

Sermon or Lesson: 1 Timothy 1:18-20 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Maintain Personal Integrity And Battle The Teaching of False Doctrines

READ: 1 Timothy 1:18-20, with vv.3-4 for context

BACKGROUND:

- - Within the discussion so far in 1 Timothy chapter 1 relating to the teaching of false doctrines, myths, and genealogies, Paul has given Timothy an instruction to confront the teaching of false doctrines in his church.
- - Paul then discusses the nature and characteristics of those people who teach false doctrines, additionally identifying himself as formerly having believed, followed, and promoted false doctrines. (v.13)
- - Then Paul describes how the Lord poured out abundant grace and mercy on Paul through salvation, dramatically impacting and turning around the destructive direction of Paul's life and then appointing Paul to now teach the law with sound doctrines rather than with false doctrines. (vv.12-14)
- - Let's look at further teaching Paul gives to Timothy about this instruction to confront the teaching of false doctrines in his church.

vv.18-19a - READ

[Lesson Question: What is Paul telling Timothy to do and how should Timothy do it?]

SECTION POINT: God's will is that ministry leaders need to implement the confronting of the teaching of false doctrines, while maintaining comprehensive personal integrity and godliness.

- - As Paul's like-a-dear-son, apprentice, and trainee, Timothy is reminded of the instruction Paul gave him in verses 3-4 and that this instruction to confront false teaching is "in accordance with" God's will for Timothy, as prior prophecies had pronounced. (NAS)
- - By following this instruction, Timothy will be engaged in rightly and responsibly fulfilling the difficult duties of his ministerial job.
- - Apparently Timothy was not confronting the teachers and promoters of false doctrines in his church, because Paul had to instruct Timothy again in this letter (vv.3,18) to do so, which also contains in chapter 1 detailed explanations and rationales to motivate Timothy to fulfill this difficult duty of his ministerial job.

- - Assertively confronting teachers and promoters of false doctrines in the manner Paul has instructed Timothy to do is likely to become combative, a spiritual fight, because Timothy is to command them to immediately stop teaching and promoting their false doctrines. (v.3)
- - In a church or ministry, this action is likely to create quite an uproar, with Timothy's reputation and ministry position eventually being put in jeopardy.

- - Certainly, Timothy's ministry authority will be challenged, his motives accused, his interpretation of Scriptures ridiculed, his personal spiritual maturity slandered, and his ministry skills disparaged.
- - Additionally, Timothy can expect that "no one [will] come to his support and everyone [will] desert him", like what happened to Paul in the midst of a similar battle. (2 Timothy 4:16)
- - Timothy can also expect that his fellow leaders in his church, who are supposedly righteous and spiritually mature, will stay silent and their solid positive supportive regard for Timothy will begin to waver and then erode during the progression of the battle.
- - But despite the adversity Timothy is going through during this battle to stop the teaching of false doctrines, myths, or genealogies in his church, Timothy must stay steady and firm in his faith, holding tightly to the sound doctrines, appropriate disciplines, and correct teachings of the faith.
- - Even though other leaders and members of the ministry will want to acquiesce to the teaching of false doctrines in order to restore peace, Timothy must maintain focused recognition of the serious dangers and the destructive results such a surrender would facilitate.
- - The teaching of false doctrines and myths in a ministry or church is not to be allowed, compromised, or tolerated. (v.3)
- - And Timothy must hold tightly to faith as he perseveres in the battle all alone, all the while self-monitoring that he has been conducting himself properly, which will generate confidence within himself that he has a good and clear conscience before God.
- - Timothy must be blameless in all of his conduct, speech, and attitudes during this confrontational battle to stop the teaching of false doctrines and myths in his church.
- - Even though his own people and fellow leaders in his church may never stand up, make known, and verify Timothy's righteous handling of this confrontational battle, Timothy can rest in the assurance that God will one day vindicate him.

vv.19b-20 - READ

[Lesson Question: Develop the dynamics of what this activity of Hymenaeus and Alexander implies and the dynamics of what this activity of Paul implies.]

SECTION POINT: Speaking in a way that in reality is hostile against God or teaching false doctrines in a ministry shipwrecks one's faith and opens oneself up to substantial disciplining from God through torment inflicted by the Kingdom of Darkness.

- - It is 'grievous, distressing, and lamentable' that some people in churches and ministries "reject", "thrust away, or push off" "holding on to faith and a good conscience". (from Strong's #3759 (omitted in the *NIV*); Strong's #0683)
- - As a result, they have "shipwrecked their faith"; by their choices and actions they have brought upon their faith destruction and utter ruin.
- - The reality is their faith no longer functions as it is suppose to, in a God-approved way, even though they think their faith is proper and healthy.

- - Two examples of this are Hymenaeus and Alexander, who shipwrecked their faith evidently by speaking and promoting "blasphemies", which is speaking about God in a sinful, or irreverent, or disrespectful, or contemptuous, or slanderous, or insulting, or defamatory, or denigrating way. (from Strong's #0987 and various *AHD* definitions)
- - Hymenaeus and Alexander probably are the "certain men" being referred to in verses 1:3-4, 6, 7.
- - Think about this for a minute: These men were in the church, probably in the worship services, in the prayer meetings, teaching in Bible studies, teaching in Sunday School classes, teaching in home groups, teaching in Vacation Bible Schools, and they were uttering and promoting blasphemies, which evidently were in the form of false doctrines, myths, and genealogies that were against God and contrary to Scriptures.
- - These men were teaching blasphemous false doctrines in Timothy's church, and Timothy was unwilling to confront them, which apparently the rest of the church and its leadership were not willing to do either. Heaven forbid!
- - And yet observations confirm that this phenomenon occurs regularly in countless numbers of churches today.

- - So Paul, having repeatedly urged Timothy to confront these blasphemous men and being unable to personally go and do it himself, now invokes a spiritual approach to address this problem by "handing [these men] over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme".

Several dynamics can be reasonably theorized from this spiritual approach:

- - Paul has put in a request to God that spiritual powers of the Kingdom of Darkness be loosed upon these blasphemous men in Timothy's church. (cf. Matthew 16:19)
 - - These men probably were convinced their doctrines were correct and thereby they refused to respond to reasoning and sound interpretation of Scriptures; so painful discipline is brought to bear upon them to bring repentance and correction from false doctrine.
 - - These blasphemous men are doing substantial harm to the spiritual well-being of the church; they are a serious threat and they need to be stopped. (cf. 2 Timothy 2:15-18; 4:14-15)
 - - So in effect, Paul is asking God to remove any God-extended umbrella of spiritual protection over them, so to speak, and instead allow these men to be inflicted with direct, substantial, and sustained spiritual torment, harassment, oppression, and influence on physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual levels.
 - - This spiritual infliction is not necessarily intended to be punitive but yet it is intended to be painfully impacting enough to get or instigate their focused attention, serious contemplation, openness to sound teaching of Scriptures, genuine repentance, and concrete change that terminates their blasphemies. (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:4-5)
 - - This request for spiritual infliction upon these blasphemous men in Timothy's church represents and denotes a major shift in how Paul prays from them and how God deals with them.
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BIG IDEA: Maintain comprehensive personal integrity and godliness when confronting persons of shipwrecked faith in your church who teach false doctrines or speak in a way that in reality is hostile against God.

APPLICATIONS:

- - Do you consider part of your responsibility and function as a leader or member in your church or ministry is to be a guardian for sound doctrine?
 - - Within the teaching that is going on in your church or ministry, do you diligently watch for any false doctrines, myths, or speaking that in reality is hostile against God?
 - - Do you dutifully report suspected violations to the leaders in your church or ministry and then fully support them as they are investigating and confronting those who are teaching false doctrines?
 - - If the confronting of a false teaching escalates and becomes prolonged, do you openly, solidly, and continuously support your leaders who are implementing the confronting?
 - - In the midst of a confrontation of false teaching, do you maintain personal integrity and godliness, "holding on to faith and a good conscience"? (v.19a)
 - - If the teacher of false doctrine refuses to repent and desist, do you fully support the removal of that false teacher from any position and membership that person holds in your church or ministry?
 - - If that defrocked teacher of false doctrine is your friend, do you obey God, your leaders, and Scriptures by supporting the sanctions against your false teaching friend and then treat that false teaching friend as an unbeliever, as prescribed in Matthew 18:15-18?
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[Additional Lesson Questions (optional, if time allows):

- - Considering how God regards false teachers in the church, what should be our attitude and our response to them? Tolerance / minimizing / ignoring / inaction? Or persistent confronting? Should we ask or pray for God to remove the spiritual forces that are being utilized to discipline them?
 - - Logically, what should be the policy and practice of the church when recruiting people to fill teaching or leadership positions? Should they be placed into teaching or leadership positions without conducting any kind of doctrine interview or observation or training? (see v.3:9)
 - - What else does this imply about how God regards, responds to, and treats those who refuse to change (hard-hearted) their doctrine from false to sound?
 - - What do the principles in this passage indicate about the role that God has for demonic forces in the church?
 - - Notice that this passage does not say to kick these false doctrine teachers out of the church. Presuming this is correct, what place or role should they have in the church?]
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