

1 Timothy #4

May 18, 2025

Series: Body Essentials: Imperatives for Church and Leaders

Today's Message: Defend The Faith; 1 Timothy 1:18-20

So far in 1 Timothy we have discovered two imperatives for the church and leaders: 1) Teach sound doctrine, and 2) Preach the Gospel. Today we see our third imperative, 3) Defend the Faith.

Defending the faith has both a positive and negative aspect. Positively it means to teach and promote sound doctrine to the Church, and negatively it means to prevent false doctrine from gaining a foothold in the Church. Also, observe that equally essential to holding on to faith (doctrine) is having a good conscience.

I) (1:18) Defending the Faith by fighting the good fight.

- A) Paul as a father to Timothy: "My son." (Here he appeals to his deep personal concern for Timothy.)
 - 1) "Instruction," or "command" or "charge." But "instruction" carries a sense of *earnest love*. As a father to his son before the son goes to battle. "Instruction" for producing manly conduct.
 - (a) The "instruction" refers to how Paul taught Timothy to teach sound doctrine in the face of opposition, namely those who were promoting false doctrine.
 - 2) Encouragement: "in keeping with the prophecies...". You've been qualified. You've been called.
 - (a) As if Paul is saying, I'm not instructing you to do something beyond your qualification. Do it!
 - (i) Prophecies no doubt included the good word spoken of Timothy in **Acts 16:1-2**.
 - 3) Instruction: "...following them..." Paul's instruction and the remembrance of Spirit led qualification.
 - 4) "...you will fight the good fight."
 - (a) With instruction (preparation) and qualification (calling) you will engage successfully.
 - (i) **App: Ministry is difficult, demanding, and dangerous.** Turning back is not an option!
- B) **Lessons:** 1) Know your task and calling. 2) New Birth will **enable** you, instruction and preparation will **strengthen** you; affirmation of calling will **embolden** you.

II) (1:19a) Defending the Faith by holding on to faith (sound doctrine) and a good conscience.

- A) "...holding on to faith and a good conscience."
 - 1) The two necessities for *fighting the good fight*: **faith** and **a good conscience**.
 - (a) Holding on to **Faith**: hold/**grip** your convictions which are informed by sound doctrine.
 - (i) Fight for it (1:18); hold on to it (1:19); mature w/ it (4:6); preach it (4:13); guard it (6:20).
 - (b) A good conscience: indicative of a pure life (thought, word and deed) conforming to Christ!
 - (i) The conscience: a gift from God. Reacts to our behavior. Accuses or excuses (Rm.2:14-15)
 - (a) Good conscience: when bad behavior: guilt, shame, remorse, despair, conviction.
 - 1. A warning siren when our behavior is treading on sin and disobedience.
 - (b) Good conscience: when good behavior: peace, calm, contentment, well-being.
 - 1. Conscience is to the soul what pain is to the body. (MacArthur)
 - 2) Paul is stressing the importance of both sound doctrine to guide the mind and moral purity to free the man. That is, to keep Timothy from *hesitation caused by hypocrisy* when the fight is on!
 - (a) Timothy's faithfulness to both promotes spiritual health in the Church.
 - (i) "Doctrine plus godly living are the twin towers guarding the Church." (MacArthur)
 - (ii) "The greatest need of my people is my own personal holiness." (M'Cheyne)
 - (b) **2 Peter 2:1-3; 13-19** and **Jude :3-4** emphasize that at the root of false teaching is moral impurity
 - (c) **A good conscience gladly yields itself and the Church to the obedience of sound doctrine.**

III) (1:19b-20) Defending the Faith by exercising Church Discipline.

- A) Hymenaeus (**2 Tim. 2:16-18**) and Alexander (**2 Tim. 4:14**) refused both moral purity and sound doctrine.
 - 1) Shipwrecked their faith. This means they rejected the Truth displaying heresy and violence.
- B) "...handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme." Discipline for restoration. (See 1 Cor. 7:12-14)

Supplemental Scripture and Notes

IV) (1:18) Defending the Faith by fighting the good fight.

- A) I find it interesting that Paul uses a word that describes Timothy as a son, his own son. Just as in 1:2, Paul enforces his deep love for Timothy not just as a workman, but as one personally connected. Elsewhere Paul addresses him as a workman (2 Tim. 2:15), also like a soldier with military-like responsibilities (2 Tim. 2:3-4; 4:5), an athlete (2 Tim. 2:5), and a farmer (2 Tim. 2:6). But here in 1 Tim. 1:18 he woos him to his heart as one very dear to him.
- 1) NIV uses “instruction.” Sounds like a father speaking to his son in the calm before the storm. In this moment, Paul, knowing Timothy’s timid temperament, offers an assurance of “with-him-ness,” if I can use a phrase like that. *Timothy, this is a serious work, but my son, I’m with you. Don’t shrink back.*
 - 2) Encouragement: Paul reminds Timothy of the prophecies spoken to him of his divine qualification and calling to this work in Ephesus. It is as if Paul says, *And you have the leaders of the churches in Lystra and Iconium supporting you with full confidence* (Acts 16:1-2).
 - 3) Instruction: What Paul had spelled out in 1 Timothy 1:3-11.
 - (a) “In keeping with the prophecies...” I’m of the mind that whatever the prophecies were, which had been spoken to him, that they also included with “divine assurance” that God had qualified his called one named Timothy! So, Paul connects his command to Timothy in 1:3-11, which was to have him strongly confront the false teachers, as in keeping with their prophecies.
 - 4) “...you will fight the good fight.” Timothy must have drawn strength from both Paul’s father-like instruction, which prepared him to fight intelligently, and from the positive affirmation of his divine qualification to competently engage in standing as a protector of the flock, protecting them from the false and destructive teachings of the false teachers. **Armed with the assurance of the Spirit who qualified him, Paul who taught him, and the elders who affirmed him, turning back was not an option!**
- B) Lessons: New Birth will enable you; Instruction and preparation will strengthen you; and affirmation will embolden you!

V) (1:19a) Defending the Faith by holding on to faith (sound doctrine) and a good conscience.

- A) A few thoughts on good conscience: Sometimes we erroneously fault the conscience when we feel, for instance, guilty. But the sense of guilt is a sign of a good conscience when we have sinned or transgressed the law. Another example is restlessness or discontentment. Our conscience may very well be sounding the alarm that our energies are not being directed Godward seeking his direction and counsel.
- 1) On the other hand, our conscience may actually be affirming that we are doing right. When we are pleasing to God there is a sense of peace and contentment, etc. In these moments we can see the connection with purity and obedience to God, having aimed our efforts toward pleasing God. (See how Paul connects purity and a good conscience in 1 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:22)
 - 2) What about a bad conscience? A person can have what the Bible calls a “seared conscience.” This is the result of repeatedly ignoring the alarm of a good conscience. Paul says in 1 Timothy 4:2 that as a result of a seared conscience it is no problem for such a person to practice hypocrisy and lying, which makes false teaching and heresy, the doctrine of demons the natural result. They can deceive and speak falsely, convincing people with weak consciences to follow.

VI) (1:19b-20) Defending the Faith by exercising Church Discipline.

- A) All I will note here is two things regarding my understanding of handing them over to Satan:
- 1) Paul is probably stating to Timothy that these men have been excommunicated. But that should they be repentant, that is, should they *learn* “not to blaspheme” they can be welcomed again.
 - 2) Excommunication from the Church has as its goal a temporary removal from the sanctifying effect of the Church. This is similar to the warning Paul gives in 1 Corinthians 7:12-14.