

## Warning about false doctrine

Text: 1 Timothy 1:3-7

Read: verses 1 to 11

Opening prayer

### INTRODUCTION:

I have three introductory points that I think would help us to understand the tone and purpose of Paul's charge concerning doctrine.

1. To be sure we have the same understanding of our passage we must define what doctrine is, specifically "sound doctrine". **Doctrine** is a belief or set of beliefs held and taught by the church. Doctrine is scriptural teachings on theological truths. **Sound doctrine** means **error free doctrine** or pure doctrine. Simply put, sound doctrine is the accurate teaching of the Bible and the central beliefs of the Christian faith. It spans from creation in Genesis all the way to revelation.

Paul describes sound doctrine as "**in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God which I have entrusted**" (1 Timothy 1:11), "Sound doctrine" is used in 2 Timothy 4:3 where Paul warns

that there will come a time that people will not endure or tolerate sound doctrine. Instead, many will gather around false preachers that will tell them what they want to hear. **“3 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;”**

According to most interpretations, the seven key doctrines developed in the letters of Paul are: justification by faith, salvation through grace, the church as the body of Christ, spiritual gifts, the resurrection of Jesus, the unity of believers, and the believer’s new life in Christ.

2. Paul’s introduction in verse 1 as the Apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God not only establishes his authority, but extends his authority to Timothy, his Spiritual son and disciple. It also served as a notice to the members of the church of Ephesus that Timothy had been given authority over the church with **specific instructions/commands/orders concerning false doctrine; which is the subject of our main message tonight.** Paul’s first letter to Timothy was significant in two ways: first, it assured Timothy that he was supposed to be at the church of Ephesus and secondly, it was his marching orders.

3. Paul's charge to Timothy is to teach sound doctrine in the church of Ephesus and warn him of the "false teaching" that is already occurring in the church. Timothy was to guard the faith.

I invite you now to join me in examining 3 points concerning Paul's charge to Timothy: I. Purity of Doctrine II. Purpose of Doctrine and III. Perversion of Doctrine.

#### I. **Purity of doctrine 1:3-4**

**3 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,**

**4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than **godly edifying which is in faith**: so do.**

The word **besought** or "**Parakaleo**" in Greek is the same word used in Romans 12:1 and it is a strong word which suggests that Timothy had other plans and the word "**abide**" means to stay put. Paul wanted Timothy to remain in Ephesus while he was away.

Paul used military language to help Timothy and his people understand the seriousness of the problem of false teaching that is happening in the church of Ephesus.

The term "charge" in verse 3 can also be interpreted as

command, order or instruction which demands that Timothy take a strong stand against false doctrine and order “some” to only teach sound or pure doctrine based on Paul’s teachings.

The fact that Paul said “some” and not “all” people of the church suggests that Paul and perhaps Timothy knew who these false teachers/preachers were.

So Timothy's assignment was to be aware of the teachers of false doctrine and charge/order them to teach no other doctrine that is contrary to Paul’s teachings. They are to stop focusing on fables and endless genealogies that only lead to questions and focus on **teaching that brings about godly edification through faith.**

The use of **fables** and **endless genealogies** during this period were common practice among the Jews and gentiles. **Fables** or “**Muthos**” in Greek means speech, word, saying, narrative, stories and myths. The problem with fables is that they are oftentimes made up or false. **Genealogy** or “**genealogia**” in Greek means a record of descent or lineage. Endless genealogies are boundless or endless lineage and are also used widely among the people. Genealogies are also mentioned throughout scripture. The problem about endless genealogies is that many are false and made up for personal benefit. Paul identified the false teachings as fables and endless

genealogies leads to questions with no answers and leads people away from Jesus and godly edification through faith. I like what Warren Wiersbe said, “*God had committed the truth of the Word to Paul (1 Timothy 1:11) and Paul committed it to Timothy (1 Timothy 6:20). It was Timothy’s responsibility to guard the faith (2 Timothy 1:14) and to pass it along to faithful people (2 Timothy 2:2).*”

So it was Timothy’s responsibility to guard the faith by keeping the doctrine pure or error free and pass it along to Christians.

## II. **Purpose of doctrine 1:5**

**5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:**

The end or purpose of keeping and teaching sound doctrine is charity or love that ultimately brings unity and not division and confusion. **1Co 14:33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.**

This kind of charity or love can only come from a pure heart which has been redeemed and washed in the blood of Christ.

There should be no cause for separation between us and God, and between believers. Confessing our faults and forgiving the faults of others brings **a good conscience.**

The word “Unfeigned” (anupokritos) in Greek is where we get the word “hypocrite” or one who pretends to be what he is not (an actor). So **faith unfeigned** means sincere faith.

So the purpose of doctrine is to bring about love, good conscience with sincere faith.

### III. **Perversion**

**(alteration/falsification/distortion/misrepresentation)  
of doctrine (law) 1:6-7**

**6 From which some having swerved have turned  
aside unto vain jangling;**

**7 Desiring to be teachers of the law;  
understanding neither what they say, nor whereof  
they affirm.**

**“Having swerved”**(astocheo) in Greek means to deviate from or miss the mark. In this case, Paul said that some in the church had deviated from sound doctrine and turned unto **vain Jangling (vain talking or meaningless and contentious talk)**.

Unfortunately, many back then and today prefer the “vain jangling” of those who teach novelties over the pure Word of God that produces holy lives. These meaningless talks are not only found in teaching and preaching, but in music as well.

The law is good and meant to be used even today if used

for its intended purpose. Romans 3:19 **“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”**

So every mouth may be stopped, and **all the world may become guilty before God so that man turns toward Christ for righteousness**. This is the ultimate intent and purpose of God’s law - to show that all are sinners and need a savior.

The cause for the false doctrine in Paul’s time as well as today is the misuse of the old testament law due to teachers’ lack of understanding of the content and purpose of God’s law.

False teachers misuse or distort the old testament law and sound doctrine to serve their personal agenda and benefit.

False teachers even today are leading people away from the liberty of grace and back to the bondage of legalism which is not the intent of God’s old testament law.

A saved person today is not under the law but under God’s grace. A saved person is not lawless, but is controlled and guided by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God.

Many false teachers and false doctrines can be found

online and some of their characteristics include pride, rejection of godliness, inability to unite, deception, and the list goes on. They pervert thinking and poison the soul.

Here are a few things you can do to help guard against them:

- Know and understand scripture
- Don't use the internet or watch TV
- Watch for their agenda or purpose - is their goal to glorify and honor God by sharing the Gospel of Jesus?
- Look for their source of teaching and preaching - is it Biblical and doctrinally sound?
- Check with your Pastor

I want to close with this thought: People generally behave based on their experience and belief. So "sound doctrine" is essential and should bring about godly behavior among believers. Timothy was charged to guard the faith and we should also be guardians of the faith by knowing and teaching sound doctrine.

Closing prayer



## Group discussion questions:

1. What are some of the ways that false doctrine/teachers are introduced today?
2. What can you do to guard against false teachings outside of the church?
3. What are you going to change from what you learned from this lesson?