

Sermon or Lesson: 1 Timothy 4:3-5 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Overruling The Good That God Has Established

INTRO: When we walk into church each time, we assume that all of the teaching content is true, is based on correct interpretation of Scriptures, and comes from a godly teacher. But beware! God says our church is a prime target for activities of intentional deception implemented within our church.

READ: 1 Timothy 4:3-5, with vv.1-3 for context

BACKGROUND:

- - In the first two verses in 1 Timothy chapter 4, God's Spirit is warning us that our church has been infiltrated and infused with agents who work covertly on behalf of and in conjunction with the Kingdom of Darkness.
 - - The Holy Spirit says these wayward congregants in our church are hypocrites and spiritually un-discerning, and they have an approach of deception and masquerading in order to promote the agendas of counterfeit manifesting and teaching false doctrines that originate from deceiving spirits.
 - - Let's study some of the activities of these enemy agents in our church.
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v.3 - READ

[Lesson Question: Analyze the approach of false teachers and the nature of the contents of their false doctrines that are cited in this verse.]

SECTION POINT: The teaching of false doctrines can lead people away from the benefits of what God has established and approves of.

"They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods"

- - One common approach characteristic of those persons who teach false doctrine is that their false doctrine is used as a means to impose restrictions on other people who choose to follow their teachings.
- - As such then, this approach contains an element of power - exerting power to control, to dictate, to "forbid", to "order".
- - This approach also contains an agenda element - the false teachers establishing themselves personally in authority over others and then imposing their agenda upon others.

- - These false teachers who have infiltrated our churches are using something other than God's Word as the authority to formulate and dictate their false doctrines.
- - They contend their doctrine is in compliance with God's Word but in reality it is in opposition to God's Word.

- - Also, they contend their doctrine leads to righteous living but in reality it is in opposition to righteous living because it effectively restricts what God clearly allows, producing oppression where God intended that freedom of choice and thanksgiving be produced.

"which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth"

- - These two particular false doctrines cited here are perversions of what God created and His intentions for how those created things are to be used.

- - Clearly in Scriptures, the "truth" is God created marriage and He created food, and both were created for the benefit of humans. (cf. Genesis 1:31; 2:7,15-24)

- - Therefore, a proper response by us humans is to have "gratefulness" and "thanksgiving" when we "receive", "participate" in, or "partake" of these things, which God has created for our benefit. (Strong's #2169, #3336)

- - And an improper response is to "forbid" or "order" "abstinence" upon others from things that God has approved for us to use in accordance with His guidelines.

- - From analysis, the false doctrines cited in this verse possess an inherent underlying foundational doctrine of works-based faith, wherein one's works or outward acts of supposed godliness are presumed to improve or achieve a higher level of current interrelations with God.

- - But God rejects this approach to living out one's faith that is based solely on good works because He additionally seeks simultaneous "believing" and "knowing the truth", which contain an inner rightness of heart as evidenced by one's outer willful submitting to God and His Word.

- - God seeks all of these aspects in balanced combination - believing, knowing the truth, submitting to God, obeying His Word, refraining from sinning, living godly, and doing good works, which all contribute as a whole to achieving a higher level of current interrelations with God. (Note this is not a discussion about achieving salvation. Instead, this is a discussion about achieving improved sanctification or consecration before the Lord.)

vv.4-5 - READ

[Lesson Question: Analyze and describe what God says are the foundational truths that contradict the two false doctrines cited in verse 3.]

SECTION POINT: Some false doctrines being taught in our churches directly condemn and outright reject that which God has pronounced as being good and permissible.

v.4 - "For everything God created is good"

- - Now in these next two verses, the reasons are given as to why marriage and eating certain foods should not be forbid.

- - Firstly, "everything God created is good" - meaning everything that God Himself created is God-approved and thereby "valuable or virtuous for appearance or use". (Strong's #2570)

- - Notice though the qualifying distinction cited here, that everything "God created" is good, which does not include everything humans or fallen angels create (examples of which are described in verses 1-2). (cf. James 1:17)
- - So the reasoning given here is that God created marriage and food; therefore both are intrinsically good and are approved by God for us humans to receive or partake in.

v.4 - "and nothing is to be rejected"

- - Secondly, because everything God created is good, approved, and permissible, therefore none of them are "to be rejected".
- - For the things God has approved of, who are we to come along and disapprove of?
- - To disapprove of things God approves of is to play god, essentially self-exalting ourselves to be above God.
- - Also, to reject what God approves of is to label and condemn as evil or sinful that which God says is good.
- - God gives us humans non-sinful choices of whether to marry or not and what foods to eat or not, so who are we to dictate, forbid, or order otherwise?

v.4 - "if it is received with thanksgiving"

- - Within our freedom and God-approval to choose in these regards, notice though that God does put limits, restrictions, and/or conditions on these choices.
- - For the kinds of foods we choose to eat, a condition God attaches is "if it is received with thanksgiving".
- - We are to have gratitude and thanksgiving towards God for graciously creating and providing this kind of food we choose to eat.
- - Therefore, actively acknowledging God for His divine providing is an important aspect of worship, particularly when we receive His provisions, which technically occurs throughout every day in some form or another. (Strong's #2169)
- - Psalms 147:7-9a - "7. Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; make music to our God on the harp. 8. He covers the sky with clouds; he supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills. 9. He provides food for the cattle..."

v.5 - "because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer"

- - One concern or objection might be that a devote believer would be spiritually defiled for eating food that came from processes done by persons engaged in doing evil. (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:7)
- - While this concern may appear to be noble and have righteous intentions, it is invalid and inappropriate because the solution is simple and easy. (cf. vv.22-23 in Colossians 2:13-23)
- - God says this food is not spiritually defiling because it is "consecrated" or spiritually "purified and made holy" through His declaring food as good and through prayer of thanksgiving to God. (Strong's #0037)
- - An implication here is that false teachers in our churches pronounce edicts like these restrictions on marriage and food because they think and contend they have superior spiritual knowledge - that they have attained true, correct, and thereby superior spiritual knowledge. (1 Timothy 6:20-21)

- - And from their supposedly superior spiritual knowledge they formulate their own interpretation of Scriptures, which together result in ideas, doctrines, edicts, and disciplines that in actuality oppose God, are contrary to His Word, and wander from the faith. (1 Timothy 6:20-21)

- - Like the "deceiving spirits" who covertly empower them (v.1), false teachers embedded in our churches have themselves likewise become deceivers (v.2), pronouncing edicts that originate from false knowledge to in effect condemn and reject that which God pronounces as good, approved, and permissible.

BIG IDEA: We humans do not have the right to condemn, overrule, or forbid what God has established as being good, approved, and permissible.

APPLICATIONS:

- - It is time to do a self-check. Are you following and/or promoting any false teachings? If your immediate reaction is "No!", are you sure?

- - All of the doctrines and teachings you follow and/or promote, do they all conform appropriately to what God has established? Or do some deviate from or even outright reject what God has established?

- - Are you promoting any doctrines or teachings for which there is a Scripture verse that clearly contradicts what you are promoting?

- - Are you following and/or promoting any doctrines or teachings that forbid or order abstinence for which there is a Scripture verse that clearly contradicts what you are promoting?

- - Are you following and/or promoting any doctrines or teachings that were in effect in the Old Testament but have since been nullified or declared obsolete in the New Testament?

- - Do you try to justify the following of and/or promoting of any doctrines or teachings that utilize outer actions to avoid, but yet claim inner spiritual righteousness?

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

- - As a true believer, how would you answer someone who contends that if God declares all food to be good, then it is acceptable to ingest plants that contain an addictive psychotropic drug?

- - As a true believer, how would you answer someone who contends that if God declares marriage to be good, then it is acceptable to marry a person of the same sex or to be married to multiple persons at the same time?

- - Can you think of any other false doctrines that forbid or order abstinence from what God has established as being good, approved, and permissible?]

Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

"Strong's Greek Dictionary." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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