

## 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy Ch 4

“Marks Of The Minister”

As you know the over arching theme that umbrella’s 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy is church order, and Paul spells that out very clearly in Ch 3 vs 15 where he says quite clearly, *“I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”* The conduct of the Christian is what’s held in view in this letter (not only as it pertains to life in general) but specifically as it pertains to body life, how the order is to be set in the church and how we’re to function according to God’s standards. In Ch 1 the church and its “message” was the focus, the importance of doctrine, which comes back in view here in ch 4 to a very real degree. But Ch 1, The church and it’s message, Ch’s 2-3, The church and it’s members, dealing with men, women and leaders in the church, what’s their place and what should be happening in their lives? and Here in Ch 4 we see as the central theme of these 16 vs, The church and its minister. and Then as we get to ch’s 5-6 we’ll see, The church and it’s ministry, 1<sup>st</sup> to itself in ch 5, then also those outside the church to be included in ch 6.

Now there are several different ways that we could attach a handle onto this ch to bring some overall continuity and comprehension to this text because there are several different ingredients that have been inserted into this portion of scripture that have brought about a single thought. In other words even though there’s eggs, butter, and a mix of some form that you may combine together in a given setting, perhaps sugar cookies is the single result. and Even though Paul talks about demonic doctrines, divine doctrines, physical exercise, spiritual exercise, example’s and exhortations in this ch, the prominent point that seems to stand out, and that all these other things seek to serve is that in the midst of all of these things going on in life, what’s Timothy to do about it? There’s a lot of things that mark a lot of people’s life, but what’s to mark the ministers life, how’s he to handle these various situations, and in light of all of these scenarios and situations that we’re all confronted with to varying degrees Paul explains to Timothy 3 things that he needs to be if he’s to overcome these challenges of the wicked one and of the world. If you take notes and want to outline this ch along with me write these things down, Vs 1-6 he’s to be a “good minister” Vs 7-12 he’s to be a “godly minister” and finally in vs 13-16 he’s to be a “growing minister”. Now as a “good minister” we’ll see he’s to be “Preaching the Word” as a “godly minister” he’s to be “Practicing the Word”, and as a “growing minister” he’s to be “Progressing in the Word.” Vs 1 begins.

### Vs1-6

The word “now” in vs1 would’ve probably been better translated “But” because what’s happening is that Paul is setting a sharp contrast between the divine, and the demonic. He’s just recited this doctrinal creed of the church in vs 16 of ch 3 (read). and Now he’s setting in opposition to that, demonic doctrine that will permeate the church and send some into apostasy (that is, a departing from the faith) in the “latter times.” So having recited this creed, or this statement of faith he says (read Vs 1 using “but” rather than “now”).

So this is a warning that goes out directly from the Holy Spirit who “expressly” says, that is, “explicitly” or “distinctly” and very “clearly” says, in other words this wasn’t something that Paul saw as something that could very likely happen, but rather the Holy Spirit gave very distinct insight regarding the “signs of the times” the latter times. The times that would follow the ascension of Christ, Peter tells us that the manifestation of Christ in the world signaled the last times, or the times near the end.

*“He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.”* 1 Peter 1:20

1<sup>st</sup> John ch 2 tells us that we’re in the *last hour*. Knowing that, “*with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*” 2 Peter 3:8 we don’t need to try and tackle the question of how could it be the latter times then and yet that be 2,000yrs ago? Because the latter times of this 6,000yr or so existence of mankind upon the earth was signaled upon the ushering in of the 1<sup>st</sup> appearance of Christ. That being the case how much more are we in the latter times now, how much more will these things be signaling us as to the care we should take to know the truth.

Because what the Holy Spirit is telling us here through the apostle Paul is that even as there were men bringing in destructive heresies in the church there in Ephesus that were leading people astray, even though it’s sad, it shouldn’t be surprising because this type of thing is going to happen in the later times. People will “depart from the faith” now there are those who teach that this isn’t possible, but I must say, they’re wrong! How can I say that so boldly, because I didn’t say it, the Holy Spirit expressly said it. There are people who come into the knowledge of the truth (the faith) the content of divine revelation that constitutes what Christians believe (vs 16 of ch 3) and then they will make a conscious decision to depart from it.

You may or may not have heard of man by the name of Charles Templeton, but Charles Templeton wrote a book called “Farewell to God” and let me just read you a portion of the back of that book. “For more than 20 yrs, Charles Templeton was a major figure in the church in Canada and in the United States. During the 1950’s he and Billy Graham were the 2 most successful exponents of Mass Evangelism in North America. Templeton spoke nightly to stadium crowds of up to 30,000 people. However increasing doubt about the validity of the OT and the teachings of the Christian Church finally brought about a crisis in his faith, and in 1957 he resigned from the ministry. In ‘Farwell to God’ Templeton speaks out about his reasons for the abandonment of his faith.”

Then he goes on to try and point out various loop holes that he’s found in the bible, (a loving God but suffering people, questions regarding the person of Christ and all the rest.) But what he doesn’t point out is that all of his doubts about the bible began to surface when he got involved with a woman other than his wife and in needing to justify his sin he simply decided to excuse himself from accountability by denying that there was a God. Or that if there was there was no way that we could know.

What did Jesus say regarding the latter times? *“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.”* Matt 24:12 In Luke 18:8 we read where Jesus asked the question, *“When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”* Charles Templeton has since died and to my knowledge he never repented. But Lee Strobel in his book, “A case for faith” interviewed Templeton before he died. As Templeton spoke to him, not being smug in his tone, but condescending towards Christians in his comments, Strobel asked him the question regarding his latter years (basically) if there was anything he regretted in life, anything that he missed, and the countenance on Templeton’s face suddenly sobered as he began to well up and to weep and he said, “I miss Jesus.”

*“The Spirit expressly says that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving or seducing spirits.”* Why will people abandon the faith, because they’ve been deceived, or seduced by demonic spirits, and it often begins with the need to justify sin in their lives. People will come to the most absurd conclusions, and things that they believe when they refuse to adhere any longer to the Word of God. But if you refuse to believe the truth you have no choice but to believe a lie, and there’s no limit to the bizzarities, and absurdities that are out there that people will believe, but they are demonic doctrines or “teachings” created and crafted and planted in your mind in order to seduce you and lead you astray. So there will be a departure from the faith, due to *“deceiving spirits”* and doctrines of demons.”

Vs 2

Or to understand this another way these guys may preach one thing, but they practice something different, they’re hypocritical, speaking lies in hypocrisy, you see it’s not in what we *say* so much as it is in what we *do*. Jesus said *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?”* Matt 7:15-16 In other words what’s the fruit of their lives, are they placing into practice the things that they preach and if they are is it yielding godly, scriptural results? Are they teaching God’s Word line by line, keeping it with in it’s context, or are they using the scriptures as a cloak to manipulate God’s people? Just because someone opens this book doesn’t mean that they’re representing the Lord properly, you can teach whatever you want out of the bible, do you know that the bible teaches atheism? It’s true Ps 14:1 says, *“There is no God.”* But if you were true to the text and read it in its context you would realize the implications of that vs are anything atheistic. Because in it’s context it says, *“The fool has said in his heart, ‘there is no God.’”* That’s why it’s so important that we as individuals be diligent students of the Word of God, so that we recognize lies spoken in hypocrisy. Rom 16:17-18 says, *“Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.”*

Peter tells us, “*But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.*” 2 Peter 2:1-3 They speak lies in hypocrisy, why? Because their consciences have been “seared” and the idea there is “cauterized” deadened as with a hot iron, what would have once bothered them no longer does because with each stroke of deception and sin it gets a little easier.

In Eph Paul speaks of those “*who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.*” Eph 4:19 That’s the type of person we have in view here, they’re past feeling, it doesn’t bother them anymore to lie and take advantage, to deceive the people of God. and It’s no wonder because Satan himself is the father of all lies, I’ve met people who can bold face lie, and they can lead you on, and you think (when you find out) man, I can’t believe the way that person could just lie like that, not even batting an eye. But it really shouldn’t be a big surprise because doctrines of demons are full of lies, they teach men that they can either be gods themselves or function just fine on their own apart from God and stand justified before God on their own account. Even in the garden Satan was filling Eve’s head and heart with such lies, and as their conscience deadens more and more, the lies just pour forth from their mouths, no guilt or remorse involved any longer. You know, God wants to bless your life but what’s holding His blessing back is the fact that you need to give more money to my ministry, serving themselves in the name of God, lies in hypocrisy.

Now next here Paul confronts a couple of these demonic type doctrines that were directly imposing upon the church of Ephesus though we see them today as well.

Vs3-5

Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from certain foods, now I don’t want to pick on the Roman Catholic church for truly there are some God fearing, Jesus loving right on people in the Catholic Church. There are other institutions that having initiated these type of criteria, but these are doctrines of demons, if you want to be a priest then you can’t be married. Now as of late the Catholic Church has come under high scrutiny (and rightfully so) regarding child molestation charges and things of that nature. Though such things are monstrosities, and absolutely intolerable, how much of that do you think may’ve been prevented if these men were married, and had a wife that they could look to and be with? These are doctrines of demons meant to destroy men’s lives, now it’s not that being single is a sin, but marriage is sanctioned by God, that’s why it’s a Satanic doctrine that would forbid it. You remember that after God created everything He said that everything was good, except for one thing. Gen 2:18 “*And the LORD God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.’*” Prov 18:22 “*He who finds a wife finds a good thing, And obtains favor from the LORD.*” So why then would God seek to forbid marriage? He wouldn’t, that’s demonic and regarding foods.

Jesus said, *“Hear and understand: Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.”* Matt 15:10-11 God created foods to be received with thanksgiving, and if you know the truth you realize that. Now I realize that some people have certain dietary restraints for health reasons, but there’s nothing more spiritual about eating fish than there is eating pigs in a blanket. You remember that’s what the Lord told Peter in Acts ch 11 when he saw that blanket coming down out of heaven in a vision with all kinds of pigs and unclean animals in it. The Lord said, Rise Peter, kill and eat, all of the things that the dietary laws pointed to and foreshadowed were fulfilled in Christ, but Christ is the end of the Law for all who believe. (Vs4-5)

Sanctified by the Word of God, that the word that God has spoken concerning it, saying that all of His creation was good, Gen 9:3 *“Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs.”* So it’s all good, God’s declared it so, so just pray over it, and eat enjoy it, happy is the man who doesn’t condemn himself in what he approves.

Asceticism, and legalistic regimens like that seem real spiritual but in reality they indulge the flesh, because they cause you to place confidence in your works. (Look at Col 2:20-23)

Vs6

Notice the contrast between the “good doctrine” and the words of faith that nourish us as opposed to the “doctrines of demons” and seducing spirits that *draw us away* from the faith. This word “instruct” here literally means “to put under continually” so that “If you put the brethren under these things continually” that is; the word of God, the good doctrine, warning them of false doctrines and things hazardous to their spiritual health, then you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ As ministers of the word of God we’re to be both teaching you and warning you continually, bringing these things (even that you already know) back to your remembrance to stir you up by way of reminder. Remember Paul said, *“Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”* Col 1:28 So the good minister is the one who teaches the totality of the truth God’s Word, rightly divided, its precepts, and its principals uncompromisingly and with conviction to the people of God. and Though it’s important that I expose false teachings, and warn you regarding demonic doctrines, by far the majority of the time should be focused not on the lie, but on the truth of the Word of God. You see when people are being trained to spot counterfeit money, they don’t teach them by having them study counterfeit bills, they teach them by having them observe very meticulously, and painstakingly the genuine article. You see Satan is a counterfeiter; he has counterfeit doctrines, and counterfeit ministers and man at 1<sup>st</sup> glance they look like the real deal. That’s why it’s so important that we give meticulous study, and become increasingly intimately acquainted with the genuine article, Jesus Christ The good minister of Jesus Christ will continually and carefully instruct you in God’s Word. Notice Timothy has “carefully” followed the nourishing words of faith and the good doctrine.

Vs7-12

“The godly minister” not one who gives way to man’s word, that is, profane fables or old wives tales, myths and things that have no credence according to the Word of God. But rather stays anchored in God’s Word, he studies the Word of God, not the myths of man. It’s not that it’s wrong to know what your enemy is purporting, a chemist may handle all kinds of poisonous chemicals, but he’s careful not to allow any of them into his system. and Even so we’re to exercise ourselves towards godliness, now as you know the Greek culture placed heavy emphasis upon physical fitness, all these sculptures that you see with these men just ripped and fit. and Paul is saying that’s not wrong, it profits a little, but only for a season, and only in this life. But if you discipline yourself towards godliness, if the *deep knee bends* you do are for prayer, if you *lift* holy hands in praise, if you *press* towards the mark of the upward call that’s in Christ Jesus, and *curl* up to the Word of God everyday then you’re going to profit not only here and now as God just uses your life, but it will benefit you throughout all eternity. Godliness is of benefit to you temporally and eternally and Paul says this is a faithful saying, there should be no problem seeing the reality of that. (Vs10)

If you desire to live godly in Christ Jesus you will suffer persecution, and Paul says we’re reproached because we trust in the Living God, (as opposed to dead idols). Do you trust in the Living God? Do you really trust Him, I mean really, if you were put on trial for being a Christian would your neighbors testify against you, or would there be a hung jury, reasonable doubt about your faith, or maybe a total acquittal all together. It’s a probing question because if you’re never reproached, maybe it’s not evident that you trust in the Living God. Who is the Savior of all men (here God is shown as the Savior for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time in this letter). Especially those who believe, what does that mean? Well a couple of things could be considered, either the fact that Jesus’ death, resurrection and shed blood was *sufficient* for all men, He died for all, and the *efficiency* of that work is accredited to you when you believe, which is absolutely true. Or that in the general sense of the word, God being a “deliverer” meaning that God saves all men (not that all men are eternally saved) but that they all experience common grace. God sends rain on the just and unjust, he blesses them with good and gracious gifts, saves them temporarily in the here and now from immediate continual torture and suffering because of their sin, so in that sense he “saves” or “delivers” them for the moment, but specifically or eternally His grace and salvation is bestowed upon those who believe, you can go either way you like. But these are the things we’re to command, and to teach, that Jesus didn’t come into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. God’s not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. (Vs12)

Now Timothy was at least 30 yrs old here conservatively and so that makes me feel better being 30 that he was still considered a youth, but Paul was around 70 so it’s a relative thing. But men weren’t generally seen as having experiential wisdom until they were at least 50 so Paul says don’t let anyone disdain or belittle you because of your age, but rather set the standard, be an example, or a pattern, that word “example” means to make a lasting impact. Like when one car smashes into the side of another, it’s been given an “example” the impression that’s been made has had a definite permanent effect on that vehicle.

Paul is saying the godly minister should impact people's lives like that, and would to God that we would all have that kind of impression on those around us. Paul lists here 6 areas by which we do well (as godly individuals) to serve as an example in (and I like the KJV here that says be an example "of" the believers rather than "to" the believers). "Timothy don't let anyone think less of you because of the way you lead your life but rather show them what the life of the believer is to look like, model true Christianity to them, be an example of the believers."

We could spend an entire study just on this vs but basically be an example in what you say, (in word) in what you do, your lifestyle (in conduct) in letting God pour Himself through you (in Love, agape'), in your attitude (spirit) in the truth of God's word and trusting God (faith) and in keeping yourself undefiled physically or spiritually due to the things of the this world, the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life (purity).

### Vs13-16

The "growing minister" one who is progressing in the things of God, Paul says that we're to give attention to reading, that is the public reading of the Word of God, God's Word is to have prominence in our gatherings, and to exhortation, God's word has been read, then the exhortation to be doers of the Word, not hearers only. To trust in the Lord and cease doubting His faithfulness, and then to doctrine again the emphasis on the need for solid biblical doctrine, we need to heed it, allow it to infiltrate our lives and change us from the inside out. and Regarding vs 14 every child of God has been entrusted by God with some gift, be it of helps or giving, or teaching, administrations or whatever, don't neglect it but rather stir up the gift that God has given you, get involved and use it to the glory of God. (Vs15)

Think about these things, absorb yourself in these things, consider these things, what things, purity, conduct, the faith, the way you handle yourself, what kind of example are you? Think about that honestly, what kind of example are you, if we all led our lives exactly as you do (honestly) would this place be better and further along, or would we be here at all. If everyone came to church when you did, would we meet more than once or twice a month, if we studied like you, would we know more about the bible? If everyone gave in accordance with how you give would we be sitting here right now, would you have soft chairs, would this PA exist would we be in this building? Or would we all have to meet in my garage if I even had a garage because I never got paid? Stir yourself up on these things, give yourself entirely to purity, to love, and the good doctrine, allow these things to change your life, that your growth, or your progress might be noticed by everyone around you. Are you closer to Jesus now than you were last year, more excited about Him and in love with Him than ever before, because if not you're backslidden, you see (vs 16).

Notice not only do I need to pay attention or take heed to myself and the doctrine (lest I do something foolish) but I need to *abide* in good doctrine, and need to continually be

allowing it's influence into my life, why? Because the gospel of Jesus Christ saves not only myself, but others who hear it, you see how can they respond if they've never heard, but how can they hear unless you or I tell them. You see the need is to myself 1<sup>st</sup>, then to those around me, I can't take you where I've never been. The word of God saves me over and over again (not regarding my salvation necessarily) but it saves me countless wrong moves and bad decisions, good doctrine has saved me countless times. and It's saves others as well, again not only does it issue wisdom and save you a lifetime of regret as you give yourself to purity vs immorality, or to love rather than resentment and bitterness. But it can impact a person eternally, Paul said, "*I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.*" Rom 1:16 and Aren't you glad that someone took the time to let you hear the good news that you could be forgiven of everything you'd ever done, that it didn't matter where you'd been or what you'd done but that God loved you and was willing to receive you just as you were if you'd just come to Him through the person of His Son? (Repeat vs 16).

If you're here today and don't know the Lord then allow me the privilege of sharing the simple fact of the gospel with you. God in His Love for you, sent His Son Jesus Christ to lead a sinless life and lay down His life upon the cross for you so that if you would just believe upon Him, God would give you His righteousness and forgive you of every sin you've ever committed or even thought about committing and give you everlasting life. Jesus Christ tasted death so that you can live for ever and if you'll only receive Him today God will make Himself real to you in a personal way and you'll never be the same, you'll find your name written in the Lambs book of Life.