

THE FALSE TEACHERS

1 TIMOTHY 06:03–05

Introduction

This is a most serious and critical passage, a passage that the church must constantly study in order to keep its message and ministry pure. It deals with those who fill the pulpit and classrooms of the church, whether the positions are filled by true teachers or false teachers. Every minister, teacher, leader and member must heed and search his heart over this description of the false teacher.

- I. He teaches a different doctrine (v. 3).
- II. He is conceited (v. 4).
- III. He has a sick interest in controversial questions (v. 4).
- IV. He has a corrupt mind and is destitute of the truth (v. 5).
- V. He thinks religion leads to financial gain (v. 5).

I. *1 Timothy 06:03 Teachers of a Different Doctrine*

The false teacher teaches a different doctrine (*heterodidaskalei*). (See note, 1 Tim. 1:3.)

He does not teach the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a terrible indictment.

Imagine being in the pulpit of a Christian church and claiming to be a teacher of the Lord Jesus Christ, yet not teaching His words. How many of us are guilty of this indictment?

How many of us are guilty of teaching a different, false doctrine? Two reasons are given as to why the false teacher teaches a different doctrine.

1. The false teacher does not agree to the sound teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. The word “agree” (*proserchomai*) means *approach* and has the sense of “attaching oneself to” Christ (Daniel Guthrie. *The Pastoral Epistles*. “Tyndale New Testament Commentaries,” p. 110f). The false teacher is just not willing to attach himself to the *Lord Jesus Christ*. He is...
 - not willing to confess that Jesus is the *Lord God* from heaven, the very Son of God Himself.
 - not willing to confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah and Saviour of the world.
2. The false teacher does not agree to godly teaching. He is...
 - not willing to accept the righteousness of God revealed in Jesus Christ.
 - not willing to separate himself from the world nor to set his life wholly apart unto God.

One or both of these reasons are why the false teacher does not teach the wholesome words of Christ, but rather chooses to teach a different doctrine and way of life. He has committed his life to the *profession* of the ministry...

- as a way to serve mankind.
- as a way to earn a livelihood.

But he is not committed to represent Christ and His Word. As a result, the person is called a false teacher by both the Holy Scriptures and Christ.

Gal 1:6-9 *I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel — which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!*

Mat 16:12 *Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.*

Col 2:8 *See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.*

Heb 13:9 *Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings.*

II. 1 Timothy 06:04 Conceited False Teacher

The false teacher is conceited (*tetuphotai*). The word means *puffed up* and proud. But note: the word includes the idea of folly; it lacks good sense. Rejecting the evidence that Jesus is the Lord — the Lord Jesus Christ — is the height of pride and folly. Such rejection just lacks good sense (source unknown).

The false teacher takes pride...

- in his views and ideas.
- in his rejection of certain portions of the Bible.
- in his knowledge that some of the stories and events in the Bible are what he calls fables.
- in his intellectual ability to dissect the truth from the falsehood about Christ.
- in his enlightenment — that he knows better than to believe in such things as the miracles, deity, virgin birth, incarnation, resurrection, ascension and the personal return of Christ to earth.
- in his new and novel concepts and ideas about Christ.

The list could go on and on, but all ministers have detected this pride in discussions with other ministers. And, tragically, we have all been guilty of feeling pride over our own ideas before. William Barclay has an excellent comment on the pride of the false teacher:

“His first characteristic is conceit. His first aim is self-display. His desire is not to display Christ, hut to display himself. There are still preachers and teachers who are more concerned to gain a following for themselves than for Jesus Christ. They are more concerned to press their own views upon people than they are to bring to men the word of God. When people meet together for worship they are not concerned to listen to what any man thinks; they are eager to hear what God says. The great preacher and teacher is not a purveyor of his own ideas; he is an echo of God” (The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, p. 146).

III. 1 Timothy 06:04 Teachers Interested in Controversial Questions

The false teacher has a sick interest in controversial questions. When preparing to preach and teach, the false teacher does not rely upon the primary source, the Word of God itself. He relies upon secondary sources, that is, books *about* the Bible.

The Bible just is not the basis for his life nor for his preaching and teaching. The false teacher rejects the primary source (the Bible), and turns to secondary sources *about* the Bible. In some cases, he does not even know how to study the Bible. His interest lies...

- in trying to *discover* the truth in the Bible, not in proclaiming the truth of the Bible.
- in *questioning* what is true and not true instead of living out what the Bible says.

The result, of course, is what we so often see written in the faces and minds of the false teacher and those who sit under him: many thoughts and moments of...

- disturbance and lack of peace
- emptiness and lack of purpose
- questioning and lack of meaning
- wondering if God really does exist
- wondering if there is really any meaning to religion and worship
- wondering if there is a world or life beyond this earth

Why? Because what the human heart craves is God and His Word, the knowledge and assurance of Him and His guidance.

This is only reasonable and to be expected, for God is bound to have put within man a deep, natural hunger for Him and His Word. Therefore, what the human heart craves, even the heart of the false teacher, is not controversial questions and arguments over the “sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ” or of the Bible. What the heart craves is to hear from God, to hear the *authoritative proclamation of the Word of God itself*.

1 Th 2:3-4 *For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. On the contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts.*

1 Th 2:13 *And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.*

1 Tim 1:3-7 *As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work — which is by faith. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.*

1 Tim 6:4 *He is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions.*

2 Tim 2:23-24 *Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.*

2 Tim 3:16 *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.*

Titus 3:9-11 *But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.*

2 Pet 1:19-21 *And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

IV. 1 Timothy 06:05 Teachers with a Corrupt Mind

The false teacher has a corrupt mind and is destitute of the truth. His mind is corrupt in that it is not centred upon teaching the “sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ,” (the Word of God, the Scriptures, the Bible, v. 3). His mind...

- focuses upon the doctrines and theologies of men.
- focuses upon the psychologies and philosophies of men.
- focuses upon man's own energy and self-improvement, upon building up man's ego and self-image.
- focuses upon the latest religions or theological ideas.
- focuses upon the popular religious discussions that please and tickle men's ears.

The point is this: the false teacher does not focus upon the truth, the Word of God. He is destitute and empty of the truth. He does not possess nor teach the truth. He is bankrupt when it comes to the truth. However, note this: what the false teacher teaches often helps us do better. It often helps to build our ego and self-image and to achieve more in this life. Some self-help preaching is just like some self-help programs, clinics and seminars conducted all across the nation: they are excellent in so far as they go. But they have one serious flaw: *they do not go far enough*. They do not show...

- that God is really with us and looking after us as we walk upon earth.
- that Jesus Christ has really died for our sins and risen to give us life — life that goes on forever.
- that God has really forgiven our sins and accepted us in Christ.
- that when we die, God will immediately transfer us into His presence to live with Him forever.

This kind of absolute, deep, intense assurance is missing in the false teacher and in anyone else whose mind is not focused upon “sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ,” that is, the Word of God (v. 3).

Rom 1:28 *Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done [immoral].*

Rom 8:7 *the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.*

Eph 4:17 *So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.*

Col 2:18 *Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.*

Titus 1:15 *To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted.*

V. 1 Timothy 06:05 Religion for Financial Gain

The false teacher thinks religion leads to financial gain. This means at least three things.

1. Some false teachers *are concerned* with morality and virtue and with man being the best and achieving the most that he can. They believe in God, not necessarily in Christ, but in God. Therefore, they know the answer to making man and his world better is religion. Hence, they commit their lives to God and religion, to getting men to do the works of religion and to living more righteous and moral lives. They want people to be good and to do good. They think that “godliness is a means to financial gain,” that it helps and benefits man and his world.

Thought 1. Note that the false teacher is right on this point: the moral teaching of religion — living moral and upright lives — is good for man. But as pointed out above, works and self-help ministers do not go far enough. They do not focus upon God’s Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And God will never accept anyone who *does not honour* His Son, for He has only one Son who is begotten of Him. That Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is loved by God. God loves His Son with His whole being, for His Son has the very nature of God Himself. Christ has always obeyed the Father — has always lived a perfectly godly life just as the Father willed. Therefore, anyone who honours Christ shall be honoured and accepted by the Father. But the converse is also true: anyone who does not honour Christ will not be honoured by the Father. The craving of man’s heart for God and His Word — for the deep, intense knowledge and assurance of God — comes only through Christ. Therefore, as good as they are, religion and good works do not go far enough. They do not make a person acceptable to God. God accepts only one thing: faith in Christ, His only Son. (See notes *Justification*, 1 Tim. 2:3-7; Rom 5:1.)

John 3:16-18 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”

John 5:24 “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”

John 14:6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Rom 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Rom 5:08 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

2 Cor 5:20 We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.

2. Some false teachers enter the ministry as a profession and as a means to make a living. They probably have some concern for the religious welfare of people, but the major consideration in choosing to enter the ministry was this: they thought it would be a good and commendable profession and provide a good livelihood for them and their present or future family.
3. Some false teachers have commercialized religion. The false teacher is “out for profit. He looks on his teaching and preaching, not as a vocation, but as a career. He is in the business, not to serve others, but to advance *himself*” (William Barclay. *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, p. 148).

Thought 1. Man-centred and self-help teaching is helpful, but it does not belong in the pulpit of God’s church; it belongs in the conference rooms and halls of the secular world. The church must be kept pure and free in proclaiming the gospel and the supreme love of God demonstrated in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. If the human race fails to keep the pure Word of God flowing from the pulpits of God’s church, then the human race is doomed. Why? Because when we die, that will be it. We shall be separated from God eternally. For God will only accept us if we approach Him in Christ. Therefore, the critical hour for man will always be when he sits under the preaching of the Word of God and listens to “the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching.” When man hears the Word of God preached, he must respond and do as God says.

Rom 16:17 *I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.*

2 Th 3:6 *In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.*

1 Tim 6:3-5 *If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.*

2 Tim 3:5 *Having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.*

2 John 1:10-11 *If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work. ■*