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THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

1 Timothy 4:1-5
Lesson #12
Avoiding Apostasy
07/9/2023

1



2

1 Timothy is addressing spiritual warfare in the church

1 Timothy 1

“3 As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus, in order that you may instruct certain men not to teach **strange doctrines**, 4 nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation **rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith.** 5 But the **goal** of our instruction is **love** from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere **faith.**”

3

The POINT of this passage

1 Timothy 4

“1 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,

an illustrated cultural application (Judaizers)

3 men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods, which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude; 5 for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.”

4

As aliens in this world, we should expect to face the “headwinds” of many hostile spirits of this world.

1 Peter 2:11

“I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.”

How should we respond?

5

Storms that can sink the soul
and how to avoid them

1. Unrealistic expectations
Face the truth courageously.

Two common expectations:

1. True believers will not “fall away”.
2. Godliness leads to worldly gain.

6

1 Timothy 3:16 (Last week)
 “By common confession, great is **the mystery of godliness: INCARNATION, INCLUSION, IMPUTATION**
Some who once embraced these truths may later reject them.

1 Timothy 4
 “1 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times **some will fall away from the faith,**

Matthew 24:11
 “And many **false prophets will arise, and will mislead many.**”




7

How are we to understand Jesus’ words?

John 10
 “²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and **no one shall snatch them out of My hand.** ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. ³⁰ I and the Father are one.” *John 6:37,39, 10:5, 17:12, 18:9*

The sheep can’t be stolen against their will, but they can run away, whereupon the Good Shepherd will pursue them to win them back.

Could that be Timothy’s mission as an “under shepherd”?



8

Philippians 2
 “¹² **work out your salvation** with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is **God who is at work in you**, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”

The Good Shepherd dies for, feeds, protects, and gives eternal life to the sheep, **but does not control them.**


“Calvinism emphasizes divine sovereignty and free grace; Arminianism emphasizes human responsibility (and free choice). . . . **The Bible gives us a theology which is more human than Calvinism, and more divine than Arminianism, and more Christian than either of them.**”

Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, vo. VIII:815-6

9

RECONCILIATION

Provision **Participation**
 “It is finished” “It is received”

Ephesians 2:8
 “**By grace we are saved through faith**”

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 Hard Questions #1 “*Is faith a gift from God.*”

10


How are we to understand “falling away” in this text?

1. Some believe that **faith and salvation are the gift of God, and true believers cannot fall away.**
 Those who renounce their “faith”, or fail to back it up with disciplined lives, either **never were saved or will one day return** to godly confession and conduct.
2. Others believe that **an authentic relationship includes free choice, with responsibility to abide.**
 Assurance of salvation is experienced only as a person abides in faith.
 Reason and faith are not viewed as meritorious works.

11

A full explanation of God’s choices and our choices lies above our spiritual pay-grade.

Deuteronomy 29:29
 “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.”



12

Two common expectations:

1. "Once saved, always saved"
2. Godliness leads to worldly gain.

1 Corinthians 15:19

"If we have **hoped in Christ in this life only**, we are of all men most to be pitied."

1 Timothy 6

"5 . . . men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. 6 But godliness actually is a means of great gain, **when accompanied by contentment.**"

13

Storms that can sink the soul
and how to avoid them


1. **Unrealistic expectations**
Face the truth courageously.
2. **False teaching**
Watch your diet carefully.

14


1 Timothy 4

"1 — **paying attention to** deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,"

Saladdressing



Dessert



1 Corinthians 3

"18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become foolish that he may become wise. 19 For **the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God.** For it is written, "He is *the one who catches the wise in their craftiness*"

2 Timothy 3

"16 All Scripture is inspired by God and **profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness**; 17 that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

15

Principles of church growth that work if you just count nickels and noses.

1. **Dynamic pulpit** (personality sells)
2. **Target a market** (narrow your focus)
3. **Promote an image** (optics sell)
4. **Beat the competition** (excellence sells)
5. **Don't be a Berean**

More dressing than salad?

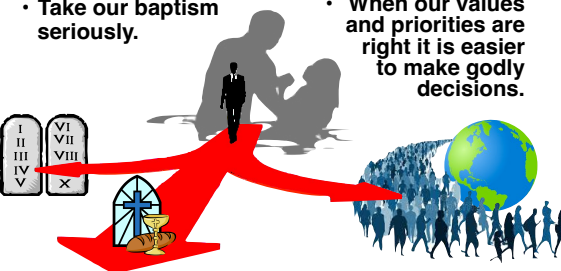
WARNING: this may retard spiritual development

16

Diet control

1. Face in the right direction (The Word and Way of the Cross).

- Take our baptism seriously.
- When our values and priorities are right it is easier to make godly decisions.



17

Diet control

2. Respect the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

Old Testament - Gospels

Old Covenant



Paul's Gospel

Acts - Epistles

- All Scripture is written **FOR us but not TO us or ABOUT us.**
- Most Christian cults appeal to **Old Covenant texts or personal, mystical, experiences.**

18

2 Chronicles 7:14

“. . . (If) My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

The Puritans applied this to America, believing that America had a covenant relationship with God as “the New Israel”.

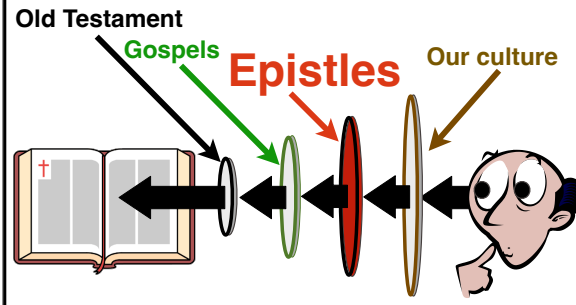
7:20

“My land (**Palestine**) which I have given you.”

19

Diet control

3. Look to the Epistles for Interpretation of the Biblical Gospel.



20

2 Peter 2

“14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, 15 and regard the patience of our Lord *as* salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, 16 as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which **the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.**”

21

Diet control

4. Choose your mentors carefully.

Look to those who:

- are **respected** by the Christian community.
- help you **make sense** of Scripture & life.
- are at **peace** in responding to reality.
- offer **tools** more than dogma.
- are trusted in **little things**.
- are **wise and humble**.



22

How many of our theological affirmations are punctuated with:

(!) (.) (,) (?)

“I AM FULLY CONVINCED.”

“I have some settled beliefs.”

“I have tentative insights.”

“I only have questions.”

Major on majors not minors.

1 Corinthians 13:12

“For **now we see in a mirror dimly**, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known.”



23

Storms that can sink the soul
and how to avoid them

1. Unrealistic expectations

Face the truth courageously.

2. False teaching

Watch your diet carefully.

3. Seared conscience

Live your life consistently.

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