

Sermon or Lesson: 1 Timothy 6:20-21 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Guardians Of Sound Doctrines In Our Churches And Ministries

BACKGROUND:

READ: 1 Timothy 6:3-5:

- - God directly and strongly opposes "anyone teaching false doctrines" in the church or ministry. (v.3)
- - By their nature, teachers of false doctrines typically are un-teachable, stubbornly entrenched in their false doctrine, and oblivious to what godliness truly is. (v.3)
- - Through the debating and arguing about their false doctrines, teachers of false doctrines are responsible for the occurrence of a variety of evils in the churches and ministries that they are in. (vv.4b-5,10)

READ: 1 Timothy 6:11-12a:

- - Pastor Timothy, along with all pastors, elders, ministry leaders, and true believers, are to flee from all this evil, and instead pursue having genuine godly virtues in their life. (v.11)
- - Furthermore, they are to simultaneously take a stand for the faith in the midst of relentless surrounding pressure and opposition to the contrary. (v.12)

READ: 1 Timothy 6:20-21

v.20a - READ

[Lesson Question: Conduct a brief overview of the Book of 1 Timothy, finding and noting instances wherein apostle Paul instructs pastor Timothy about what he should and should not do in regard to the teaching of false doctrines that is occurring in Timothy's church. Then, extrapolate what the inappropriate responses were that pastor Timothy was doing.]

SECTION POINT: Pastors and elders must forcefully confront those persons teaching false doctrines in their church, and turn away from prolonged discussing, debating, and arguing with them.

"Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care."

- - Near the beginning of chapter 6, the topic again focuses on the teaching of false doctrines, previously having been the topic in the beginning of chapters 1 and 4. (vv.6:3ff; 1:3-11; 4:1-8)
- - Each time this topic of the teaching of false doctrines is addressed, the countering imperative always is for pastor Timothy to teach and to insist on the teaching of true doctrine, "sound instruction", "godly teaching". (v.6:3; cf. vv.1:3,18-19; 4:6-7,11,16; 6:2,11,20)
- - Throughout the Book of 1 Timothy, pastor Timothy is repeatedly exhorted to take specific actions to counter the "teaching of false doctrines" in his church. (v.6:3)

Question: Why does pastor Timothy need to be exhorted repeatedly to take specific actions to counter the teaching of false doctrines in his church?

-- From the evidence, apparently pastor Timothy was not forcefully confronting those persons in his church who were teaching and promoting false doctrines.

- - - - In verses 1:1,3, pastor Timothy is authoritatively instructed by Paul, a ranking apostle, to "command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer".

- - - - But, apparently pastor Timothy was instead merely engaging those certain men in "controversies" (v.1:4), in other words engaging them in discussions and perhaps arguments.

- - - - So, pastor Timothy is exhorted to "fight the good fight" (v.1:18) and thus battle those persons who were teaching false doctrines in his church - and not merely discuss and argue with them.

- - - - Next, in verses 4:6-7,11, pastor Timothy is again authoritatively instructed by apostle Paul, this time to "point out", "command", and "teach" the truths of the faith to his congregants, while "having nothing to do with" the false teachings that were being promoted in his church.

- - - - But, apparently pastor Timothy was instead succumbing to the persuasiveness of the reasonings, assertions, and conclusions that the false teachers were using to defend their false doctrines. (v.4:16)

- - - - Furthermore, apparently this prolonged engaging in discussions with the false teachers was also having a detrimental effect on pastor Timothy's time and on his ministerial duties. (v.4:13)

- - - - So now pastor Timothy is exhorted to "train yourself to be godly" (v.4:7) and "persevere" in closely guarding his doctrine (v.4:16), and thus shield himself from falling victim to the persuasiveness of the false teaching that was occurring in his church.

- - - - And then, in verses 6:4,11-14, pastor Timothy is again authoritatively instructed and even "charged" and "commanded" by apostle Paul, this time to "flee from all these" "controversies and quarrels about words", and again to "fight the good fight of the faith".

- - - - But, apparently pastor Timothy was instead being successfully seduced by "godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge". (v.6:20)

- - - - So now, in verse 6:20, pastor Timothy is exhorted to "guard" and "preserve" "what has been entrusted to your care" and to "turn away from" this "godless chatter", debating, discussing, and arguing with the teachers of false doctrines in his church. (Strong's #5442)

- - It is interesting to note that in the Book of 1 Timothy, Paul does not commend pastor Timothy for being a good pastor; instead Paul repeatedly exhorts pastor Timothy to do what a good minister is suppose to be doing - "Timothy, do this..., and Timothy stop doing these other things..." (e.g. v.6:20); "Timothy, if you do this..., then you will be a good minister" (v.4:6).

vv.20b-21a - READ

[Lesson Question: Analyze and describe from these verses 20b-21a what the nature, and the formation, and a result of false doctrines are.]

SECTION POINT: In confronting teachers of false doctrines in their church, pastors and elders must recognize that those teachers have distinctly wandered from the faith even though they vehemently assert that their doctrines significantly bring them into heightened rightness and righteousness of the faith.

v.20b - "Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge,"

- - Indeed, there are righteous-looking people in our churches who teach and promote false doctrines.
- - They engage other people in supposed intelligent conversations about their doctrines, but the reality is these conversations are actually "godless chatter" - "empty babblings and fruitless discussions" that are "profane, heathenish, and wicked". (Strong's #2757, #0952)
- - The promoting of their doctrines is "godless chatter" because their doctrines are devoid of the truth from God, even though they vehemently claim to the contrary.
- - And furthermore, their doctrines are "oppositional" to and in "conflict" with the truth from God, even though they vehemently claim to the contrary about that as well. (Strong's #0477)
- - The false doctrines that these righteous-looking teachers promote are based upon what they contend is authentic "knowledge", but in reality their supposed knowledge is actually "theories" that someone deduced and then were elevated to the status of being authentic knowledge. (Strong's #0477)

v.21a - "which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith."

- - The teachers and promoters of false doctrines in our churches have personally "openly affirmed, and declared their belief in" these doctrines. (AHD - 'profess')
 - - "In so doing, they have wandered from the faith", "deviating from truth" and "missing the mark" of what faith genuinely is. (Strong's #0795)
 - - They think their doctrines significantly bring them into heightened rightness and righteousness of the faith - that is why they so adamantly believe in and promote their doctrines.
 - - But they are seriously in error, because God says here that their faith has actually deteriorated significantly - to the extent that they have now "wandered from the faith", implying they are no longer even functioning in the faith.
 - - So in essence, we have teachers of the faith in our churches who look and sound righteous, but because they are professing and promoting false doctrines, they are in actuality functioning outside of the faith - even though they are in our churches teaching the faith - their version of it. Doesn't this alarm anyone???
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BIG IDEA: Pastors, elders, and ministry leaders must guard sound doctrines in their church, and not allow the teaching nor the prolonged debating over false doctrines nor succumb to believing them.

IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS:

-- Pastors, elders, and ministries leaders: You have been entrusted by God to guard and ensure that the doctrines being taught in your church or ministry are sound, biblically-aligned, and correct.

- - - - Are you doing this, which God has entrusted you to do?

- - - - Or are you neglecting this responsibility?

- - - - Or worse yet, are you allowing or even promoting what God forbids here, the teaching of false doctrines and "opposing ideas" that are based on experiential but false spiritual "knowledge"?

-- Pastors, elders, and ministries leaders: You have been ordered by God to refrain from engaging in "godless chatter", and prolonged debating and arguing about false doctrines, which cause those persons who "profess" them to "wander from the faith".

- - - - Are you doing this, which God has ordered you to do?

- - - - Or are you allowing the prolonged debating and arguing about false doctrines in your church or ministry?

- - - - Or worse yet, are you actively promoting what God forbids here, that you believe in and profess false doctrines, and consequently you have been engaging in ongoing debating and arguing about your false doctrines in order to try to convert your church over to believing and professing them like you do?

- - From God's perspective, the teaching of false doctrines destroys churches and ministries, even though those churches and ministries appear to be doing fine.

- - Pastors, elders, and ministries leaders: Do you want to jeopardize or destroy the spiritual and doctrinal purity of your church or ministry, thereby facilitating your people in actually "wandering from the faith"? Really?

- - You have been herein warned, directly by God from His Word. Judgment Day will not go beneficially for you, and you will not have a good "foundation laid up for yourself for the coming age". (v.19)

- - For those of you pastors, elders, and ministries leaders who now choose to be obedient to God in this regard, take these orders from God very seriously - because the threat to the spiritual health of your church is very serious.

- - Proactively stay on alert for the teaching of false doctrines in your church or ministry.

- - Confront those persons teaching any false doctrine.

- - Initially reason with them with Scriptures, and then if they refuse to correct and align with the Scriptures and sound doctrine, then immediately implement steps that terminate them from teaching and vocalizing any of their false doctrines anywhere within your church or its ministries. (vv.3-5)

- - Be assured that God will bless you and your church for your obedience in this regard, even though you may resultantly lose a few or some attenders or members.

- - May God's favor and may "grace be with you", as you diligently and successfully "guard what has been entrusted to your care" by confronting and stopping the teaching of false doctrines in your church or ministry. (v.21)

[Additional Lesson Question to ponder (optional, if time allows):

- - What are the implications of the principles and commands in these verses 20-21 for search committees, which sort through and interview candidates to hire one for a ministry position in their church?]

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