**1 Timothy: 1:1-20 – Confront what is false by living by the truth**

If you’ve ever seen a big building being constructed, the people involved didn’t just wake up one morning and decide to build it. Many months of planning, blueprints, and detail went into what, how, and when things should be built. As you will see, this letter is a wonderful blueprint for the household of God. It identifies the blueprint for appropriate conduct in worship gatherings, the qualifications of elders and deacons, the proper order of church discipline and how to minister to widows in the church. Paul advised Timothy on these practical matters and for us today.

Everyone studying this letter, begin by reading **1 Timothy 1:1-20** on your own. Then if you are in a group setting, have someone read it out loud.



**Observation:** What do you see?

1. What stands out in the first chapter as being important?
2. Are there any comparisons or contrasts that stand out in the chapter?
3. Key words or phrases that are used?
4. What concerns is Paul addressing to Timothy who is a pastor in the church of Ephesus?

**Warning Against False Teachers: Stay on Course**

 If an airplane flying from California to Hawaii is off course even by one degree, by the time it approaches Hawaii it will have veered off course many miles from the airport runway. Timothy has been challenged by Paul (the writer of this letter) to confront “certain people” in the church of Ephesus who are teaching false doctrine. These people are veering off from the truth of God’s Word. This is a good reminder for us today, to stay on course by teaching and living out the Word of God, because if we are off even one degree we can quickly go from truth to error.

What are some of the false teachings which Timothy is to confront? (See vs. 4)

How do you know when someone is promoting false teaching?

** *Helpful Notes:*** **OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER ONE:** Timothy is to confront these leaders who are coming into the church and spreading their strange teaching. He describes how these individuals are obsessed with speculating about the Torah; specifically about the early stories and genealogies in the book of Genesis. They developed all kinds of weird teachings about food and marriage and sex which were not consistent with the teachings of Jesus and the apostles. He even names some of these people: Alexander and Hymenaeus (vs.20). Their teaching has divided the church by generating controversy. When genuine Christian teaching is done it is faithful to the way of Jesus, resulting in love and genuine faith.

**TORAH** – The Torah is the compilation of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, namely the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Torah means the same as Pentateuch or the Five Books of Moses.

The purpose of the Torah was not to fuel speculation, but rather to expose the truth about the human condition, as it did for Paul.

Correct teaching about the Torah will lead people to see the grace of God revealed in the Messiah, who came to save sinful, broken people. Paul closes with a poem that honors King Jesus overall, and calls Timothy to shut these men and their false teachings down. These false teachers were quoting God’s law but misusing it.

Think of the Law as an X-ray. My daughter, when she was young, broke her leg. We went to the hospital, and they took an X-ray of her leg and it showed where the bone in her leg was broken. The X-ray, however, did not fix the break, it only revealed it. In the same way the Law reveals man’s sinfulness by helping us to see it, but it is only through the shed blood of Jesus Christ that our lives can be permanently fixed.

Why is sound teaching essential for the health and stability of the church?

I’ve traveled overseas in countries where the water is not the cleanest. Contaminated water can make a person sick. So, I rely heavily on bottled water. There is nothing worse than getting deathly sick overseas because the water is polluted. I had one experience in a marketplace where they were selling water, but it wasn’t pure, clean bottled water. The vendor was refilling old bottles with unfiltered tap water. Thankfully one of our partners saw the deception and told me so that I would not get sick.

In the same way, Paul is warning Timothy about the contaminated false teaching which was creeping into the church, saying it was the pure water of the Word of God, when in reality it was not, it was contaminated.

* **False teachers teach a different doctrine (vs.3)**
* **False teachers give heed to speculation and questions rather than godly edification (vs. 4)**
* **False teachers put empty discussion above love (vs.5-6)**
* **False teachers put ambition and personal greed above the truth (vs.7)** They

want to be the teacher, but they really don’t know what they are talking about. They just want personal recognition and applause. They are doing this for their own glory not for the glory of God.

* **False teachers put self-righteousness above the Gospel (vs. 8-11)**

*But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Heb. 5:14*

**Read 1:12-20 – Battle Cry for a Weary Soldier**

1. Paul describes in verses 12-17 what his life was like prior to Christ rescuing him from his sin. What does he say his life was like?
2. What was your life like prior to Jesus rescuing you from your sinful state?
3. Paul uses the phrase “wage the good warfare” to Timothy in verse 18. What do you think Paul meant by this?

**Blueprint for the Household of God**

Those who are grounded in the truth will quickly recognize what is strange, false, or different.

If something appears to be false, put it up against the truth and consistency of the Word of God.

**Interpretation – Ask a Question:** What’s the author’s main intent or purpose of sharing these examples of false teachers who are subtly moving into the church?

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**Application – Put into practice**

• **Know where you stand as a Christian** – As the old hymn says, “How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!” We must study scripture to discern between what is true and what is false.

**• Know the methods and tactics the enemy uses to try to cause division in the church and in our homes.**

**Jesus himself warns his disciples of false teachers in:**

**Matthew 7:15-16a -** “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits.”

**Matthew 24:11** - And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray.

• **Be prepared to stand alone** – With so much deception in the world, the follower of Christ may feel as if they are alone. But remember God has provided His Holy Spirit to give guidance and comfort, as well as His church to help us persevere to the end.



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