



“INTOLERANCE FOR FALSE TEACHERS”

1 Timothy 1:3-7

Theme: *The Church must insist on biblical teaching.*

Introduction: Nutrition is important. Parents know this as they are constantly maneuvering to provide food that will properly nourish a child who will spit out what they don't like. Often, finicky eaters will prefer food that tastes good to them, and not what is best for them. Give me Lucky Charms over an egg any day! But poor nutrition results in poor dental health, physical health and can even affect mental health. Yet far worse is the introduction of substances that poison a person – and result in their physical death. Arsenic, carcinogens, or other toxins which can kill must not merely be avoided but identified and eliminated.

False teaching is in this latter category. It doesn't merely make a person spiritually emaciated and weak; it can result in their death. Embracing false teaching can result in the eternal death of souls that are seeking the way to God. In our text today, Paul goes straight from his introductory greetings to Timothy to the castigation of those men in the church who were producing false doctrine. Paul's instruction to Timothy is to prevent such men from gaining the respect and following by the saints in the church at Ephesus. He is requiring that ***“the church itself must insist on biblical teaching.”***

I. THE CONFRONTATION OF STRANGE DOCTRINE – 1:3-4

A. The Suppression of Strange Doctrine – vv. 3-4a

1. One of the Apostle Paul's great burdens was that the church remain free from the corruptions brought by false teachers – Acts 20:27-30.
2. He was constantly battling the attempts of charlatans who were under the demonic empowerment and lies who sought to enrich themselves through the gullibility of new believers – 2 Peter 2:1; 2 Corinthians 2:17.
3. Because of his burden for the church at Ephesus, Paul entrusted Timothy with the task of stabilizing the church which was being confronted with schemes of false teachers – *“As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines ...”*
4. We can see the intensity of Paul's concern as he uses a strong word to describe his appeal to Timothy – *“As I urged you ...”* [παρακαλέω] - he called Timothy to come to his side; to call on someone to help; to appeal or implore.

5. Timothy's charge was to *"instruct"* [παραγγέλλω] – to make an announcement or give a public authoritative command – it presupposes an altercation or confrontation of *"certain men not to teach strange doctrines ..."*
 - a) *"certain men"* – suggests that there were specific people in view – men who had become a problem to the church at Ephesus.
 - b) *It appears that they were part of the leadership team:*
 - (1) Paul's warning in Acts 20 was that such false teachers would spring up from among the elders.
 - (2) Since they were teaching, they have assumed the role of an elder – 1 Timothy 5:17.
 - (3) Paul's describing the qualifications of an elder in chapter 3 hints that unqualified men had crept into these positions.
 - (4) Paul's instruction to rebuke elders who err in public suggest that it is what needed to be done – 1 Timothy 5:19-22.
6. *"strange doctrines"* [ἑτεροδιδασκαλέω] – refers to divergent or divisive instructions – meaning teaching that diverts people from the apostolic revelations that were being recorded in Scripture.
7. Today they would refer to things that go beyond what is written in Scripture.
8. It included favorite obsessions by the false teachers – *"... nor pay attention to myths and endless genealogies ..."*
 - a) *"myths"* [μῦθος] – stories without substantiation or facts to back them up – fictional narratives that do not have their source in God but in legend – cp. 2 Peter 1:16.
 - b) *"endless genealogies"* [γενεαλογίαις ἀπεράντοις] – these would be "truths" drawn from stringing lineages, names, and family trees used to create allegories or spiritualized interpretations.
9. Timothy is to forbid *"paying attention"* [προσέχω] to such things – to follow or be concerned about such things – cp. 2 Timothy 2:16; 1 Timothy 6:20.

B. The Speculation in Strange Doctrine – v. 4b

1. There is no truth in such things – *"... which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith."*
2. When opinions, fabrications, moralisms, legalistic impositions, humanistic philosophies, and worldly wisdom are embraced as equal authorities as God's Word, it always results in the abandonment of that work that is of

God resulting in transformation by grace – cp. *1 Timothy 6:4; Titus 3:9.*

3. *“speculation”* [ἐκζήτησις] – describes the destabilization of faith – the raising of questions that obstruct faith without sufficient, biblical answers to build up one’s confidence in Christ and the credibility of His Word.
4. Such tampering with truth fails to provide what is essential – the sanctification without which no one will ever see God – cp. *Hebrews 12:14; Matthew 5:8.*
5. Hence, the stakes are eternally high and cannot be viewed as “no big deal.”

II. THE CULMINATION OF SOUND DOCTRINE – *1:5*

A. The Conclusion of Sound Doctrine

1. Paul reminds Timothy the contrast with the message the men of God deliver – *“But the goal of our instruction is love ...”*
2. *“love”* [ἀγάπη] – refers primarily for a love for God that results from the Gospel – when we experientially know God’s love for us – *1 John 4:19.*
3. Of course, the proof of our love for God is our love for others – cp. *1 John 4:20-21.*
4. This is the evidence of supernatural grace that transforms a sinner into someone who cares about someone other than himself, involving self-denial and sacrifice in order that the welfare and interests of another prevail – *John 13:35; 1 Peter 1:22.*
5. This is the *“goal”* [τέλος] – the outcome or desired end – the conclusion, indicating that “instruction” will not cease until such love for God and others is fully fulfilled – the same love as Christ exhibited in dying for us – *Ephesians 5:2.*
6. Notice the contrast – the false teachers cannot produce what enables a sinner to love God and others; rather, their teaching promotes selfish ambition, carnal indulgences, and “forms of godliness” but denying its power – *Colossians 2:18-19.*

B. The Characteristics of Sound Doctrine

1. The impact of the love for God and others caused by the Gospel is a three-fold transformation that, in turn, result in even greater love ... and so on – *“... from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”*
2. First, we see that this love comes from a *“pure heart”* – [καθαρός] – a heart that has been cleansed by grace to be free from moral corruption and guilt – cp. *Matthew 5:8; 1 Peter 1:22; 2 Timothy 2:22.*

3. Second, we see that this love comes from *“a good conscience”* – [ἀγαθός] – a conscience that meets the highest standards of quality, useful in applying the truth of Scripture to assess right from wrong; something called moral discernment – cp. *1 Timothy 4:1-3*.
4. Finally, we see that this love comes from *“a sincere faith”* – [ἀνυπόκριτος] a faith that is “without pretense” or a faith that is “genuine,” a faith that can only be known as a gift from God – cp. *Ephesians 2:8*.
5. Only God can create a *“pure heart”* – *Psalms 51:10*; a produce *“a good conscience”* and provide *“a sincere faith”* – no work of human merit or sourced within any sinner.
6. We need the power of God’s Word for such things – something to which Paul had already exhorted these same elders to commit – cp. *Acts 20:32*.
7. As God’s grace produces these things through the agency of God’s Word, it results in love; and when love grows, it results in even greater purity of heart, health in one’s conscience, and sincerity of faith ... and so on.

III. THE CONSEQUENCES OF STRAY DOCTRINES – *1:6-7*

A. The Distractions from Truth – *v. 6*

1. Returning to the deviance of false teachers, Paul rebukes false teachers – *“For some men, straying from these things ...”* – that is, the love resulting from the sanctifying grace of God through His Word.
2. When a person *“strays”* [ἀστοχέω] to “miss the point” – they wander into matters without authority and are *“turned aside to fruitless discussion.”*
3. *“turn aside”* [ἐκτρέπω] – means to be wrenched or dislocated – a term used medically to refer to twisting or spraining one’s ankle.
4. Hence, there is nothing profitable in the progress of Christlikeness, but only *“fruitless discussions”* – [ματαιολογία] – foolish or empty talk – with nothing to offer – *Jude 12-13*.
5. Their teaching pivots attention away from the substantive truths of God’s Word that sanctifies and perfects us and causes the wrong turns that lead into the wilderness of truth.
6. Satan seeks to distract us from the truth about Christ by raising myriads of questions that embroil doubt, and discussions about things that have no grounding in Scripture but gives a person a sense of self-righteousness or excuses for fleshly indulgences.

B. The Declarations Self Promotion – *v. 7*

THE EPISTLE OF 1 TIMOTHY

1. The self-promotion by false teachers is shameless – as they elevate themselves through the deceptions that call attention away from Christ with whom they cannot compare.
2. They are *“wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand wither what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.”*
3. The conceit involved in self-appointment as teachers – usurping the genuine call of God by aspirations of authority and public esteem – cp. *1 Timothy 6:3-5.*
4. This is why it is important to abide by the necessary spiritual qualifications of elders who are free from the love of money or conceited – cp. *1 Timothy 3:3, 6.*
5. Such men promote themselves, despite themselves, and for the benefit of themselves – cp. *3 John 9.*
6. A man is a false teacher who seeks his own promotion when he does the following:
 - a) *Speaks of himself and his own accomplishments.*
 - b) *Softens doctrine to be more acceptable to greater attendances or reputation.*
 - c) *Sways people with charm, or personality.*
 - d) *Sidesteps the glory of Christ by focusing on man-centeredness.*
7. Despite such *“confident assertions,”* they *“do not understand”* and have nothing to offer except themselves – an inferior savior to the genuine Redeemer!

So What?

1. Pay attention to doctrine – it is crucial for the health of the church and the eternal destiny of individual souls.
2. You personally must insist on what is taught being clearly demonstrated from Scripture and not sourced in tradition or opinion.
3. “Teaching” that distracts from the sufficiency and glory of Jesus Christ needs to be rejected and the teacher needs to be censured ... not tolerated.
4. Churches that tolerate false teaching must be abandoned ... including Grace Bible if it were to do so.

The church must insist on biblical teaching.