

# Studies in 1 Timothy-04 1 Timothy-4

by William MacDonald

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of godliness and faithfulness in the face of impending apostasy and demonic activity.*

**Duration:** 38:31

**Scripture:** 1 Timothy 4:12-16

**Topics:** "Salvation By Faith", "Christian Leadership"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on 1 Timothy chapter 4. He begins by discussing a Supreme Court ruling that states a pardon is only valuable when accepted, drawing a parallel to salvation. He emphasizes that while God has provided salvation for all, it is only efficient for those who believe. The speaker then instructs Timothy to be an exemplary believer, exhorting and teaching based on scripture. He encourages Timothy to make full use of his gift and emphasizes the importance of being a good servant of Jesus Christ, nourished in faith and good doctrine.

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## Transcript

Today, we continue with our study in 1 Timothy, chapter 4. So, shall we turn to 1 Timothy, chapter 4, and we'll read the chapter through. Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine whereunto thou hast attained. But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance. For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God who is the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe. These things command and teach.

Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." Now, this chapter is divided into two parts, really.

First of all, in verses 1 through 5, Paul warns Timothy about the coming apostasy, and we'll describe that in just a minute. It's a warning about the fact that apostasy is coming in the later days. And then, in verses 6 through 16, the rest of the chapter, you have positive instructions to Timothy in view of the impending apostasy.

In other words, what is a man of God? What is his resource in the face of these terrible conditions that are going to come? And, of course, the answer is a faithful ministry and personal godliness. Those are the two things that Paul emphasizes to young Timothy in the latter part of the chapter. Okay, the apostasy is coming.

What is your resource, Timothy? The answer is you be faithful in carrying out your ministry, and you watch out for your personal life, that it's a life of godliness. Now, first of all, in verse 1, you have the Spirit's testimony, the Holy Spirit's testimony to the fact of apostasy. The Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter time some shall depart from the faith.

The Spirit here is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit speaks expressly. What does that mean? It means he speaks clearly, and he speaks explicitly.

He doesn't mince words. The message comes through loud and clear. What is the message? The message is that in later time some shall depart from the faith.

The expression latter times simply means future to the time that Paul wrote. It doesn't mean, for instance, the end of the world, as people sometimes think. It just means later time, and it doesn't really define when those later times are, but in later times some shall depart from the faith.

This is what is known as apostasy. An apostate is a man or a woman who once professed to be a Christian, perhaps was even baptized, and perhaps was even received into the fellowship of the local church, but he was never really born again. He was never regenerated by the Holy Spirit of God, and then subsequently he renounces the whole thing.

He turns his back on Jesus Christ. He counts the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing. He tramples underfoot the blood of Christ, and does death bite to the spirit of grace, and this is going on in the day in which we live.

I'm sorry to say I have known apostates. I know apostates, men who once seemed to be bright Christians, and it isn't just that they backslidden. A Christian can backslide, but a real Christian cannot commit apostasy.

This man becomes malicious in his attitude toward the Savior of the world. Well, we learn from this that things aren't going to get better. I'm so glad that the Bible is such a realistic book.

If the Bible predicted that through the preaching of the gospel, things would get better and better, we could be very disillusioned today, couldn't we? Because they're not getting better and better, and as you know, there is a breakdown of moral standards on every hand, and all the great principles of the word of God are under attack today, and there's a blurring of moral distinctions. Isaiah said that would come. He said that people will call evil good, and good evil.

That's exactly where we are in this day in which we live. Well, the Spirit of God bears clear and explicit testimony to this fact, and remember, this was written hundreds of years ago, a couple of thousand years ago. Okay, next we come to the demonic origin of the apostasy.

Some shall depart from the faith that says giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, and this says that in connection with this latter-day apostasy, there's going to be a great rise of spiritism, a great increase of demonic activity. When the Lord Jesus came to earth the first time, you know that there was a great outburst of demonism, and as you read the gospels, you find him going and casting demons out of men. We believe from the word of God that just prior to his coming again, there will be a great outburst of spiritism, and once again, this should begin to ring bells in your mind, because if you know anything about what's going on in the United States today, you know that the occult is on the increase.

You know that there are definite cases of demon possession around us. You know that with the increase of hard drugs, people open their beings to the entrance of demons. You know that the purpose of demons is always to destroy.

There is no exception to that rule. The purpose of demons is always to destroy. That is why you have so many of these mindless crimes being committed.

You read about them in the paper. There's no sense to them. There's no motive to them.

You say, what's behind that? Demon activity is behind it, as in the Manson cult. Demonic activity, the purpose of the demon is always to destroy. That is why Christian people should be warned against every form of the occult and spiritism, should be warned against the Ouija board, should be warned against astrology, against the signs of the zodiac, against fortune-telling of any kind, against phrenology, against palm reading, against teacup reading, against the use of dominoes in occultism, against playing cards and tarot cards as they are used in the occult.

We have all the paraphernalia of the occult about us today, and we see this tremendous rise of demonism, and Paul associates the latter-day apostasy to that giving heed to seducing spirits. This means that the men who teach these doctrines are animated by seducing spirits. You say, what are seducing spirits? They're spirits who seek to trick and tempt people into this false doctrine, and it distinctly speaks doctrines of demons.

This doesn't mean doctrines about demons, it means teachings that demons themselves inspire, demonic teaching. Now, the character of the apostates is given in chapter 4 verse 2. The character of the apostates speaking lies in hypocrisy. It's saying, in effect, that these people are hypocritical liars.

That's what they are. Well, of course, this is one of the tactics of the enemy of men's souls. The devil is a liar.

He has been a liar from the beginning, and it's no wonder if his representatives, if the demons who represent him, would be hypocritical liars, and they indwell men who become the same. And then it says,

"...having their conscience seared with a hot iron." What this really means is that their conscience has lost all sensitivity. They can sin now, and it doesn't bother them anymore.

It really means that they can sin, and it quits hurting them. But that's a terrible state to be in. You know, as man is created, he's given a conscience by God, and that conscience serves as a monitor.

It sends out beeps, it sends out red lights. When a man is tempted to sin, the conscience says it's wrong. But the more a man suppresses that conscience, the weaker the voice of the conscience begins to become, until at last, as I said before, the person can sin and it no longer hurts.

And that's spoken of as having a conscience that's seared as with a hot iron, a conscience that has been cauterized. Now, the person can sin, and it's just as if he were drinking a glass of water. It doesn't affect him any more than that, and he can wipe his mouth and say, what have I done wrong? Seared with a hot iron.

Now, two of the doctrines of the apostates are given in the first part of verse 3. It says, Forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meat. Now, I know there are a lot of different interpretations of this, but actually I believe these two doctrines have especially to do with Spiritism. Forbidding to marry.

In the world of Spiritism, especially those who are in contact with the unseen world, spirit mediums, they believe that an unmarried person can contact the spirits better than a married person. Of course, it's an attack on the institution of God, the institution of marriage. It's saying that the single state is more holy than the married state.

That's what it's saying. That isn't what the Bible says. The Bible says, marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled.

But, spirit mediums believe that the unmarried state is preferable as far as contacting the unseen world is concerned. And then it says, commanding to abstain from meat. Actually, the word meat here doesn't mean the flesh of animals.

It means foods. You probably noticed in the Bible that many times, especially in the King James Version of the Bible especially, the word meat means solid food in contrast to liquid foods. And that's what it means here.

The word is *broma*, and it means foods in general. And, of course, this refers to the ascetic practices of many of these demonic cults. Their ascetic practices.

Now, once again, the spirit mediums believe that abstinence actually from the meat of animals is better for them. Most good, quote, spirit mediums are vegetarians. They abstain from the flesh of animals.

For instance, Jean Dixon of Washington, with her crystal ball. Many of you have read about her. The article in Reader's Digest said that she went very light on meat.

Now, this is it. Doctrines of demons forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meat, from foods. And this refers to various kinds of diets and fast ascetic things that are promulgated by these people.

Now, in the latter part of verse three, and verses four and five, you have the scriptural reputation of these doctrines. What does the bible say about it? We've heard what the demonic seducers say. Now, what

does the bible say? Well, it says, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving of them which know and the truth.

Which, the word which refers back not only to foods, but it refers back to marriage as well. Marriage is a creation of God, and foods are a creation of God, and they are, God created them to be received with thanksgiving of them who believe and know the truth. It says, for every creature of God, and the word creature there is better translated creation, every creation of God is good, and once again it refers to marriage as well as to foods.

Marriage is a creation of God, and every creation of God is good, and nothing to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. What does that mean? Well, let's take it in connection with foods. Foods, the foods we eat as Christians are sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

The word sanctified means set apart. It means set apart for God's glory and for our good. Now, does the Bible set apart foods? Yes, if you'll turn back to Mark chapter 7, I believe it is, the gospel of Mark chapter 7, um, verse 15.

I'll have to read a few verses here. Verse 15, Mark 7, 15, it says, Jesus said there's nothing from without a man that entering into him can defile him. See, they thought that eating pork or shrimp or barbecued ribs would defile them.

He said there's nothing from without a man that entering into him can defile him, but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile him. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. When he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable, and he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding? Do you not perceive that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him, because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goes out in the draft? And then it says, purging all meats, and most modern versions say, This he said, making all foods clean.

This he said, making all foods clean. Does it say that in the New American Standard? I'm sure some of you have a version that does say that, because that's what it means, purging all meat, making all foods clean. Then the Lord Jesus went on to say, For from within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, and evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.

All these evil things come from within and defile the man. So, that passage sanctifies food to our use. It is sanctified, Paul says to Timothy, by the word of God and prayer.

How is it sanctified by prayer? Well, we bow our heads before we eat our food. I hope we all do. We bow our heads, and we ask God's blessing on the food, and that act sets that food apart.

We ask God, bless this food to the strengthening of our bodies in your service. That has a sanctifying effect upon the food that we eat. And so, this is the Bible refuting these doctrines of demons.

It is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. And, it's sanctified by the word of God in Hebrews chapter 13. We've already quoted that, and it's sanctified by prayer when we gather together for the marriage ceremony, and pray and commit the couple to the Lord.

Now, Paul is saying in verses 1 through 5, dark days ahead, Timothy, and you must be prepared for them. Now, how is Timothy going to be prepared for them? First of all, by regularly reminding the brethren of this peril. By regularly reminding the brethren of this peril.

Verse 6, if thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, what things? Verses 1 through 5. If you put them in remembrance of the dangers that lie ahead, and of the truth of the word of God, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ. The word minister here means servant. It doesn't mean somebody wearing an ecclesiastical collar at all.

It just means a good servant of Jesus Christ, and it has more to do with work than it has to do with office. All people can think of today is office, dignity, and the rest. But, the Bible is always emphasizing work.

Thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. So, there's the first thing. Regularly remind the brethren of this peril.

Then he says, refuse profane and old wise fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. It's so easy for one in the Christian life to become taken up with a lot of debates that really don't lead to godliness. There are a lot of them going on today.

People get off on some crazy little tangent that really isn't that important, and that's all they can see when they come to the word of God. Paul calls them profane and old wise fables, and we all have to watch out. We have to watch out for bypass meadow, where you get off from what's really fundamental and become occupied with trivia.

Paul says, exercise thyself rather unto godliness. This is a great resource for the man of God in a day of peril, in a day of apostasy, keeping his own personal life in right relationship to the Lord. And then he makes a contrast between bodily exercise and spiritual exercise.

Bodily exercise profiteth a little. I don't think Paul is denying the value of bodily exercise here. He's certainly got plenty of it, as he tramped over the mountains of Turkey and the Mediterranean area there.

He doesn't deny the value of it, but comparatively. When you're catering to the body, you're catering to something that's going to be returning to dust in a few years if Jesus doesn't come, right? But, when you put the spirit in the place of preeminence, ah, then you're catering to that which is eternal. That's the contrast Paul brings here.

A lot of people are so fussy about their bodies. Their bodies. You'd think that their bodies were the great thing to be attended to, but it's not the body at all.

It's the spirit, the soul. Bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. He's saying, yes, bodily exercise is good, but spiritual exercise is important, not only for this life, but for the life that is to come.

So, let's not live our lives catering to the body, which in a few short years will be eaten by worms if Jesus doesn't come. All right, he says, this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, and this refers back to verse 8. What he has just said about the body and about the spirit, he said, this is something worth thinking about. When you go away from community chapel today, this is something to take with you and ask yourself, is this the order of priority in my life? For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, or if you have a modern version of the Bible it says, probably, therefore we both labor and strive.

Therefore, it means to that end, to this end. What is Paul speaking about here? He's saying, to this end we both labor and strive. To what end, Paul? The life of godliness.

That's the end that he has in view here, the life of godliness. This is what really counts. We both labor and strive because we trust in the living God who is the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe.

Now, this might be a surprise to some of you, finding God here as spoken of as the Savior of all men. Does that mean that everybody's going to be saved? No, it certainly doesn't mean that. The Bible does not teach universalism.

The Bible does not teach universal salvation. God is the Savior of all men potentially. Anybody can be saved if he will come and trust the sinner's Savior.

God has provided salvation for all men, but effectively he's only the Savior of those who believe. That's what this verse is saying. Who is the Savior of all men potentially, but effectually he's only the Savior of those who believe.

The fact that the Lord Jesus died on the cross of Calvary and was buried and rose again the third day doesn't save you and me. We have to come and, by a definite act of faith, put our trust in him. We have to commit ourselves to him.

We have to receive him as Lord and Savior. There has to be the personal acceptance of a personal offer. That's what makes the distinction.

So, when you come to this expression who is the Savior of all men, don't presume on that. Don't presume on that that that's going to take you to heaven. It won't, especially of those that believe.

It reminds me of the story that you perhaps heard of a criminal in the early days of this country who was sentenced to death, and the morning of his execution came, and just as they were ready to lead him out to the gallows, a messenger rushed in breathlessly with a pardon from the President, and the man looked at the pardon and he said, I would rather die than accept a pardon from Andrew Jackson. Well, the execution was naturally delayed long enough for the case to go to the Supreme Court for a decision. Here's a man who was pardoned, but he wouldn't accept the pardon, and the Supreme Court ruled, and this is in the records of the United States Supreme Court, that the ruling of the Supreme Court was this.

A pardon is a piece of paper, and only valuable when it's accepted. So, the man was put to death. Well, that's true with salvation.

God has provided salvation for all. The work of Christ was sufficient to cover the sins of all the world, but it's only efficient to cover the sins of those who believe. The Savior of all men, especially of those that believe.

He says, these things command and teach, that is the foregoing thing. Let no man despise thy youth. In verse 12, Paul is saying to Timothy, you'll be an exemplary believer.

Let no man despise thy youth, but don't stop the sentence there. That doesn't mean that Timothy is to go around as an arrogant young man. It means that his life is to be so pure and so outstanding that nobody will be able to find valid criticism of it.

Be thou an example of the believer. You be what a believer ought to be. That is the privilege of God's people in the day in which we live, in a day of apostasy, in a day of declining moral standards.

The privilege of the true child of God is to stand true to Jesus in all things. Be thou an example of the believers in word. That means in the language that you speak.

In conversation means your manner of life, in your whole manner of life. The word conversation has changed down through the years. When this was written, it meant way of life.

So, it means in word, that is in your speech, in conversation, in your way of life, in love. That means love to God, love to your fellow Christians, and love to mankind in general. The words in spirit are left out of most of the versions.

In faith, and this can mean dependence, faith in the living God, or it could mean faithfulness as well, as it often does. It means dependability, reliability, and impurity. That means immoral purity, that his life was to be pure and transparent.

Then Paul says to him, till I come give attendance to reading, and this means, it doesn't mean reading novels, it means the public reading of the scriptures. So, it means the public reading of the scriptures. You must remember that when this was read, when this was written, people didn't have copies of the Bible the way you and I have today.

The copies of the word of God were very, very limited, and the public reading of the scriptures was very, very important, and it should be today, too. We believe in the public reading of the scriptures, and so he says, you give attendance to the public reading of the scriptures. Is that all? No.

When they're read, you exhort on the you teach, you explain what the scriptures are saying, and you make the personal application to the hearts of people. And then he says in verse 14, Timothy, you make full use of your gift. If God has given you a gift, and he has given you a gift, you use it.

Don't just sit on the sidelines. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbyter. What does that mean? Well, it means that sometime in Timothy's career, some prophet stood up in the assembly and spoke to the effect that a certain gift would be given to Timothy, and the gift was given, and it was accompanied by the laying on of the hands of the elders.

The elders didn't give him the gift. God gave him the gift, but the elders laid their hands upon him, indicating their identification with what the Lord had done. Now, every member of the body of Christ has a gift.

No one who doesn't have a gift. Everybody has a function who is a Christian, and this admonition is, don't neglect that gift. Find out what your gift is, and use it to the hilt for God's glory.

And it says, meditate on these things, and that word meditate really means be diligent. When we think of meditate, we think a lot about it, but Paul isn't saying think a lot about it, he's saying do a lot about it. Be diligent in these things.

Give thyself wholly to them that thy profiting may appear to all. In other words, don't be a half-hearted Christian. Be all out for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Be a burning light for him. Be like the burning bush, ever on fire, but never consumed. That's what he's saying.

And then I like that last verse. He says, Timothy, guard your personal life, and be careful of the effect of your teaching on others. That's what he's saying.

Guard your personal life, and be careful of the effect of your teaching on others. You know, every one of us today is either going to be a blessing or a bane on other people. Do you ever stop to think of that? Your life and my life influences somebody today, but I have to ask myself, is my life going to be a blessing to other people, or is it going to be a stumbling block to other people today? A blessing or a bane? Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine.

Continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee. Save thyself? Is that the way of salvation? That seems funny, doesn't it? It doesn't mean the salvation of the soul, here. That isn't the way you're saved.

As far as your soul's salvation is concerned, but remember the context was about apostasy, about false teachers, about seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. How do you save yourself from them? That's how. Paul is saying to Timothy, if you do this, if you watch out for your ministry, and if you watch out for your personal life, and see that yours is a life of godliness and integrity, you'll save yourself from the effect of these false teachers and false teachings, and you'll save those who hear you from them as well.

Isn't that what it says? Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.

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