



2/23/26

I love the concept of building into the next generation so that the kingdom of God can continue to grow and thrive, not only in our church, but in the whole universal church of our Lord Jesus Christ. The truth is, scripture makes it clear that the attack against the church is going to get harder and harder as time continues... and the most effective strategy for the enemy is to mold young minds into thinking that the church is obsolete, or that the bible is culturally irrelevant. To build into the church, especially the next generation is, I believe, the call for every believer in Christ to pursue. No one is exempt. Today's passage gives me insight into what we have to guard against, and how we pursue our call in Christ Jesus.

*Blessings,
Jonna*

1 Timothy 4:1-12

1 Timothy was written by Paul to Timothy. That makes sense. It would be weird if it was written to someone else. Hahaha. Timothy was Paul's "spiritual child." He had met Timothy while on a missionary journey. Timothy's faith was so authentic that Paul wanted him to join him on the mission field. Timothy served the Lord alongside Paul and then became the pastor at Ephesus. In this letter, Paul was giving Timothy instructions on how to lead the church well... in order to protect the church from falling into the traps of "deceitful spirits and teachings of demons."

Vs. 1-5 ~ I love that Paul was sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the one who moved men to write the word of God over 1500 years with 40 different authors. He's the one who revealed prophecies. He's the one who leads us into all truth. Being open to His leading is imperative for a follower of God. Paul modeled that.

In this case, Paul explained that the Holy Spirit was revealing some pretty hard truths. In these last days, some people who claim to follow Christ will leave the faith by getting caught up into deception and wrong instructions. Deceitful spirits and false teachings of demons will

influence insincere liars to teach things that completely go against the Lord. They have no conscience for the Lord, and they're consciences are seared. They make up rules that have nothing to do with what God truly wants, but they will try to make it look plausible. At that point in time, they would "forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth." I see this in our culture today. It's not that people come out and say, "I forbid you to get married, and I forbid you to eat certain foods." Instead, they provide logical statements that make it seem that marriage is unnecessary. "You should live together first to see if you're compatible." Or, "You don't need a piece of paper to say that you're committed to someone." And then food, "Fat is evil. Stay away!" Wait... no... "Carbs are evil. Avoid them at all costs." Wait, "Real protein from animals will ruin our ecosystem. It's not caring for our resources to eat beef."

They come up with all kinds of plausible arguments. Why??? Because God created it to be received with thanksgiving. The goal of the enemy is... DISTRACT. To draw attention away from things we can thank God for is to draw attention away from God. "For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer." Getting caught up into rules that go against God's plan distracts us from the Lord... from gratitude for His sweet gifts and provisions... from His holiness and from relationship with Him. O Lord, please help us not to miss Your sweet generosity.

Vs. 6-8 ~ Paul not only didn't want Timothy to get sucked up into the deceptions of deceitful spirits and demons, he also wanted him to remind all the believers of their tactics. This is how we serve Christ. Not only do we not get caught into the deception, we also keep the motto, "No man left behind." We serve Jesus by caring for His people. We take our training in God's word and share it with others... as we also make sure that we're following the doctrine of God's word faithfully. We practice what we preach.

We make sure that we don't get caught up in irreverent, silly myths. In 2 Timothy 2, Paul added that we're not to get caught up in foolish, ignorant controversies. What's wrong with these things? Distraction. They distract us from what really matters... training in godliness. Godliness is simply following in the footsteps of Jesus. We understand what training looks like through our approach to physical training, and physical training in part needs to serve to understand the need for godliness training. There is value in both types of training... physical and godliness. But physical training is only useful for this temporary life on earth, and truthfully, eventually our bodies will break down because of age. But godliness is ageless. It holds value in the here and now, and in the life to come. How cool is that! The godly things I do in the here and now will carry on into the eternal. God's purposes for His kids are eternal!

This physical vs. godliness training is so important for me... to protect myself from DISTRACTION. There's that word again. Whether it be rules about marriage and food, or getting caught up in irreverent, silly myths which are things I have no control over, or whether it's getting too focused on my physical training and health rather than my spiritual health... deceitful spirits and demons are simply trying to DISTRACT me, to make me ineffective for

Jesus Christ. O Lord, please help me not to fall for their schemes!

Vs. 9-12 ~ How do I keep from being distracted? Strive and toil to set ALL my hope on my living God and Savior. He's eternal. Why do I have to strive and toil, to work hard and eagerly pursue this? Because there are enemies whose goal is to keep me from my hope, Jesus Christ. He is "the Savior of ALL people, especially of those who believe." God sent His Son to be the Savior of the WORLD... and ALL who come to Him in faith will not perish but have everlasting life. This is what matters. This is what's lasting. This is eternal. This is where my hope is.

The call on Timothy was to COMMAND and teach these things to the church. Why? Because the church can be distracted and we need all the help we can get to fight against the current that pulls at us to cause us to drift away from the Lord. The goal is to get us focused on something else while we drift away from what really matters... our eternal hope in the Lord.

I am not a pastor, and I am not in my youth... but like Timothy, I need to set the believers an example. How do I not "let them despise" me? By living for my hope in Christ without distraction. Why would they despise me or look down on Timothy? They might act condescending toward him as though his age took away his credibility. People will always look for a way to discredit someone if they feel like that person is calling them to do something they don't want to do. This is why it's necessary for believers in God to model Jesus in the way we talk, in our behaviors, and how we genuinely love, in showing a genuine confidence in the Lord, and in doing it faithfully without reason to point fingers. People who WANT the distraction from Jesus will try to find a reason to point fingers, but I pray that I will live in such a way before the Lord that their finger pointing will come up with empty accusations. Let me give others no reason to be distracted from the Lord. Let me put all my hope in the Lord.