

1 Timothy

Week 4 - Chapter 4

Pray for your time together in God's Word!

Leader's Note (Synopsis of Study): In this study we think about what it means to be in the faith--to be bolted down to the Gospel. We examine this through the converse: How does Paul depict straying from the Gospel to Timothy? We also examine this through the actual ramifications of Gospel faith in Jesus Christ: godliness. We see that godliness has external manifestations sourced through our great Savior.

? Who are some people that you look up to? Why do you look up to them?

1 Timothy 4:1-5 (NIV)

¹Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, ²through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, ³who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, ⁵for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.

? What's going wrong here? How and in what ways are the Ephesians departing from the faith?

Possible Answers: They're being led astray by false teachers. They're actually devoting themselves to things that lead away from the Gospel, in other words, they're forgetting the Gospel.

? In the beginning of the passage, who is active in this departure?

Possible Answer: Both the folks being led astray and others (false teachers, demons).

? What explicitly were some of the heresies going on there?

Possible Answer: Asceticism, legalism (v3).

? What are some of the false influences in the Church today? How does today's Church stray from the truth of God's Word, from the Gospel?

Possible Answers: Prosperity Gospel. Making up rules for ourselves. Imposing a certain cultural form onto our relationship with God. A tendency to leave doctrine behind and just focus on loving and social "justice." The "to each his own" doctrine.

? How do you avoid being deceived by false teachers?

Possible Answer: You first have to know the Truth. Filtering what teachers say through the Gospel. Being careful about who you are under submission to, but also to be under godly submission is just as important (see Chapter 3!).

? What are some ways you personally are tempted to forget the Gospel?

? Looking at verse 2, the false teachers' consciences' are 'seared.' What do you think that means?

Possible Answer: Closed off. Romans 1:28 – God gave them over... (Not doing Phil 4:8).

? How do you think that happens?

Possible Answer: Every bit of ground that we willingly cede to sin (or ignore that sin) dulls us to that sin.

Leader's Note: Psalm 51:10 could serve as a contrast to how a conscience gets seared, AKA how a conscience can get 'un-seared.' Here David asks God to create in him a clean heart.

? Are there ways you are searing your conscience?

Leader's Note: This might be a good question for accountability.

1 Timothy 4:6-16 (NIV)

⁶ If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. ⁷ Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; ⁸ for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. ⁹ The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. ¹⁰ For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

¹¹ Command and teach these things. ¹² Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. ¹³ Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. ¹⁴ Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. ¹⁵ Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. ¹⁶ Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

? Verses 7 and 8 assert that godliness has value both now and in eternity. What is that value? What are the promises that it holds?

Possible Answers: Intimacy with the loving God of the Universe. More effective for the Kingdom and much more.

? What does it mean to train yourself for godliness?

Possible Answers: Seeking truth and testing things through Scripture. Prayer, memorization, meditation on scripture, fasting. It is NOT creating for yourself a new set of rules to live by, it is taking every thought captive, and exposing it to truth, it is being quick to obey the Holy Spirit when He prompts. Doing the opposite of ignoring sin.

? How does verse 10 tie into training yourself for godliness?

Possible Answers: It is toil based in hope. It is hard work based in our eternal sure hope in our salvation, based in and sourced from our Savior.

? What's the toil and striving here?

Possible Answer: Against our sinful nature, pursuing with exertion God. Sanctification isn't easy. There's toil, there's perseverance, but it's from not for our righteousness. It is offering ourselves as a living sacrifice to the Lord.

? How does 'hope set on the living God' tie into toiling and striving?

Possible Answers: Philippians 1:6, 2:3 1. We know that we are not the source of our hope and strength to be godly. 2. We have an eternal perspective, and know who we actually serve here on earth.

? This passage lists a lot of "action" words: command, teach, devote, set an example, etc. What do you think this list of actions indicates about godliness and about faith? Is faith just an internal state?

Possible Answer: James 2:14-18. Godliness and faith are definitely internal, but they definitely do not stop there.

? How does it matter that godliness has external manifestations according to this passage?

Possible Answer: As an example (v12) Exhortation. V16

Read aloud to the Group: Do you get tired when you read a bunch of action verbs in a row? Is the Christian life about trying as hard as you can? Where does external godliness come from? How do we do all these things? Are we performing or is there a source?

John 15:5 (NIV)

⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

? What does Jesus say about doing?

Leader's Note: That it's only through Christ that we can bear real fruit of the Spirit—evidence of heart and life change.

? What is our community application of this passage?

Leader's Note: You may choose to create your own application question as a group based on your discussion, or highlight a question from this study.