

False Teachers

False and True Teachers in the Church

1 Timothy 1:3-11

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The Danger of False Teachers

(1 Timothy 1:3-11) Introduction— Minister: this is the first charge to the young minister—to *be a defender of the faith*. The young minister must guard against and correct false teachers. (See the [general outline](#) for the other charges to the young minister.)

OUTLINE OF FIRST TIMOTHY

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The Danger of False Teachers

1. False teachers teach a different doctrine (v.3).
2. False teachers give heed to speculations and questions rather than godly edification (v.4).
3. False teachers put empty discussion above love (v.5-6).
4. False teachers put ambition and personal ideas above the truth (v.7).
5. False teachers put self-righteousness above God's gospel (v.8-11).

1. (1 Timothy 1:3) Teachers, False— Doctrine: false teachers teach a different doctrine. Timothy was in Ephesus and Paul was in Macedonia, a great distance apart. Ephesus was in Asia and Macedonia was in Europe, north of Greece. Note that Paul had to urge Timothy to stay at Ephesus. The church was in trouble because false teaching had seeped in, and the church needed Timothy. Apparently, Timothy felt incapable and wanted to join Paul until Paul could return to Ephesus and handle the situation himself. However, false teaching is so serious a matter that it has to be handled immediately when it raises its ugly head. Therefore, Timothy had to remain in Ephesus so that he could *charge* the church to stop the false teaching. The word "charge" (*paraggellō* ^{PWS: 544}) is a strong word. It is a military word that means to pass commands down through the ranks. Timothy was to *give orders and charge* the false teachers to stop teaching false doctrine, and if this did not work, he was to order and charge the church to handle the false teachers. This says several things about the church at Ephesus.

1. The leaders had not heeded the word of Paul when he had met with them earlier (Acts 20:17-38). He had warned them about false teachers.

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" ([Acts 20:28-31](#)).

2. The leaders had not insisted upon the purity of the gospel as Paul had done and taught. They had allowed the Word of God to become corrupted.

"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" ([Acts 20:24-27](#)).

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" ([Acts 20:32](#)).

"For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ" ([2 Cor. 2:17](#)).

3. Timothy was to charge the ministers, teachers, and leaders to preach no other doctrine than the doctrine of God's Word.

- ⇒ They were not to add to the doctrine of God's Word.
- ⇒ They were not to take away from the doctrine of God's Word.
- ⇒ They were not to formulate new doctrines for the church.

They were not to make what they thought were improvements nor to correct what they thought were defects in the Word of God. They were not to change or alter the Word of God to any degree whatsoever. In the clear words of this verse: "charge some that they teach no other doctrine."

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" ([Galatians 1:6-9](#)).

"Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" ([Matthew 16:12](#)).

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" ([Col. 2:8](#)).

"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines" ([Hebrews 13:9](#)).

2. ([1 Timothy 1:4](#)) **Teachers, False: false teachers give heed to speculations and questions rather than godly edification.** No better description of false teaching could be given than what this verse gives:

"[False teaching] is fables and endless genealogies, which give rise to questions, rather than godly edifying."

1. The word "fables" (*muthois* [PWS: 1411](#)) refers to *all forms* of false and fictional teaching or doctrine. It means the *false ideas* and speculations of men about God and Christ and the teachings of God's Word. The doctrines of men are only speculations, fables, narratives, stories, fictions, and falsehoods (A.T. Robertson. [Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol.4, p.561](#)).

"But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness" (1 Tim. 4:7).

"And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4:4).

"Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth" (Titus 1:14).

"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty" (2 Peter 1:16).

2. The word "genealogies" refers to those who take comfort in a godly heritage. The Jews were guilty of this. They took great pride in their godly forefathers, so much so that they felt that the godliness of their forefathers rubbed off on them. The more godly forefathers they had in their roots, the more prestigious and acceptable they felt before God and men. They felt that the stronger their roots, the more man and God would accept and esteem them. Note the reference to **"endless genealogies."** There were apparently those who were spending enormous amounts of time in structuring and discussing the godly heritage of the past. Apparently, the practice had seeped into the church. There were those...

- who were stressing heritage over Christ.
- who were depending upon a godly heritage for salvation instead of trusting Christ.
- who were spending more time in genealogies than in edifying and building up the godliness of the church.
- who were concentrating upon questions and theories rather than upon building godly behavior among believers.

Thought 1. Some persons take great comfort in their godly heritage. They actually feel that God would never reject them...

- because of their godly wives, husbands, children, parents.
- because they have a godly pastor or friend with whom they are close.

"Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Luke 3:8).

"Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples" (John 9:28).

"And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness" (Romans 2:19).

"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one" (Job 14:4).

"I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me" (Job 33:9).

"Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?" (Proverbs 20:6).

"Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" ([Proverbs 20:9](#)).

"Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts" ([Proverbs 21:2](#)).

"There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness" ([Proverbs 30:12](#)).

3. (1 Timothy 1:5-6) Teachers, False— Love— Conscience— Faith:

false teachers put empty discussion above love. The end of God's commandment to men is love (*agapē*, God's kind of love). Therefore, ministers and teachers are to focus upon growing in love and in teaching love. The great call of believers is...

- to know the love of God and to love God.
- to love each other as brothers in the Lord.
- to love the lost of the world so much that we are driven to take the gospel to them.

But note where this kind of love comes from. Its source is not found in men; it does not just arise out of the heart of man. The love which we are to know and possess comes from three sources.

- ⇒ **Love comes from a pure heart:** a heart forgiven by God and cleansed from all impurities; a heart that is not weighed down by selfishness, worldliness, envy, covetousness, and immorality.
- ⇒ **Love comes from a good conscience:** a conscience that knows there is nothing between it and God, between it and men; a conscience that knows it has been true to God's Word and has taught no error.
- ⇒ **Love comes from unfeigned or sincere faith:** a faith that is set upon God and His Word, that holds to God's Word and trusts and teaches God's Word and God's Word only.

The end of God's commandment—of all that God has ever said to man—is love. Therefore, a true believer commits his life to learn more and more about the love of God and to teach the love of God more and more. But to do this he must be totally committed...

- to having a pure heart before God.
- to having a good (clear) conscience before God.
- to following *the faith*, that is, the teachings and doctrine of God's Word.

However, this is not true with some—not true with false teachers. Note exactly what Scripture says: some have swerved and turned aside to empty discussions. The term "vain jangling" sounds just like what false teaching amounts to: *janglings*—vain, empty janglings. The term means empty arguments, discussions, and speculations—the speculative ideas of men about God, Christ, and the Word of God. Note that false teachers swerve and turn aside from the doctrines of God's Word to these vain janglings.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" ([1 Tim. 4:1-2](#)).

"For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision" ([Titus 1:10](#)).

"Should a wise man utter vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind? Should he reason with unprofitable talk? or with speeches wherewith he can do no good?" ([Job 15:2-3](#)).

"The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness: and the end of his talk is mischievous madness" ([Eccles. 10:13](#)).

4. ([1 Timothy 1:7](#)) Teachers, False: false teachers put their own ambition and personal ideas above the truth.

The picture is that of a person who is ambitious..

- to be recognized as an original teacher or preacher.
- to be recognized as a creative person.
- to be recognized as the creator of a novel idea or doctrine.
- to be recognized as the author of a new concept or doctrine.
- to be recognized as the founder of a new movement.

The picture is that of a person who so desires to fit in with the latest fashion of teaching that he neglects or ignores the truth. He disregards the truth in order to fit in with his peers. The false teacher's ambition is allowed to cloud his understanding of the truth.

Barclay points out that the false teacher who is ambitious often...

- demonstrates arrogance instead of humility.
- focuses upon teaching rather than learning.
- looks down upon simple-minded people.
- regards those who do not agree with his conclusions as ignorant fools. (*The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, p.37.)

"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" ([Matthew 15:9](#)).

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God" ([Matthew 22:29](#)).

"He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not" ([John 1:10-11](#)).

"For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead" ([John 20:9](#)).

"Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" ([1 Tim. 4:2](#)).

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and

strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself" ([1 Tim. 6:3-5](#)).

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" ([2 Tim. 4:3](#)).

"Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" ([Titus 1:11](#)).

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not and their damnation slumbereth not" ([2 Peter 2:1-3](#)).

5. ([1 Timothy 1:8-11](#)) Teachers, False— Law, The: false teachers put self-righteousness above God's gospel.

These verses show that the false teachers who had infiltrated the church were Jewish legalists. These said that a person became acceptable to God...

- by Christ *and the law*.
- by receiving Christ *plus keeping the law*.
- by becoming righteous in Christ *and by doing* the righteousness of the law.

They rejected the teaching that a person was saved by grace through faith *alone*. To them a person could not be saved unless he...

- became good enough to please God.
- did enough good to make himself acceptable to God.

What is wrong with this? There is nothing wrong with doing good, but there is a great deal wrong with *thinking and teaching* that a person can do *enough good* to make himself acceptable to God. God is perfect; therefore, a person would have to become perfect to be acceptable to God.

- ⇒ Man is already short of perfection; he is already imperfect; therefore, he can never be acceptable to God—not by any merit or work of his own.
- ⇒ Man already comes so short and is so sinful, he can never stop coming short and sinning. Every man comes short, sins, fails, trespasses, and transgresses—no matter who he is. He is depraved and lives a depraved life—a life short of God's glory ([Romans 3:23](#)).

This is the reason God gave man the law: not to show man that he is righteous (lawful), but to show him just how far short he really is of God's glory—how unrighteous he is and how much he needs the love and grace of God. God gave the law to show man how much he needs a Savior, even the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God Himself. **This is what man fails to see. This is what the false teachers fail to see.**

1. False teachers do not understand the law and its purposes. God gave the law to man to show him how short he comes (unrighteousness) and to restrain evil. Note this:

- ⇒ The law was given to man—to all men.
- ⇒ The law was not made for the righteous, but for the unrighteous.
- ⇒ Therefore, all men must be unrighteous because the law was given to all men.

Scripture gives a list of the people to whom God gave the law. Note how the list covers all of society. Every person is guilty of having broken the law of God.

- a. The law is given to the lawless and disobedient (rebellious): all who fail to live as God wills and commands. If a person could fail just once (he can't, but if he could), he would still need the law to let him know that he is short of the standard and has to pay the penalty and must not violate the standard any more.
- b. The law is given to the ungodly and sinners: all who act contrary to God's nature and come short of perfection.
- c. The law is given to the unholy and profane: all who refuse to set their lives apart to God and dedicate themselves to God; all who deny and question God and spiritual things and exalt themselves and this world above God and the spiritual world.
- d. The law is given to "those who strike and beat and [even] murder fathers and strike and beat and [even] murder mothers" and for other murderers (Amplified New Testament).
- e. The law is given to whoremongers and to those who defile themselves with mankind, that is, all impure and immoral persons and all homosexuals.
- f. The law is given to menstealers or kidnappers.
- g. The law is given to liars and to those who commit perjury.
- h. The law is given to any thing else that is contrary to the sound doctrine (teaching) of God's Word.

Note how no person is left out of the list: every human being who has ever lived or ever will live needs the law, for every person is short of God's glory; that is, every man is unrighteous. Therefore, no person can ever be acceptable to God. Righteousness is not by the law—not by being good and doing good. False teachers fail to see this.

- 2. False teachers do not understand the real measuring rod of God: the gospel—the glorious gospel of the blessed God.** The blessed God has made a way for man to become acceptable to Him. It is not the way of law and works, but the way of the gospel. When a person accepts the gospel of God, God accepts that person. What is the gospel?

"That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" ([1 Tim. 1:15](#)).

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" ([1 Cor. 15:3-4](#)).

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" ([1 Peter 2:24](#)).

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" ([John 3:16-18](#)).