

Message #3**I Timothy 1:3-7**

We are losing sight of what God wants His church to be. It is not to be some academic center where various mystical ideas about God are kicked around. It is to be a pillar and support of the truth of God. Leaders in a local church have a very serious and real responsibility to carefully see to it that God's pure truth and pure doctrines are being taught.

LEADERS IN A CHURCH HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO SEE TO IT THAT TRUE DOCTRINE IS TAUGHT AND THOSE PROMOTING ERROR ARE OPPOSED AND SILENCED.

It is not the job of leadership to baby those who are drifting from a focus on teaching God's Word and doctrine in the church; it is the job of leadership to shut them up and stop them from teaching.

PART #1 – Paul's assignment of instruction to Timothy. **1:3-4**

Paul urged Timothy to remain in Ephesus in order to give instruction to the church. Now Ephesus was at one time a strong church. Paul himself had stayed in Ephesus and had personally taught the people for three years (Acts 20:31). This church had good elders in it who were committed to truth, to God, and to Paul (Acts 20:17-20, 28, 32, 36-38).

Now the word "urge" is one that refers to appealing to a person to do something in a very cheerful, encouraging and comforting way (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 340). Paul strongly and positively encouraged Timothy to remain in Ephesus as the teacher, but he did not demand it.

That word "instruct" is important for it has to do with transmitting messages in a military-type of command and order way (*Ibid.*, p. 338).

Paul wanted Timothy teaching God's Word with a high-ranking military kind of authority. The church is to preach and teach God's Word with authority. There ought to be an authoritative ring to the Word of God. People ought to sense this is God's truth, these are His commands and these are His orders.

Now the target of the instruction was to be "certain men" or "some men." There were "certain" ones, there were "some" in the church that were very problematic: 1) Some had strayed from the truth (**1:6**); 2) Some were shipwrecked in their faith (1:19); 3) Some were being seduced by demons (4:1); and 4) Some were following Satan (5:15).

They were not right with God, they did not know God's doctrines or truth and Timothy was to spot them, stifle them and stop them!

Category #1 - The object of Timothy's instruction. **1:3b-4a**

(Object #1) - To stop the teaching of strange doctrines. **1:3b**

The words "strange doctrine" are words that literally mean certain men were teaching things which were different from what was true and sound and Pauline. In fact, the same word is translated "different doctrine" in I Timothy 6:3.

Strange doctrines are not to be tolerated; they are to be eliminated. If it isn't true to the Word, it doesn't belong in the church.

(Object #2) - To stop the focus on meaningless discussions. **1:4a**

The word "myth" refers to fictitious narratives and fables which are not true (*Ibid.*, p. 297).

The "endless genealogies" may refer to the Gnostic heresy of ridiculous genealogies between God and man, or more than likely it refers to the Jewish attempt to link one to the Jewish patriarchs. The Rabbis were known for their genealogical discussions (Titus 1:14).

Category #2 - The reasons Timothy must stop unbiblical teaching. **1:4a-b**

(Reason #1) - Because it does promote useless speculation. **1:4a**

In fact, the words "give rise" indicate that nonsense teaching supplies and furnishes nothing more than opportunities for useless disputes (G. Abbott-Smith, p. 138).

(Reason #2) - Because it does promote God's administration. **1:4b**

The word administration is one that refers to a stewardship in the household of God. False, meaningless doctrine does not build up the household of God in the faith. Fables do not strengthen faith. God's truth is what strengthens faith as faith comes by hearing the Word of God. Only by true instruction and sound doctrine will God's church become strong in the faith.

William Barclay said there are five characteristics of a dangerous heretic who is in the church:

- 1) He is driven by novelty.
- 2) He exalts the mind at the expense of the heart.
- 3) He deals in argument rather than action.
- 4) He is governed by arrogance rather than humility.
- 5) He is dogmatic without the knowledge to be dogmatic.

(William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus & Philemon*, pp. 31-32)

PART #2 – Paul’s aim of instruction to the Church. **1:5**

True instruction from the Word of God is not given just to kill time; it is given to change hearts. The word “goal” is one that refers to a period of time which is at the final end. We could understand it as referring to the final destiny (*Greek Lexicon*, p. 443).

Does it refer to a love for God or a love for man? Probably it refers to both, although it would be easier to fit it with love of God.

Prepositional Phrase #1 - The goal is love out of a pure heart. **1:5a**

The word “pure” is one that speaks of something God deems ceremonially clean and pure (*Ibid.*, p. 223).

Instruction from the Word of God is designed to clean up hearts and minds. The Word of God has a pure, cleansing effect and is able to wash one completely clean in the sight of God (Eph. 5:26).

Prepositional Phrase #2 - The goal is love out of a good conscience. **1:5b**

The Apostle Paul was a man who was legitimately able to say, “I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day” (Acts 23:1). A good conscience is an inner mindset that, before God, is good, clean and untainted. It is a conscience that knows the life squares with the Word.

Prepositional Phrase #3 - The goal is love out of a sincere faith. **1:5c**

A sincere faith is faith that is real, true, honest, and unhypocritical; but God will only classify the faith as pure and true if it is based on instruction from His Word.

PART #3 – Paul’s assessment of some in the Church.

Fact #1 - Some in the church had strayed from the truth. **1:6a**

The word “stray” means to miss the mark (*Ibid.*, p. 65). Some in the church were missing the real truth of the Word of God.

Fact #2 - Some in the church had turned to discussions that were fruitless. **1:6b**

Some of the church services in Ephesus were meaningless in the sight of God. In fact, the Greek words “fruitless discussion” literally means empty words. From man’s perspective these church discussions were scholarly; but from God’s perspective they were empty.

Fact #3 - Some in the church wanted to teach what they didn't know. **1:7**

Apparently some in the church of Ephesus wanted to postulate their wisdom on the subject of the Law, but they had no idea how the Law related to New Testament Grace Age doctrine.

The church is to be a pillar and support of the Truth of the Living God. It is not to be some intellectual entertainment center for a free-for-all bunch of nonsense.

May God help us to become the kind of church He wants His Church to be.

Do you have a pure heart today?

Do you have a good conscience today?

Do you have real faith today?