Godliness

READ: 1 Timothy 4:6-8, with vv.1-5 for context

BACKGROUND:

- - In the first part of 1 Timothy chapter 4, God's Spirit is warning us that our church has been infiltrated and infused with agents who work covertly on behalf of and in conjunction with the Kingdom of Darkness. (v.1)
- - The Holy Spirit says these wayward congregants in our church are hypocrites and spiritually un-discerning, and they have an approach of deception and masquerading in order to promote the agendas of counterfeit manifesting and teaching false doctrines that originate from deceiving spirits. (v.2)
- - False teachers can lead people away from the benefits of what God has established and approves of, even to the extent of convincing them to participate in directly condemning and outright rejecting that which God has pronounced as being good and permissible. (v.3)
- - Let's study what God says should be done to counter the teaching of false doctrines in our church.

v.6 - READ

[Lesson Question: What is a "good minister" directed to do in this verse, and what ramifications can be expected from the fulfilling of this directive from God?]

SECTION POINT: Good ministers regularly teach their congregants the characteristics of false teachings that are occurring in their church or ministry.

"If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus"

- - Being a teacher of the Word necessitates some engaging in apologetics, some defending of the faith - particularly in regard to protecting congregants from the hazards of false teachings.
- - Information needs to be taught to the congregation about how false teachers function in churches, what their tactics are, where they get their false doctrines from, how specifically their teachings stray away from what God says, and why their teachings pose a serious "hazard" and threat. (Strong's #5294)
- - Teaching this information about false teachers is a necessary educational process for every church, and is not an activity and topic to be avoided.
- - Pastors and teachers of the Word do right and do "good" if they teach this information.
- - Conversely then, those pastors and teachers of the Word who avoid or fail to teach this information are thereby potentially and unnecessarily allowing the exposing of their congregants to the enticing sins and subsequent harm inherent to false teachings.

"brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed"

- - "A good minister of Christ Jesus" is a person who, having been "brought up in the truths of the faith", thereupon continues forth that process and dynamic, bringing up the next generation of believers in the truths of the faith.
 - - The same truths of the faith that established the good minister need to be taught to the next generation, "nourishing and educating" all of those persons who are to rise up next to carry on the propagation of the truths of the faith. (Strong's #1789)
 - - "Following" "good teaching" of the truths of the faith will establish, nourish, and sustain those persons coming next just as it has accomplished in the life of the good minister.
 - - The truths of the faith need to be intentionally and directly passed on to those persons coming next, because the agents of the Kingdom of Darkness and their false teaching human collaborators are aggressively striving to subvert this passing on process. (vv.1-3)
 - - The responsibility of passing this information and process legacy on to those persons coming next needs to be regarded seriously and pursued diligently by every good minister.
 - - Therefore, considering that all churches are under current and ongoing attack internally, then the topic of 'False Doctrines Present In Our Church' should be regularly and adequately taught. (from 1 Timothy 4:1-2; 2 Peter 2:1-3; Jude 1:4; 2 Timothy 4:3-4)
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v.7 - READ

[Lesson Question: Analyze what God is instructing in this verse, and explore the corresponding ramifications.]

SECTION POINT: Believers are to refuse, avoid, resist, and vocally disapprove of false teaching, as they instead pursue godliness only in the way God instructs in His Word.

"Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales"

- - In order to follow the good teaching and the truths of the faith as cited in verse 6, true believers will need to "have nothing to do with" false teachings.
- - Of course, this will require that each person is not open to false teaching and does not entertain listening to false teaching, which, by the way, is a critical fatal error Eve made in the Garden of Eden. (see Genesis 3:1-6)
- - In the original Greek, the phrase "have nothing to do with" carries a sense of responding with a somewhat passive refusing and avoiding, and also responding with an active vocal expressing of disapproval and outright resistance. (Strong's #3868)
- - So for those who are knowledgeable about the theological faults within the false teachings, then they are to additionally respond by speaking out against the false teachings occurring in their church and perhaps even refuting the theological faults within the false teachings.

- - A necessity, then, is that there needs to be persons in the church or ministry who can discern and specifically identify the technical theological errors, deviances, falseness, and deceptions contained within the seemingly harmless false doctrines being taught.
- - Analytical persons with theological training and the spiritual gift of discernment should be recruited, listened to, and encouraged to speak up when they detect within teachings false doctrines, "godless myths, and old wives' tales".
- - Instead of being rebuffed, these Spirit-gifted discerning guardians should be appreciated and thanked when they verbally expose contentions and assertions that in reality are baseless "tales, fiction, or myths". (Strong's #3454)
- - Likewise, instead of being suspiciously questioned and badgered, these Spirit-gifted discerning guardians should be readily believed and firmly supported when they verbally expose and biblically prove the "godlessness", or "impropriety, or irreverence, or irreligiousness, or contemptuousness" that is subtly embedded or disguised or hidden within false teachings occurring in our church or ministry. (from Strong's #0952 and *AHD* - 'profane')

"rather, train yourself to be godly"

- - "Train yourself to be godly" is the opposite of and counters following godless myths.
- - This instruction implies that following false teaching and godless myths is an unacceptable shortcut, or deviation, or inadequate substitute for genuine godliness in one's life.
- - "Train yourself to be godly" is like physically training for a race - it takes consistent and persistent work, dedicated ongoing exerting of effort, resolute determination, self-discipline, and self-initiation, for which there are no shortcuts or easy ways to circumvent this discipline that God accepts.
- - Reading your Bible daily, learning and applying what God is instructing in each passage, identifying and wrestling with your own bondages to sins, confessing your sins to God, changing your lifestyle, putting off your sinfulness, putting on righteous living, changing your beliefs system, making your requests and prayers to God, yielding to God's will on a moment-by-moment basis every day - these disciplines all take a lot of work, time, and dedication to successfully exercise and fulfill.
- - A common objective of false doctrines is to circumvent this hard work of pursuing godliness by offering a shortcut or deviation to improving godliness.
- - Rationales are used to try to justify and prove that godliness has been achieved by believing and/or putting into practice the contention of the false doctrine.
- - An example common and popular today is, "If you exhibit this particular behavior, then that is evidence that the Holy Spirit is supernaturally manifesting through you, therefore you are filled with the Spirit and thereby you are godly."
- - This line of thinking covertly seeks to circumvent the hard work of pursuing godliness by offering quick effortless godliness that in reality is superficial and deceptive.

v.8 - READ

[Lesson Question: Develop the similarities and the differences between physical training and spiritual training as described in this verse.]

SECTION POINT: Properly pursuing genuine godliness can bring long-term and comprehensive profitability to your life.

- - In a similar way to the "value" that "physical training" has, spiritual training or pursuing godliness produces even more value, "profitability, or advantage". (Strong's #5624)
 - - Physical training only somewhat positively impacts and improves one's life because it is limited to affecting the physical aspects of our existence on a physical level and temporally in the present.
 - - But godliness significantly positively impacts and improves one's life because it has wide-ranging effects on "all things", all aspects of our existence, which includes the physical and the spiritual, and not only temporally in the present but also eternally in the future.

 - - Pursuing and following false teachings, such as "godless myths, and old wives' tales", is an exercise in futility, being utterly "worthless, frivolous, ineffective, and fruitless" because it effectively moves the person away from the godliness that God values, desires for us, and will bless us for genuinely achieving. (v.7; AHD - 'futility')
 - - May "the eyes of your spiritual heart be" opened and "enlightened" to see, recognize, and embrace the truth and reality pertaining to godliness. (Ephesians 1:18)
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BIG IDEA: Believers are to learn and follow the truths of the faith, which lead to godliness, while simultaneously learning and actively rejecting false teachings, which lead to futility and godlessness.

APPLICATIONS:

- - Church and ministry leaders, have you designated any analytical persons with theological training and the spiritual gift of discernment to watch for and expose false teachings in your church or ministry? And if not, why not?
- - Do you encourage them to monitor all teaching that is occurring in your church and support them when they expose the teaching of false doctrines?

- - For all of you here today, are you directly being taught the characteristics of false teachings that are occurring in your church or ministry?
- - If not, what steps can you initiate to educate yourself about the characteristics of false teachings that are occurring in your church or ministry?
- - If you are learning about the characteristics of false teachings that are occurring in your church or ministry, are you accepting and standing firm in the relating biblical teaching and principles that oppose the false teachings?
- - Or are you wishy-washy on the issues because you do not want to make any waves or you are friends with some of the persons who are following or doing the false teaching?

- - Are each of you willing to do the hard work, to dedicate yourself right now to consistently put in the work, effort, and time to learn the truths of the faith and pursue godliness in the ways and areas that God instructs in His Word?
 - - Or are you open to or looking for some deviant way or shortcut to quickly and effortlessly achieve godliness?
 - - Can you see and comprehend that pursuing deviant ways or shortcuts to godliness is a form of practicing false doctrines?
 - - And can you see and comprehend that pursuing deviant ways or shortcuts to godliness is futile and counterproductive to genuinely improving godliness in your life?
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[Additional Lesson Questions to ponder (optional, if time allows):

- - Can you remember ever having heard a sermon or lesson on false teaching that was occurring in the church or ministry you were attending at the time? If so, what was the essence of that sermon or lesson, and what specific kind of false teaching was being addressed?
 - - During the time you have been a true believer, personally believing in Jesus that He died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins, what false doctrines have you heard promoted that claimed to improve one's godliness?
 - - How did the false doctrine claim to improve godliness?
 - - How did you respond when you heard that false doctrine being promoted?
 - - Without disclosing identities, how did the leadership respond to that promoting of false doctrine?
 - - Without disclosing identities, how did the other true believers respond who heard that promoting of false doctrine?
 - - What was the eventual outcome, whether that promoting of false doctrine was forced to stop, or it ceased on its own, or it continues on?]
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