

## Lesson 2: The Necessity of Sound Doctrine

**Text: 1 Timothy 1:3-8** “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. But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully...”

**Summary:** Paul wanted Timothy to correct faulty approaches to Bible interpretation that had led to weak mystical thinking rather than focused vibrant Christian living.

**Fact 1: Paul commands Timothy to hold fast to the standard of the church: 1:3** “I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine...”

- **Paul commanded Timothy to call the church to hold fast only to and entirely to the doctrines of Christ through the apostles: 2 Thessalonians 2:15** “Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle...” **Ephesians 2:19-20** “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone... **2 Peter 3:2** “Be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior...” **Matthew 28:18-20** “Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...”
- **Clarify what he is not saying:** These are not standards, the way we tend to hear the term used today.
  - Practical applications that we have established as a result of attempting to implement Biblical principles.
  - A personal conviction that flows from our conscience on areas of soul liberty.
  - A personal practice we have established to protect us from violating a principle or Biblical command.
  - A personal preference we have adopted or a tradition we have established in the church over time.
- **The principle being emphasized in this passage:** We must be rigidly bound to that body of truth that was delivered through the apostles under the authority of Christ. **Jude 1:3** “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints...”
- **Several warnings:**
  - **We can violate this principle in three ways:**
    - By being purposefully or carelessly selective in what we choose to address or emphasize in our teaching ministries.

- By adding to the standard by injecting our own opinions rather than staying true to the intent of the text.
  - By clouding the intent of the standard through sloppy interpretation or communication.
- **Three ways we have and do see this in church history:**
  - The abuses of the Middle Ages were being combated by the doctrine of Sola Scriptura.
  - The modern day abuses within the modern charismatic movement should be combated by the doctrine of the sufficiency of scripture.
  - The modern day abuses we find in many conservative churches should be combated with the practice of sound Bible exposition rather than hobby horse “standards” driven preaching.
- **Fundamental core doctrine/Gospel essentials:**
  - The nature of the gospel
  - The nature of salvation
  - The Trinitarian nature of God
  - The full humanity and deity of Christ
  - The depravity of man
  - The inspiration and

**Fact 2: This standard of the church, flows from a literal rather than allegorical/theoretical approach to Bible interpretation: 1:4** “Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do...”

- **Fables:** The word used literally means myths (a myth was either a story that was entirely not true or an embellishment of a story about a real person.)
- **Endless genealogies which minister questions:** Taking Old Testament narratives and allegorizing them.
- **He is contrasting mythological embellishments and infatuation with allegorized interpretations with the plain meaning of the historically reliable accounts in scripture.**
  - 1 **Timothy 4:7** “Refuse profane and old wives' fables...”
  - 2 **Timothy 4:4** “They shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables...”
  - Titus 1:14** “Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth...”

**Be cautious how you approach Bible study:**

- Don't approach the Bible as a skeptic who picks and chooses based upon what he believes to be rational.
- Don't be like the moralist who picks and chooses based upon what he thinks is morally acceptable.
- Don't be like the mystic who focuses primarily on the internal impressions that accompany Bible study.
- Don't be like the syncretist who takes the Bible and blends it with his philosophical approach to life issues.
- Have a responsible Biblical approach to Bible study:

- Approach the scriptures with a confidence in its nature.
- Approach the scriptures humbled by your own bias.
- Approach the scriptures diligently as a persistent student.
- Approach the scriptures with a vulnerability to its contents.

**Fact 3: This standard of the church promotes healthy Christian living 1:5** “Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned...”

- **The ultimate goal is growth into spiritual maturity/godly edification: 2 Timothy 3:16-17** “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, thoroughly furnished unto all good works...”
- **Four aspects to his description of spiritual maturity:**
  - **Christian love:** “Now the end of the commandment is charity...”
    - **God-centered**
    - **Others-focused**
    - **Affectionate**
    - **Active**
  - **Purity in the heart:** “Charity out of a pure heart...”
    - **Focused/undivided/untainted**
  - **A healthy conscience:** “and of a good conscience...”
    - **Is shaped by a Biblical world view.**
    - **Is based upon a practiced sense of discernment.**
    - **Has not become desensitized by ignoring its unsettledness.**
  - **Sincere faith:** “and of faith unfeigned...”
    - It will not be put on, but will be the real thing

**Application:** False doctrine, imbalanced teaching, or a faulty approach to Bible study and teaching will hinder our ability to grow properly.

- We will lack Christian love.
- We will have divided hearts.
- Our consciences will be unhealthy.
- We will have hypocrisy.

**Fact 4: This standard and interpretative approach to scripture, view the law correctly**

“From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; <sup>7</sup> Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. <sup>8</sup> But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully...”

**Three thoughts that will prepare us for the next section of discussion:**

- **The law is good**
- **Just because it is good, does not mean that we will use it correctly**
- **A proper approach to how we interpret and teach the scriptures is a safeguard to improper uses of the law.**

**Conclusion:**

- **Summary:** Paul wanted Timothy to correct faulty approaches to Bible interpretation that have led to weak mystical thinking rather than focused vibrant Christian living.
- **Primary Application:** We must be careful in how we approach studying and teaching the scriptures, because it is the primary tool that God uses to bring us in spiritual maturity.