



“THE MORBIDITY OF FALSE TEACHERS”

1 Timothy 6:3-5

Theme: *Genuine followers of Jesus Christ heed His Words, not their own ideas.*

Introduction: Truth is a concept that different people approach in different ways. As Pontius Pilate complained when talking with Jesus – “What is truth?” There are diversities of ways to answer that question:

1. **Correspondence theory** – something is true if it accurately represents how things are in the world.
2. **Coherence theory** – truth is determined by how well a statement fits into a coherent and consistent system of propositions.
3. **Pragmatic theory** – something is truth if it works in practical situations and yields positive results.
4. **Constructivist theory** – truth is constructed by human perception and interpretation.
5. **Relativism** – there is no absolute truth – it is determined by personal perspective.
6. **Subjectivism** – like relativism, truth is a personal experience or belief.
7. **Consensus theory** – whatever the community agrees to be true.
8. **Postmodernism** – questions the notion of absolute truth or objective truth – emphasizing the role of language, power, and social construct in shaping truth.
9. **Pluralism** – there are multiple truths and thus celebrates divergency.
10. **Empiricism** – empirical evidence and scientific methods of determining what is true.

Cutting through the confusion and uncertainty of philosophy and humanism, God has provided us insight into truth. He is the truth, and the revelation of Himself gives us the truth. Hence, the Word of God is not just a touchstone of truth; it is truth.

The church is responsible for seeking Jesus Christ through the Word of God – the Living Word is revealed through the Written Word of God, which is the Bible. Daily, followers of Jesus Christ search the Scriptures for greater exposure to Christ – so that we might be even more enthralled by His glory and majesty and, catching these precious glimpses, find ourselves more fully conformed to Him. We gather together as believers, assembling as the church, to hear men of God stand and proclaim the excellencies of Christ and exhort us to walk worthy of our Master.

Yet not everyone – even within the ostensible church – is committed to the truth – either to Christ or His Word. They are self-promoting charlatans who seek to draw men away from the sufficiency of Christ and satisfaction with His Word to their ideas and innovations. They abandon God’s Word and exchange it for their own concepts and precepts. They claim that righteousness is attained not through conformity to Christ but to their methods or systems. They appeal to the self-dependent impulses of sinners and draw us away from our beloved Lord. Yet, in our text , we see that **“Genuine followers of Jesus Christ heed His Words, not their own ideas.”** There are three characteristics of false teachers noted in these verses:

- I. **An Ignorant Arrogance – 6:3-4a**
- II. **An Infectious Antagonism – 6:4b-5a**
- III. **An Insatiable Avarice – 6:5b**

I. **AN IGNORANT ARROGANCE – 6:3-4A**

A. **The Contrary Approaches to Truth – v. 3A**

1. Paul now provides a forensic view of false teachers – what they do, how they think, what they produce, and what motivates them ... and it isn’t pretty!
2. Paul describes what genuine believers do – they submit themselves to Jesus Christ and His instructions in His Word.
3. But, not false teachers - **“If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ ...”**
4. Paul knows that such men exist within the Church in Ephesus – as He has been calling on Timothy to **reject** their teaching (Chapter 1), **refute** their teaching (Chapter 2), **replace** their teaching (Chapter 3), **rebuke** their teaching (Chapter 4-5), and now to **repair** their teaching.
5. He begins by presenting a 1st Class conditional clause – **“If ...”** - meaning that it is assumed to be true - cp. **Acts 20:29-30**.
6. False teachers **“advocate”** [ἑτεροδιδασκαλέω] – **“different doctrines”** – things that do not come from Scripture from their own minds or the minds of others who are out of touch with the mind of Christ – cp. **Ephesians 4:17-24**.
7. The **“sound words”** are **“those of our Lord Jesus Christ”** – not merely in quotes of Him when He was incarnate, but in the Scriptures, which are His Words – **Romans 10:17**.
8. For a man or woman to set aside God’s Word and share their own ideas is the height of arrogance and a display of a lack of understanding of the

truth – [1 Timothy 1:7](#).

B. The Corrupting Application of Truth – v. 3B

1. Such a false teacher *“does not agree”* [προσέρχομαι] – “to come around to” – it describes a person who cannot comprehend the truth because they are devoid of the humility to understand it – cp. [2 Timothy 3:7](#).
2. Their “heterodoxy” abandons the truths needed for sanctification – *“... does not agree with ... the doctrine conforming to godliness.”*
3. “godliness” [εὐσέβεια] – describes that state of conformity to Jesus Christ as God.
4. If their *“different doctrines”* do not produce godliness, they will produce self-righteousness and a mere “form [or appearance] of godliness” without the ability to truly be transformed – cp. [2 Timothy 3:5](#).
5. Paul cannot adequately warn believers to be discerning to search the Scriptures to make sure what is preached is actually God’s Word; otherwise, the corruption of legalism, asceticism, and prideful performance-based works will sweep in and defame the accomplishment of Christ.

C. The Conceited Alienation from Truth – v. 4A

1. God desires that we understand that those who abandon God’s Word and replace it with their ideas are *“conceited and understand nothing.”*
2. *“conceited”* [τυφώω] – an onomatopoeic word meaning “puffed up” or “conceited” – those who are “puffed up” or “conceited” are those who are more confident in their own ideas than those of Jesus, except they are deranged?
4. Such people *“understand nothing”* [ἐπίσταμαι] – “epistemology” – they are without the study of knowledge and are studying fallacy, myths, contrivances, and deceptions.
5. False teachers are enamored with their own ideas, paying attention to one deception after another and considering it “learning” or “innovation” – cp. [Colossians 2:8](#).

II. AN INFECTIOUS ANTAGONISM – 6:4B-5A

A. The Preoccupation Interest in Controversies – v. 4B

1. As Paul describes a false teacher, he states that instead of being humbly

interested in Jesus Christ and His Word, *“he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words ...”*

2. *“morbid interest”* [νοσέω] – conveys a craving for sick or infected concepts and focuses on shadows instead of light.
 - a) *“controversial questions”* [ζήτησις] – are things that require constant discussion without the ability to resolve the matter – their design is to raise questions about what ought to be settled by the Word of Christ and destabilize the faith of those who listen to them.
 - b) *“disputes about words”* [λογομαχία] – lit. “word battles”- they quibble over vocabulary – destabilizing the faith of those who listen to them by redefining what ought to be clear.
3. Does “evening and morning” really mean a real day? Inerrancy – does it really mean there are no errors in the Bible? Hell – does it have to be a literal place? “Faith” – can it not only mean acknowledging something is true. Sola Scriptura doesn’t mean we cannot have dreams and visions, does it? Can we be against love just because it’s between two women?

B. The Provocation of Contention – vv. 4C- 5A

1. Instead of promoting unity through mutual submission to God’s Word, false teaches provoke contention.
2. Through their questioning Scripture, the cause *“disputes ... out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men ...”*
 - a) *“envy”* [φθόνος] – the stirring of discontentment caused by how others are advantaged or blessed.
 - b) *“strife”* [ἔρις] – the resulting rivalry with those being resented, perhaps because their views are gaining preeminence.
 - c) *“abusive language”* [βλασφημία] – denigrating speech designed to dishonor, disrespect, or influence their rejection.
 - d) *“evil suspicions”* [ὑπόνοια] – conjecture based on slight evidence + [πονηρός] – morally worthless – to assume evil motives.
 - e) *“constant friction”* [διαπαρατριβή] – persistent argumentativeness and wrangling – they are competing angrily with one another for preeminence.
3. Those attracted to these things are *“men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth.”*
 - a) *“depraved mind”* [διαφθείρω] – a mind that is so tainted by sin that truth is absent – they do not have the mind of Christ, nor have they been renewed in the minds by meeting Christ.
 - b) *“deprived of truth”* [ἀποστερέω] – to prevent someone from

having the benefit of truth - they are out of touch with truth, regardless of how sensible they may sound to the untrained ear.

III. AN INSATIABLE AVARICE – 6:5B

A. The Misconception of Godliness

1. As a result of their disorientation to the truth – with minds tainted by sin, their perception of godliness is also tainted – “... *who suppose godliness is ...*”
2. “*suppose*” [νομίζω] – refers to forming an idea about something but falling short of certainty – essentially, they hope their perspective is correct.
3. “*godliness*” to them means to be devout or religiously faithful to the system of righteousness as defined by them.
4. Genuine “*godliness*” eludes them as it requires conformity to Christ Jesus.

B. The Motivation of Greed

1. Their goal is monetary – “... *who suppose that godliness is a means of gain*” [πορισμός] – a reference to a means of wealth.
2. Personal advantage is their primary priority – not the edification of the saints or the glory of Christ Jesus – cp. *1 Timothy 3:3; 1 Thessalonians 2:5; Acts 20:33.*
3. They make an outward show of their religious zeal and charge fees for their instruction to accumulate wealth at the expense of the seekers of truth.
4. Although faithful, hard-working teachers of God’s Word are worthy of double honor (including generous monetary support), a mark of a false teacher is that such financial honor is what they’re angling for – not the glory of Christ – *2 Peter 2:15; 1 Timothy 6:9-10.*

So What?

1. Am I excited by novel interpretations of Scripture that stray from orthodoxy because it is innovative or new?
2. How does exegetical teaching safeguard me from false teaching?
3. What safeguard does my love for Jesus Christ provide against false teachers?
4. What vulnerability does a coldness in my love for Jesus Christ

produce to false teaching?

Genuine followers of Jesus Christ heed His Words, not their own ideas.