



First Timothy

God Created

Only Good Things

I Timothy 4:1-5

Lesson Fourteen

Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum



First Timothy

A Study of the First Letter of the Apostle Paul to His Son in the Faith

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The fourth chapter of I Timothy gives us a message from God's Spirit. It was a necessary message then and it is a good message for us today. Read I Timothy 4:1-5.

False teachers were coming. They were people who had abandoned "the faith." These aren't people who entered into Christianity to lead Christians away from the faith. They were people who had been in the church. They were people who knew Christian beliefs. They were part of the "in crowd."

But, they were people who followed deceiving spirits and demons. Paul was speaking by inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, condemning the work of evil spirits. Now, the father of all evil spirits is Satan. He is the tempter. That means that he lures people toward sin. He is also the deceiver, convincing people that sin is right for them. Satan did both of these in the Garden of Eden when he got Eve to believe that God would not kill she and Adam if they ate some of the fruit of that special tree, and also that eating the fruit would make them as smart as God.

There were some people in the church at Ephesus who had been deceived. They were probably sincere in their desire to be part of God's Kingdom. They probably weren't looking for the easy way out of serving God. You could say that they really wanted to be good Christians. The problem was that they were deceived. They were misled. They had been told that they should not marry. This, of course, would apply to younger people who had fallen in love and were looking forward to being husband and wife. However, they were now being told that they should give up that idea in order to please God. Paul spoke to marriage in the seventh chapter of I Corinthians. There he said that marriage is good, but being single is good also.

Also, they were not to eat certain food. This, most likely, was a requirement that they should live by and eat according to Jewish laws, as first explained in the Old Testament, and continued to be obeyed by the Jews living at the time of Paul. For instance, the Jews could not eat pork or shellfish. Also beef and poultry had to be cleaned and cooked a certain way. It would be called "kosher" food.

The people in the church who had not grown up in a Jewish home did not know these things about food and so the idea of having something you could do to be closer to God seemed like a good idea to them. That is not so much different from today. People still want to do things to earn their way to God. Some churches even encourage that, insisting that if you want to be with God, you have to follow certain rules, give a certain amount of money, be baptized a certain way or something else.

Paul responded to this with anger. He says that those who were leading people astray were hypocritical liars. Wow! He doesn't pull any punches. In Titus 1:10, Paul is even more direct. He calls them liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons, men who turn away from the truth, defiled, and unbelieving. He goes on to say in the sixteenth verse, "They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him..." Why was he so upset? Because, these Christians were new in the faith, and they didn't need someone misleading them. They needed teachers who would tell

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them the true facts about Jesus, and what was required of humans who wanted to be in relationship with God. He was also upset with them because they were disturbing the church by allowing evil spirits to use them in the church. And, the church was getting involved in things that were not important to being what God wanted.

Paul said that their consciences were “seared as with a hot iron.” Some want to see this as a reference to branding, which was done with slaves at that time. However, it is more likely that Paul is talking about the medical use of a hot iron which seals a wound and makes the burned place numb. These false teachers have ignored their consciences so long that there is no more feeling in them and they can say just about anything they want without feeling bad about it.

You may remember Paul telling Timothy to keep a good conscience in chapter one, verse nineteen. There he named two persons who had not done so, and their faith was “shipwrecked.”

Then Paul said that both food and marriage were created by God. And, when God makes something, it is good. How could anyone reject good food? God created it and encouraged Adam and Eve to eat it. He told them that they could eat anything except the fruit of that one tree. He told Peter, in Acts 10:15, that what God had cleaned was good to eat. At that very moment Peter was looking at a bunch of animals, birds and even reptiles which Peter had said were not clean, according to his religion.

As far as marriage is concerned, God, Himself, made Eve as a wife for Adam. Throughout Old Testament history, God blessed marriages. He included numerous laws to encourage and protect marriage, like the seventh commandment, which says that marriage partners should always be loyal to one another. Jesus’ first miracle was at a wedding. It is clear from the teaching of Jesus that He not only approved of marriage, He believed in God’s ideal of one man and one woman married for life.

Nothing is to be refused if God creates it. And when He blesses it, we can count on it being right and good. Now, it would be silly for us to believe that all we have to do is pray over bad food and it would no longer be spoiled. It would be silly to believe that if we pray over any romantic relationship it would end up happily ever after. No, we must keep in mind that God must be the maker. He makes food that is edible...that is good. He makes marriages that are good relationships. But, humans can mess any of it up.

Thanksgiving is Paul’s encouragement to us, and God’s blessing is the reward.

*Underlined words and phrases are to be used in completing the Student Worksheet.

Lesson Goal: To help students understand some tasks of God’s church.

Scripture Memory: “For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.” I Timothy 4:4

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Student Worksheet—Following Through

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>Who were the false teachers?

>What are the two names mentioned for Satan in the lesson today?

1.

2.

>What two things were the people in the church at Ephesus being told not to do?

1.

2.

>What did Paul mean when he said that false teachers had consciences seared with a hot iron?

>What did God tell Peter in Acts 10:15

>Where did Jesus perform His first miracle?

For Memory: “For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.” I Timothy 4:4

How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that the God of the Bible is the true God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God’s Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus’ name. Jesus’ death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.