

False Teachers

Behavior and Relationships in the Church, 1 Timothy 3:14-6:21

1 Timothy 6:3-5

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The False Teachers

(1 Timothy 6:3-5) Introduction: this is a most serious and critical passage, a passage that the church must constantly study in order to keep its message and ministry pure. It deals with those who fill the pulpit and classrooms of the church, whether the positions are filled by true teachers or false teachers. Every minister, teacher, leader, and member must heed and search his heart over this description of the false teacher.

1. He teaches a different doctrine (v.3).
2. He is proud (v.4).
3. He has a sick interest in controversial questions (v.4).
4. He has a corrupt mind and is destitute of the truth (v.5).
5. He thinks religion leads to gain (v.5).

1. (1 Timothy 6:3) Teacher, False: the false teacher teaches a different doctrine (*heterodidaskalei* ^{PWS: 3902}). He does not teach the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a terrible indictment. Imagine being in the pulpit of a Christian church and claiming to be a teacher of the Lord Jesus Christ, yet not teaching His words. How many of us are guilty of this indictment? How many of us are guilty of teaching a different doctrine? **Two reasons** are given as to why the false teacher teaches a different doctrine.

1. The false teacher does not *consent* to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. The word "**consent**" (*proserchomai* ^{PWS: 726}) means **approach** and has the sense of "attaching oneself to" Christ (Daniel Guthrie. *The Pastoral Epistles*. "Tyndale New Testament Commentaries," p.110f). The false teacher is just not willing to attach himself to the **Lord Jesus Christ**. He is...

- not willing to confess that Jesus is the **Lord God** from heaven, the very Son of God Himself.
- not willing to confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah and Savior of the world.

2. The false teacher does not consent to the teachings of godliness. He is...

- not willing to accept the righteousness of God revealed in Jesus Christ.
- not willing to separate himself from the world nor to set his life wholly apart unto God.

One or both of these reasons are why the false teacher does not teach the wholesome words of Christ, but rather chooses to teach a different doctrine and way of life. He has committed his life to the *profession* of the ministry...

- as a way to serve mankind.
- as a way to earn a livelihood.

But he is not committed to represent Christ and His Word. As a result, the person is called a false teacher by both the Holy Scriptures and Christ.

"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 6:4](#)) Teacher, False—Pride: the false teacher is proud (*tetuphōtai* ^{PWS: 3073}). The word means *puffed up* and conceited. But note: the word includes the idea of folly; it lacks good sense. Rejecting the evidence that Jesus is the Lord—the Lord Jesus Christ—is the height of pride and folly. Such rejection just lacks good sense (source unknown).

The false teacher takes pride...

- in his views and ideas.
- in his rejection of certain portions of the Bible.
- in his knowledge that some of the stories and events in the Bible are what he calls fables.
- in his intellectual ability to dissect the truth from the falsehood about Christ.
- in his enlightenment—that he knows better than to believe in such things as the miracles, deity, virgin birth, incarnation, resurrection, ascension and the personal return of Christ to earth.
- in his new and novel concepts and ideas about Christ.

The list could go on and on, but all ministers have detected this pride in discussions with other ministers. And, tragically, we have all been guilty of feeling pride over our own ideas before. William Barclay has an excellent comment on the pride of the false teacher:

"His first characteristic is conceit. His first aim is self-display. His desire is not to display Christ, but to display himself. There are still preachers and teachers who are more concerned to gain a following for themselves than for Jesus Christ. They are more concerned to press their own views upon people than they are to bring to men the word of God. When people meet together for worship they are not concerned to listen to what any man thinks; they are eager to hear what God says. The great preacher and teacher is not a purveyor of his own ideas; he is an echo of God" (The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, p.146).

3. (1 Timothy 6:4) Teachers, False: the false teacher has a sick interest in controversial questions.

When preparing to preach and teach, the false teacher does not rely upon the primary source, the Word of God itself. He relies upon secondary sources, that is, books about the Bible.

The Bible just is not the basis for his life nor for his preaching and teaching. The false teacher rejects the primary source (the Bible), and turns to secondary sources about the Bible. In some cases, he does not even know how to study the Bible.

His interest lies...

- in trying to discover the truth in the Bible, not in proclaiming the truth of the Bible.
- in questioning what is true and not true instead of living out what the Bible says.

The result, of course, is what we so often see written in the faces and minds of the false teacher and those who sit under him: many thoughts and moments of...

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| • disturbance and lack of peace | • wondering if there is really any |
| • emptiness and lack of purpose | meaning to religion and |
| • questioning and lack of meaning | worship |
| • wondering if God really does exist | • wondering if there is a world or life beyond this earth |

Why? Because what the human heart craves is God and His Word, the knowledge and assurance of Him and His guidance.

This is only reasonable and to be expected, for God is bound to have put within man a deep, natural hunger for Him and His Word. Therefore, what the human heart craves, even the heart of the false teacher, is not controversial questions and arguments over the "words of our Lord Jesus Christ" or of the Bible. What the heart craves is to hear from God, to hear the *authoritative proclamation of the Word of God itself*.

"For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: but as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts" (1 Thes. 2:3-4).

"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Thes. 2:13).

"As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: from which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm" (1 Tim. 1:3-7).

"He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings" ([1 Tim. 6:4](#)).

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" ([2 Tim. 2:15](#)).

"But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient" ([2 Tim. 2:23-24](#)).

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" ([2 Tim. 3:16](#)).

"But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself" ([Titus 3:9-11](#)).

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation ["is to be interpreted by one's own mind." Charles B. Williams. *The New Testament In the Language of the People*. "The Four Translation New Testament." Printed for Decision Magazine by World-Wide Publications of Minneapolis. New York, NY: Iversen Associates, 1966]. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" ([2 Peter 1:19-21](#)).

4. (1 Timothy 6:5) Teacher, False: the false teacher has a corrupt mind and is destitute of the truth.

His mind is corrupt in that it is not centered upon teaching the "words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the doctrine...of godliness" (the Word of God, the Scriptures, the Bible. [1 Tim. 6:3](#)).

His mind...

- focuses upon the doctrines and theologies of men.
- focuses upon the psychologies and philosophies of men.
- focuses upon man's own energy and self-improvement, upon building up man's ego and self-image.
- focuses upon the latest religions or theological ideas.
- focuses upon the popular religious discussions that please and tickle men's ears.

The point is this: the false teacher does not focus upon the truth, the Word of God. He is destitute and empty of the truth. He does not possess nor teach the truth. He is bankrupt when it comes to the truth. However, note this: what the false teacher teaches often helps us do better. It often helps to build our ego and self-image and to achieve more in this life. Some self-help preaching is just like some self-help programs, clinics, and seminars conducted all across the nation: they are excellent in so far as they go. But they have one serious flaw: *they do not go far enough.*

They do not show...

- that God is really with us and looking after us as we walk upon earth.
- that Jesus Christ has really died for our sins and risen to give us life—life that goes on forever.
- that God has really forgiven our sins and accepted us in Christ.
- that when we die, God will immediately transfer us into His presence to live with Him forever.

This kind of absolute, deep, intense assurance is missing in the false teacher and in anyone else whose mind is not focused upon "the words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the doctrine...of godliness," that is, the Word of God ([1 Tim. 6:3](#)).

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate [depraved] mind, to do those things which are not convenient [immoral]" ([Romans 1:28](#)).

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" ([Romans 8:7](#)).

"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity [emptiness] of their mind" ([Ephes. 4:17](#)).

"Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility [through self-effort] and worshipping of angels [claimed visions], intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind" ([Col. 2:18](#)).

"Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled" ([Titus 1:15](#)).

5. ([1 Timothy 6:5](#)) Teacher, False: the false teacher thinks religion leads to gain. This means at least three things.

1. Some false teachers *are concerned with morality and virtue and with man being the best and achieving the most that he can.* They believe in God, not necessarily in Christ, but in God. Therefore, they know the answer to making man and his world better is religion. Hence, they commit their lives to God and religion, to getting men to do the works of religion and to living more righteous and moral lives. They want people to be good and to do good. They think that "godliness is gain," that it helps and benefits man and his world.

Thought 1. Note that the false teacher is right on this point: the moral teaching of religion—living moral and upright lives—is good for man. But as pointed out above, works and self-help ministers do not go far enough. They do not focus upon God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And God will never accept anyone who *does not honor* His Son, for He has only one Son who is begotten of Him. That Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is loved by God. God loves His Son with His whole being, for His Son has the very nature of God Himself. Christ has always obeyed the Father—has always lived a perfectly godly life just as the Father willed. Therefore, anyone who honors Christ shall be honored and accepted by the Father. But the converse is also true: anyone who does not honor Christ will not be honored by the Father. The craving of man's heart for God

and His Word—for the deep, intense knowledge and assurance of God—comes only through Christ. Therefore, as good as they are, religion and good works do not go far enough. They do not make a person acceptable to God. God accepts only one thing: faith in Christ, His only Son.

"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](#)).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" ([John 5:24](#)).

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" ([John 14:6](#)).

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" ([Romans 5:1](#)).

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" ([Romans 5:8](#)).

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" ([2 Cor. 5:20](#)).

2. Some false teachers enter the ministry as a profession and as a means to make a living. They probably have some concern for the religious welfare of people, but the major consideration in choosing to enter the ministry was this: they thought it would be a good and commendable profession and provide a good livelihood for them and their present or future family. They tend to be preoccupied with money issues on a personal level.

3. Some false teachers have commercialized religion. The false teacher is "out for profit. He looks on his teaching and preaching, not as a vocation, but as a career. He is in the business, not to serve others, but to advance himself" (William Barclay. *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, p.148).

The exhortation of Scripture to the believer is clear, direct, and forceful: "from such withdraw." We must not sit under, associate, or have anything to do with the person who is a false minister and teacher. The church is not the place for professionalism nor for the doctrine of human effort and works (humanism).

Thought 1. Man-centered and self-help teaching is helpful, but it does not belong in the pulpit of God's church; it belongs in the conference rooms and halls of the secular world. The church must be kept pure and free in proclaiming the gospel and the supreme love of God demonstrated in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. If the human race fails to keep the pure Word of God flowing from the pulpits of God's church, then the human race is doomed. Why? Because when we die, that will be it. We shall be separated from God eternally. For God will only accept us if we approach Him in Christ. Therefore, the critical hour for man will always be when he sits under the preaching of the Word of God—the preaching of "the words of our Lord Jesus Christ

and the doctrine...of godliness." When man hears the Word of God preached, he must respond and do as God says.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" ([Romans 16:17](#)).

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" ([2 Thes. 3:6](#)).

"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](#)).

"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" ([2 Tim. 3:5](#)).

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" ([2 John 10-11](#)).