

Getting Into Shape—Part 1
9 Essential Spiritual Disciplines
1 Timothy 4:1-3 (Matt. 7:1-20)
“Discernment”

I. The Spiritual Discipline of Discernment:

- a. Since the beginning, the church has been under attack from without and from within (cf. Acts 20:29-31)
- b. Jesus does NOT forbid Judging or Discernment; instead, He lays out its 4 Biblical Requirements (Matt. 7:1-20):
 - i. Spiritual H_____ (v. 2)
 1. We must rely on biblical truth and not personal opinions and experiences
 - ii. Spiritual H_____ (vs. 3-5)
 1. We must remember that we are sinners saved by grace and therefore humble ourselves before God
 2. Jesus does not forbid judging; He just tells us to judge ourselves first and take our sin to God...before trying to help someone else with their sin.
 - iii. Spiritual W_____ (v. 6)
 1. We should love everyone but not be fools! (cf. Matt. 10:16)
 2. True wisdom comes from God’s Word and His Holy Spirit
 - iv. Spiritual V_____ (vs. 13-20)
 1. When someone tells you who they are, believe them!
- c. Paul left Timothy in Ephesus primarily to fix the leadership (Elders), who had been infiltrated by False Converts (cf. 1 Tim. 1:3-7, 18-20)

- d. After giving Timothy, the Qualifications of an Elder in chapter 3, Paul lays out 8 Fruits of False Converts, to aid his Discernment:
 - i. U_____ & _____ (v. 1a)
 1. **later times** = the last days = any time between Jesus’ ascension and His return (cf. Matt. 24:12; Acts 2:16, 17; 2 Tim. 3:1; Heb. 1:1, 2; 9:26; 1 Peter 1:20; 1 John 2:18)
 2. The Holy **Spirit explicitly** warned us about False Converts in the church (cf. Deut. 28:15; Ezek. 20:38; Ex. 32; 1 Sam. 15:11; Neh. 9:26; Ps. 78; Matt. 24:4–12; Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Thess. 2:3–12; Heb. 3:12; 5:11–6:8; 10:26–31; 2 Peter 3:3; 1 John 2:18; Jude 18)
 3. They are NOT “backsliders” because no one can lose their faith; either you are saved or you are not (cf. John 10:27-28; Matt. 13:3-23; 1 John 2:19)
 - ii. Spiritual O_____ & D_____ Doctrines (v. 1b)
 1. **paying attention** (*prosechō* / *προσέχω*) = “to devote oneself to,” or “to cling to something”
 2. They wrongly see Demons behind everything (cf. James 4:7; Eph. 6:11)
 3. Their obsession often leads them to follow “**doctrines of demons**” (Eph. 6:12; cf. John 8:44; 1 John 4:1–6; James 3:15; 2 John 7–11)
 - iii. H_____ Lives & D_____ Minds (v. 2)
 1. Believers must confess to God, themselves, and others that they are still sinners who struggle with sin
 2. These individuals no longer struggle with sin; they give themselves over to it (cf. Rom. 1:18-32)
 3. Their seared conscience makes their minds and hearts incapable of hearing the Spirit (cf. 2 Peter 2:1-3, 10, 13-14; cf. 2 Cor. 11:13–15)
 - iv. L_____ & P_____ (v. 3)
 1. Anything or anyone that adds to, perverts, or distorts the Gospel of Jesus Christ is accursed (cf. Gal. 1:6-9)