

Fight the Good Fight
1 Timothy 4:1-5 (Week 12) 01/11/2026
Fighting Against Bad Theology

This is my message written prior to being preached. Please excuse the bullet point format and any grammatical mistakes. This is meant to be spoken.

¹ Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, ² through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, ³ who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴ For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, ⁵ for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer. (1 Timothy 4:1-5)

Introduction and Review

- Today we return to our study through **First Timothy**.
- And since it's been **7 weeks** since our last message, **we need a review...**
- If you remember, the apostle **Paul** had given **Timothy** charge over the church in Ephesus.
- But **Timothy** is facing a number of **challenges and difficulties** in his ministry.
- So, Paul writes this letter... In **chapter 3 verses 14-15** he explains his specific purpose...

¹⁴ I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, ¹⁵ if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. (1 Timothy 3:14-15)

- The main purpose of **1 Timothy** is to instruct **Timothy**,
- and the church in Ephesus regarding **proper behavior in the church**.
- Paul wants to encourage **Timothy** to **hang in there...** we see this in **chapter 1:18-19**.

¹⁸ This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare. (1 Timothy 1:18)

- Or as the **NIV** and the **NASB** translate “**you may fight the good fight**”
- And **one of the main issues** that **Timothy** had to fight against was **false doctrine**.
- In fact, after his initial greeting, Paul’s **first instruction** to **Timothy** was...

³ As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons (probably elders in the church) not to teach any different doctrine, (1 Tim 1:3)

- So, you can see that leaders in the church who were teaching **different or false doctrine** was a **serious problem for Timothy**.
- And so, throughout this letter, **including our passage for today**.
- Paul speaks out against **insidious nature of false teaching**.
- He wants **Timothy** to **fight against this Bad Theology**,
- wrong understanding of who God is, of what he has done and what he requires of his people.
- **Basically**, bad theology is anything contrary to **sound doctrine of the gospel of Jesus Christ**.

- And the need to fight against Bad theology is just as, **if not more** important for us today.
- Because our world is full of false teaching, **bad theology**.
- From the **prosperity gospel** to **liberation theology**
- to the latest efforts to **deconstruct Christianity & more**.
- We're also exposed to all the errors of **cults and non-Christian religion**.
- From their emphasis on **works-based religion** to their **dangerous views** about **who Jesus is**.
- **And finally**, we also face the theologies of **Agnosticism, Naturalism & Atheism**.
- All of which seek to teach that **God does not exist** or is **irrelevant to our lives**.
- So, the world is full of untrue, unsound, unbiblical, **BAD Theology**.
- And **Paul wants Timothy** and us to understand this and fight against it.
- Because both in Timothy's day and ours, **there are those who fall prey to Bad Theology**.
- And so, Paul begins **by making this clear** with...

1. The Result of Bad Theology (Apostacy)

- In **verse 1** we read...

1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith... (1 Tim 4:1)

- Paul begins by stating the problem, **some will depart from the faith**.
- As we will see, **this departure from the faith is a result of receiving Bad Theology**.
- Now that word **depart**, is the Greek **aphistēmi. (Ah-Feast-tE-May)**
- It means to draw away, to fall away, to depart from.
- And it's related to the Greek word **aposisia, (A-Post-A-Sia)** where we get the word **apostasy**.
- Which specifically refers to **abandoning the faith**.
- And that's what's described **here in verse 1...**
- There are some (who as a result of Bad Theology) are departing from the faith,
- They are **Apostates...**
- Now, **Apostasy** does not mean that **true believers** who have saving faith **can lose it**.
- This would be impossible, since the Bible teaches that every **sinner** who receives the gift of **saving faith is preserved** by the **Holy Spirit until the day of Christ**.
- We've seen this truth before stated in several places in the New Testament.
- For example, in **John 10:28** Jesus says...

²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. (John 10:28)

- If you want more verses that speak of **the perseverance of true believers**, I've included several in the discussion questions.
- So, apostasy does not mean **a true believer can lose their salvation**.
- However, it does mean that someone who once claimed to be a **Christian**, claimed to have faith,
- Someone who engaged in the life of the Church.
- Can renounce their belief in what Paul refers to as "**the faith**"
- And what is "**the faith**"? Well, it's what we put our faith in, the basic tenants of faith.
- Paul has in mind **the core doctrines of saving faith** that are found in the Word of God.
- This would include believing in the **creator God**, the deity of **Jesus Christ**,
- the reality of **God the Holy Spirit**,
- and **redemption/salvation by faith in the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ**.
- **Trusting alone in Christ's finished work on the cross to provide forgiveness for our sins and righteousness before God**.
- And so, what Paul is saying is that some who profess to believe these **doctrines of the faith** will later deny them.
- But this is not **just Paul's opinion** of the situation; **it is a prophecy of the Holy Spirit**.

the Spirit expressly says

- Paul doesn't specify **when the Holy Spirit said this**.
- This truth may have been revealed to Him as he **wrote to Timothy**.
- Or he might have **been referring** to some **previous prophecy in the early church**.
- **However**, I think he was probably **recalling the words of Jesus Christ** who said...

10 And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. (Matthew 24:10-11)

- Jesus, **filled with the Holy Spirit**, prophesized not only that many will fall away,
- **but he connects their falling away to false prophets** who lead many astray.
- So, through both **Jesus and then Paul...**

the Spirit expressly says in later times some will depart from the faith

- Now what does **the Spirit** mean by "**later times**"? When are these later times?
- Well, there's an important clue in this passage.
- In **verse 1** the Holy Spirit speaks about the future: *in later times some will depart from the faith*.

- But by verse 3, Paul is speaking in the **present tense** about this very thing happening in the Ephesian church.
- This tells us that for Paul & Timothy and US the **later times** have already begun.
- So, when someone asks, “**Do you think we are living in the last days?**”
- the answer is always, “Yes!” **These are the later times.**
- The Bible teaches that the last days, began with Christ...
- His coming his death, resurrection and ascension...
- and will not conclude until His return and the final Judgment.
- As we saw in our study through Hebrews, **the author says specifically...**

² but in these last days (as he is writing) he has spoken to us by his Son... (Hebrews 1:2)

- **Jesus inaugurated the later times**, the last days.
- And Jesus will **bring them to a close in his perfect timing**.
- So like Timothy **we are living in the later times**,
- and so, **the Spirit says apostasy is to be expected**.
- And this probably **isn't a surprise** to most of us.
- Because we know people who formerly were part of the church claiming belief in “the faith”.
- But who have now **departed from the faith**.
- They no longer hold to the core doctrines of the faith,
- in fact, many are openly opposed to the “the faith”, they ridicule the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- And as sad as this is, **it should not surprise us**.
- When someone abandons the faith, **it should not cause us to question our faith**.
- Rather, **it proves the truth of Scripture**.

that in later times some will depart from the faith

- And at least **one if not the main reason** for this departure from the faith, **is bad theology**.
- **The result of Bad theology is Apostacy**.
- And this will become very clear in our second point, as **Paul describes...**

2. The Origin of Bad Theology

- The apostle doesn't pull any punches here, his disdain for **false teaching** is evident.
- He tells us that Bad theology has two main sources, **the first of which is....**

A. Deceptive Demons

- Let's read all of **verse 1...**

¹ Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith HOW, by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, (1 Timothy 4:1)

- Now we clearly see that departure from the faith results from devoting oneself to **bad theology**.
- Bad theology that originates with **deceitful spirits and deceptive demons**.
- The **Revised English Bible** aptly calls their teachings "**demon-inspired doctrines**."
- **Now** when **Christians** start talking about **Satan** and his **demonic forces**...
- We often fall prey to **two main errors**.
- **The first is to give the devil more credit than he deserves.**
- Some Christians believe there are **demons behind every door**.
- They think they're under **spiritual attack** every time they get a headache or get caught in traffic.
- They attribute most of their own sins to **demonic activity**. **The Devil Made Me Do It!**
- And this causes them to live in unholy **fear of the demonic realm**.
- But the **truth is that Jesus Christ, on the cross, defeated the devil** and all his underlings.
- Again, the author of **Hebrews** tells us that the **Son of God** became a man so...

¹⁴ ...that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. (Hebrews 2:14-15)

- So, the truth is that Christ has destroyed the devil, the demonic.
- However, at this point, in these later times, **God in his sovereignty** and for his purposes,
- has not put a **complete stop to demonic activity in our world**.
- At times, He allows **fallen angels** to interact with **human beings**.
- **Tempting** them to **commit sin and deceiving them with demonic teaching**.
- But what we must understand is that Satan's power is **limited under the authority of God**.
- And demons do not and cannot have control over **anyone who is filled with the Holy Spirit**.
- **So do not fear or give the devil more credit than he deserves.**
- But at the same time, the opposite error that Christians sometimes fall prey to is to deny that Satan and demons exist.
- As the **French poet Charles Baudelaire** once said,

The devil's cleverest ruse is to make men believe that he does not exist. (Charles Baudelaire)

- **But the devil does exist.**
- **Spiritual warfare is as real today as it was in the days of Jesus Christ. We continue to...**

¹² ...wrestle... against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12)

- We must **fight against these spiritual forces of evil**,
- And if you're familiar with Ephesians 6 you know we fight by putting on the armor of God,
- which includes **his word and prayer**.
- With these weapons, provided by God, we can fight against the deceitfulness of the devil.
- Remember, of Satan Jesus said...

⁴⁴ ...he is a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:44)

- And his work includes...

⁹ ...false signs and wonders, (2 Thessalonians 2:9)

- Satan and his demonic forces are liars and deceivers. **Therefore, Christians are warned...**

¹ Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1)

- I think this verse contains **the most important application for us today**.
- As we face **the bad theology** in our world, do not believe **every spirit** (for some are demonic).
- We must **test the spirits** and **their false prophets** against the truth of God's word.
- Because if Satan's favorite strategy is **deception**,
- it follows that the church is in **real danger** of being **fooled by false doctrine**.
- And the greatest antidote to **deception is truth**.
- We must know the truth; we must study the truth of God's word.
- So that when **bad theology** comes our way we can **spot it and fight against it**.
- We must follow Jesus' example when **he was tempted in the wilderness**.
- There he was confronted with the lies and deception of the devil.
- But He responded **with Scripture** and so should we...
- When someone says... **salvation is received by faith and works**.... You can say...

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

- Or when someone says that Jesus is just **one of many ways to God, to heaven...**
- You can remember and **repeat Jesus' words...**

⁶ "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)

- Or when someone prompts their bad theology **on billboards** saying "**Jesus is not God**"
- You can **proclaim the truth that Paul wrote to the Colossians...**

¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.... (Colossians 1:19)

- And these are just examples of how knowing the word of God...
- Enables us to fight against the deceptive demons **from which Bad theology originates.**
- **So bad theology ultimately comes from demons,**
- But it comes more immediately through... human beings.
- Specifically, Paul says it comes through...

B. Lying Leaders

- It comes originally from deceptive demons, and it is then proclaimed...

through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared

- As we've seen in our study **of 1 Timothy** and **as logic dictates.**
- These men who were teaching false doctrine in the church, were leaders (elders in the church).
- And Paul describes them in very harsh terms...
- They are **insincere liars whose consciences are seared.**
- The word **insincerity** is the Greek (**hypokritēs**), Hypo-Krit-es
- Where we get our English word **hypocrite**.
- **This word** comes from the Greek theater.
- It means, to wear a mask, to assume a role in a dramatic production, **to play a part.**
- **And so, insincerity (or Hypocrisy)** explains why bad theology can be **so deceptive.**
- Many false teachers are good actors.
- **They know how to play the part of a Christian.**
- Paul warns the church **in Corinth** about this very thing...

¹⁴ ...Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵ So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness... (2 Corinthians 11:14-15)

- False teachers often **play the part of Christians**, pretending to be followers of Jesus Christ.
- They call themselves servants of righteousness.
- They seem to be committed and sincere.
- They go to church, and they may even **preach from a pulpit**.
- However, **it's all a mask, a lie...**
- **False teachers are sincere**, all right: **sincerely wrong!**
- Neither they themselves nor **their doctrines are true**.
- Through their **hypocrisy and outright lies**,
- these men deliberately distort the gospel for their own purposes.
- And at some point, they don't even realize they're lying any more, for their...

consciences are seared

- That word **seared in Greek** was used in **medicine and means to cauterize**.
- Which involves using a very hot instrument to burn wounded living tissue to stop bleeding.
- And **cauterization** often causes the skin to become insensitive.
- Once the nerves have been deadened (seared burned), the skin is no longer able to feel pain.
- And the **same thing** can happen to the **human conscience**.
- It can become **cauterized by all kinds of sin**.
- The more **a soul sins**, the less painful sin seems,
- until finally the **conscience becomes dead to all feeling**.
- In his letter to the **Ephesians**, Paul described it this way...

¹⁹ They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. (Ephesians 4:19)

- These false teachers had developed a **callous on their conscience**.
- They could longer feel the **pain of sin in their lives**.
- No wonder they become **insincere hypocritical liars**.
- No wonder they **opened themselves up to deceiving doctrines of demons**.
- No wonder they **lead their listeners to apostacy**.
- A **seared conscience** is a danger **to self and to the church**.
- **Apostasy in the church** is the inevitable **result of hypocrisy in the leaders**.
- Therefore, leaders (and everyone) be warned, **do not cauterize (sear) your conscience** by committing **outrageous sins or by excusing lesser ones**.
- Guard your conscience so that it remains sensitive to the least offense against God.

- Paul understood the importance of a **clear conscience** in the life of a leader.
- His goal for Timothy was to have...

⁵ ...love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. (1 Tim 1:5)=

- And he urged Timothy to keep

¹⁹ holding faith and a good conscience... (1 Timothy 1:19)

He also instructs deacons to...

⁹ ...hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. (1 Timothy 3:9)

- **In short**, Paul wants **every Christian** to fight to have a **clear, good conscience**.
- To not allow you **conscience** to be seared by **sin**.
- For the result is **apostasy for self and others**.
- **So**, we've seen the **origin of Bad Theology**, it comes from the **deceitful doctrine of demons**.
- And is communicated by **Lying Leaders**.
- And we've seen the **result Bad Theology**.
- **Those who devote themselves to the doctrine of demons proclaimed by lying leaders with depart from the faith**.
- But we've also seen how to **fight against such bad theology**.
- By **knowing the truth of God's word and keeping our consciences clear**...
- we can recognize and refute the bad theology that plagues our world.
- Now up to this point, Paul has been speaking about bad theology in general terms.
- But in **verse 3 he turns** to...

3. The Specific Bad Theology - Asceticism

- That's what is infiltrating the church in Ephesus through deceptive demons and lying leaders....

³ who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created (1 Timothy 4:3)

- Given what Paul has said in the previous two verses,
- That apostasy comes from **deceptive demons** and **lying leaders**...
- We might have expected him to say that these men were **denying the deity of Jesus Christ**,
- or **adding works to faith as the basis for justification**,
- or **advocating some other heretical doctrine**.
- But instead, their focus was on **forbidding marriage**
- and **requiring abstinence** from certain foods.
- Which **doesn't seem to rise to the doctrine of demons**.

- Because there's **nothing wrong, in principle**, with **being single**, or abstaining from certain foods, or both.
- In fact, God calls some **individual Christians** to remain unmarried or to refrain from **certain foods for a time**.
- **In fact**, the apostle Paul himself was called to both.
- He was a bachelor (or widower), and he **encouraged other Christians to value singleness**.
- He also **followed the biblical practice** of fasting with prayer.
- So, what's the big deal?
- **Well, the trouble comes** when matters of personal choice (like marriage or diet) are treated as **essentials of the gospel**.
- This is really the heart of **legalism** (which by the way is very bad theology)
- A group of Christians discover something that helps them **grow in their faith**.
- A particular way of **fasting or prayer**.
- A new way of **understanding a difficult passage of Scripture**.
- A new **understanding of spiritual gifts**.
- A new method for **being disciplined in your devotions**.
- A new commitment **to a particular ministry**. All of which are all well and good.
- But then they decide that what is good for them ought to be **mandatory for others**.
- Soon they go around trying to get **everyone to adopt their style of Christianity**.
- AND they assume that anyone who doesn't do what they do is **less spiritual** than they are.
- **This is exactly what the false teachers in Ephesus were doing**.
- They had committed themselves to one particular **diet and singleness**. Fine.
- There is nothing wrong with **choosing this way of life**.
- **The problem was they then decided that what was good for them was good for everyone**.
- They tried to **require every Christian to adopt their practices**.
- **Apparently**, these lying leaders taught **that marriage & some foods** were inherently sinful.
- This might have been related to Jewish dietary customs which came from **the Mosaic law**.
- Or it could have been similar to the controversies in Rome and Corinth over eating meat.
- You must be a **single vegetarian** to follow Jesus.
- Whatever the reason for these **precise practices**, the word that best describes this bad theology is **Asceticism**.
- According to Dictionary.com asceticism is... **severe self-discipline and avoidance of all forms of indulgence, typically for religious reasons**.

- By forbidding marriage and limiting their diet,
- some members of the Ephesian church were denying the physical pleasures of sex and food,
- and at the same time saying that physical **self-denial was essential to a person's standing before God.**
- This ascetic way of thinking later (in 2nd Century) grew into what was the **Gnostic Heresy**.
- Teaching that there is something sinful about the body.
- Therefore, the **physical world and physical pleasures are a hindrance to spiritual life.**
- **Souls** are all that matter, **and physical appetites only lead to sin.**
- In his commentary on this passage, **John Stott** explains the **ascetic mindset** like this:

From the beginning of church history some teachers . . . have argued that sex and hunger are themselves unclean appetites, that the body itself is a nasty encumbrance (if not actually vile), and that the only way to holiness is abstinence, the voluntary renunciation of sex and marriage, and, since eating cannot be given up altogether, then at least the renunciation of meat. (John Stott)

- This **ascetic way** of thinking has a long history as part of Christianity.
- It began in the early church and by the 2nd Century church father Irenaeus writes of Christian ascetics called the **Encratites**... EN-CRAT-ITES

[The Encratites] preached against marriage, thus setting aside the original creation of God, and indirectly blaming him who made them male and female for the propagation of the human race. Some of those reckoned among them have also introduced abstinence from animal food, thus proving themselves ungrateful to God, who formed all things. (Irenaeus)

- There is also a long **ascetic tendency** in Roman Catholicism.
- This explains the existence of **monasteries**,
- **cloistering yourself away and denying yourself many physical pleasures.**
- And why **Catholic priests and nuns** are forbidden to marry.
- It is also the reason why **orthodox Catholics refuse to eat meat during Lent.**
- But asceticism is not limited to Christianity or even other religions.
- A more **contemporary (secular) example of asceticism** is the **Straight Edge** movement.
- Two of my nephews say they are "Straight Edge"
- This name comes from a **1981** punk song by **Ian MacKaye** and **Minor Threat**:

I'm a person just like you / But I've got better things to do / Than sit around and smoke dope. . . . I've got a straight edge. (Ian MacKaye)

- As the song suggests, Straight Edgers refuse to smoke or use drugs—**so far, so good.**

- However, they can also be opposed to sex, marriage or both.
- Some straight edgers (and many others in our modern society) also believe that it is immoral for humans to eat anything that comes from an animal.
- Thus, even to the present day in the secular world, there are people...

who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods

- **And you might still be thinking, there are certainly worse things than a little asceticism.**
- I mean **John the Baptist** lived on **honey and locusts**.
- Jesus had **nowhere to lay his head**.
- And Paul tells us...

27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control... (1 Corinthians 9:27)

- Plus, we know that **food and especially sex** can so easily **involve sins of the flesh**.
- **So again, what's the big deal with a little self-denial**, a little asceticism might be good for us.
- Well, as I've mentioned, one problem is that asceticism is often used as a form of self-righteous.
- These false teachers with their bad theology were trying to **obtain their own righteousness**...
- by abstaining from **things that God had not forbidden**.
- And they were **demanding that others follow their lead**.
- So, one problem with asceticism is that it is a **form of works righteousness**.
- It is a denial of **the true faith** which proclaims salvation and righteousness through Christ alone.
- Another problem, with **asceticism**,
- In fact, the one that Paul focuses on... **is that it rejects God's good gifts**.
- That's his point in the **rest of verse 3 to verse 5**. And there we find...

4. The Refutation of Bad Theology - Asceticism

- Paul has described the demonic doctrine of asceticism taught by lying leaders...
- And leads to Apostacy.
- He then **refutes this bad theology by proclaiming**...

³ ...that God created (both marriage and food) to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. (1 Timothy 4:3)

- God created the **very things these lying leaders are forbidding**...
- Therefore, instead of abstaining from these gifts we should receive them with thanksgiving.
- This is Paul's argument against (his refutation of) asceticism.

- And like any good **refutation of bad theology**,
- Paul's is based on good theology, **on the sound doctrine of God's word**.
- Let's look a few verses that Paul may have been thinking of...
- First Marriage, the Bible teaches that marriage is a **divine gift, ordained by God**.
- God created Adam (man) and Eve (Woman), and in **Genesis 2:24** we read...

²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24)

- And in Proverbs we read...

¹⁸ Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, ¹⁹ a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love. (Proverbs 5:18-19)

- From these and other verses we know that God created marriage and sex (that physical one flesh union) to be enjoyed and received with thanksgiving **by both husband and wife**.
- **And like marriage, food is also one of God's good gifts.**
- To Adam and Eve God said...

²⁹ ... "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. (Genesis 1:29)

- And after the flood this was expanded to include animals as well.
- Also, in the book of **Ecclesiastes**, we read...

¹³ ...everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift to man. (Ecclesiastes 3:13)

- And even though, under the **Old Covenant**, the Jews had a number of dietary restrictions.
- Those restrictions had been lifted by God,
- PTL Christians are allowed to eat whatever foods we please.
- In **Acts Chapter 10** we read that after God gave Peter (a Good Jew) a vision of all kinds of formerly forbidden animals to eat, he said....

¹³ ... "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." (Acts 10:13)

- But Peter being Peter refused, and the Lord responded.

¹⁵ ... "What God has made clean, do not call common." (Acts 10:15)

- For the Christian all food is clean, **eatable**....
- And therefore, Paul's reasoning is very straightforward: **what God has made, we may eat**...

⁴ For everything created by God is good... (1 Timothy 4:4)

- In **Genesis 1**, God describes everything he made as very good.
- Therefore, among other things, **what God has made is good to eat**.
- And the proper way to receive the good gifts of creation is "**with thanksgiving**".
- **Gratitude** is so important that it's mentioned twice in three verses: **God created these things**...

³ ...to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴ For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, ⁵ for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer. (1 Timothy 4:3-5)

- Notice that Christians are referred to here as

those who believe and know the truth

- True Christians believe **first** that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of the world.
- We trust in his death on the cross and resurrection from the grave for salvation.
- And therefore, we should be the most grateful people on the planet.
- Not only for our salvation but for all the **good gifts** that **God has created for us to enjoy**.
- **It's also important to notice that Paul doesn't say that everything is good. He says that....**

everything created by God is good

- What God made is good, but there is always the danger of **corrupting what God has made**.
- Christians are to enjoy life to the fullest, but it is not "**anything goes!**"
- God's word tells us that the right use of His gifts of food and **sex in marriage** have His blessing,
- But the wrong use of these same gifts, **sexual immorality** and **gluttony** fall under **God's curse**.
- So, thank God for your marriage and all the spiritual, emotional and physical benefits it provides.
- And thank God for the great variety of **tasty food you are free to eat!**
- **And then Paul adds these final words...**

⁵ for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer. (1 Timothy 4:5)

- The word **holy** here means **to sanctify, consecrate**, to set apart for the LORD.
- And certainly, we can thank God for a **Christian Marriage** that has been **consecrated (at the wedding)** with prayer and the word of God.

- But after the wedding Husbands and wives should make it a priority to pray together and read God's word together.
- For this not only helps to sanctify (set us apart for the LORD) as individuals...
- But it also sanctifies our marriages for the LORD.
- We can thank God that for **Christian Marriages that are set apart to the LORD.**
- **And what about food**, when Paul speaks **about thanksgiving, and prayer**.
- He may be referring to **the practice of saying grace before meals**.
- In this we have **the example of Jesus...**
- In the **Gospel of Mark**, we find Jesus giving thanks for **the loaves and the fish...**

⁶ ...he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people... (Mark 8:6)

- And on most Communion Sunday's we are reminded that

²² ...[Jesus] took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." ²³ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. (Mark 14:22-23)

- Jesus shows us that the way to receive food is with a prayer of thanksgiving.

for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer

- Now, praying before a meal doesn't transform your unholy food into holy food.
- but **saying grace** is a way of **acknowledging that daily bread** is a sacred gift from God.
- That it gives you strength to serve the LORD.
- NOW along with saying grace, Paul also advocates "the word of God" to consecrate our food.
- **I think the idea here** is to include God (who is holy) in our daily meals.
- To recognize that he is the provider of our basic needs.
- Not just thanking him for what we are about to receive.
- But at the same time receiving from him through the **true food of his word**.
- The Jews (of which Paul was one) often used Scripture when they said grace.
- And this has also been the practice of **many Christians throughout the years**.
- Christians have dedicated their meals to **God through prayer and the reading of Scripture**.
- However, even though it is still common practice to say grace...
- It seems that the "eat and run world", **has forgotten the practice of reading God's word at mealtimes**.

- So, I'd encourage you **as I have myself** to remember and include Bible reading with your meals.
- Maybe read a Psalm, or another chapter in the Bible whenever you receive God's gift of food.
- **Now one final thing,**
- Even though we've been focusing on thanking God for our marriages and food.
- Paul makes the point that...

⁴ For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, (1 Timothy 4:4)

- Giving thanks is not just for mealtimes, **Gratitude is a whole way of life.**
- Christians should give thanks to God for everything He's created,
- **for when we use it as he intends it is all good.**
- Again, Christians should be the most grateful people on earth,
- because we have not only received forgiveness for our sins, salvation,
- righteousness and eternal life through Jesus Christ.
- We have also received and continue to receive the many physical gifts of the LORD!
- And so, I conclude with a word from **G. K. Chesterton...**
- He was an English essayist and biographer in the late 19th and early 20th centuries: **He wrote**

You say grace before meals. All right.

***But I say grace before the play and the opera,
And grace before the concert and pantomime,
And grace before I open a book,
And grace before sketching, painting,
Swimming, fencing, boxing, walking, playing, dancing;
And grace before I dip the pen in the ink. (G. K. Chesterton)***

- Chesterton's point is that God is to be praised for every good thing he's created.
- **And we should follow his example.**
- **For as we thank the Lord for his many gifts.**
- **We are reminded that HE IS THE CREATOR and GIVER of all GOOD THINGS!**
- Our hearts, our minds, our thoughts and our LOVE are turned to **Him**.
- And we naturally spend more time in his presence in prayer and His word.
- And this, **among other things**, protects us from **Apostacy departing from the faith.**
- Because we see clearly GODS great love for us in **sending his greatest gift Jesus Christ.**
- And we can then turn away from **and refute the doctrine of demons put forth by lying leaders.**
- **Would you pray with me to that end!**