

Letters to Lead By

1 TIMOTHY 4

FIRST DAY: Introduction

Too often we, as believers, become preoccupied and distracted by all the evil that is going on in the world today. Jesus said, *It is impossible that no offenses should come* (Luke 17:1a). Unfortunately, evil and evil events are part and parcel of the climate of the fallen world in which we live. So, how are we as believers to live in an atmosphere permeated with apostasy, deception, hypocrisy, and lies? We do this by heeding the specific instructions Paul gave to Timothy in the fourth chapter of his first epistle. Paul instructed Timothy on what pitfalls to avoid and what activities and attitudes to pursue.

These evil times, in which we find ourselves living, are not a time to hide from the world, but to endeavor to:

- be filled with the Spirit
- walk in obedience
- be an example

Paul's instructions to Timothy, written over two millennia ago, still bear just as much relevance today. God desires to use each of us in these dark times to *shine as lights in the world* (Philippians 2:15). First Timothy 4 will give us instructions on how to shine even brighter!

Ask God to help you shine in this dark world.

SECOND DAY: Read 1 Timothy 4:1–3

1. Paul had previously warned the Ephesian believers about false teachers when he was with them (Acts 20:29–31). Paul reiterated these warnings to Timothy because he was the pastor of the Ephesian church. According to 1 Timothy 4:1a, what did the Holy Spirit *expressly* say?
 - a. The Greek word for *depart* is a forceful word signifying that these false teachers absolutely abandoned or fell away from the faith. Link this with Matthew 24:11–12 and 2 Thessalonians 2:3a. What do you see?
 - b. What is at the source of their delusion? 1 Timothy 4:1b
- (1) Link this with Ephesians 6:12 and suggest an effective way to pray.
2. Paul then described the actions of these false teachers. Use 1 Timothy 4:2–3a to record and remark on:
 - a. The way these people speak (verse 2a)

(1) What connection do you see between what these false teachers *heed* and how they speak?

(2) Use John 8:44 to comment on the source of such speech.

b. Their *conscience* (verse 2b)

(1) The Greek word for *seared* is *kausteriazō*, which means *to cauterize, to render insensitive*. Why do you think a *seared* conscience is dangerous?

c. Their restrictions (verse 3a)

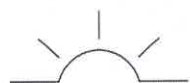
(1) These restrictions were an attempt by the false teachers to appear spiritual. How do Colossians 2:23 and Hebrews 13:9 clarify Paul's point?

(2) Share a way in which you see the relevance of Paul's warning today.

3. In contrast to what the false teachers advocated, what did Paul advocate as the perspective on marriage and food *by those who believe and know the truth*? 1 Timothy 4:3b
4. Using what you have studied today, give some practical suggestions on how to discern between truth and deceiving spirits.

THIRD DAY: Read 1 Timothy 4:4–5

1. Those who believe and know the truth are to approach marriage and food with a spiritual perspective. Use 1 Timothy 4:4a to elaborate on this perspective.
 - a. How does Genesis 1:31 confirm this truth?
 - b. How are these things to be *received*?
 - (1) Link this with Colossians 3:17 and 1 Thessalonians 5:18 and share your thoughts.



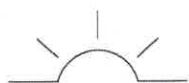
FOOD FOR THOUGHT

If God made something, calling it into being by His word, and ... declared it to be good, and if ... we can thank God for it with a good conscience, then we have a double cause to receive it, enjoy it, and thankfully celebrate it.¹
—John Stott

2. In 1 Timothy 4:5, *sanctified* means to be *set apart* or *considered holy*. How can you practically sanctify the elements in your life by:
 - a. *The Word*
 - b. *Prayer*
3. Although Paul was debunking legalistic notions concerning marriage and food, how do you think these principles might apply to your life?
4. Observe in your study today that Paul appealed to God's Word when addressing false teachers and their doctrine. Why is this a good practice?

FOURTH DAY: Read 1 Timothy 4:6–11

1. In light of the dangers of these false teachers, Paul further instructed Timothy in his ministry. According to 1 Timothy 4:6a, what would make Timothy a *good minister of Jesus Christ*?
 - a. In Greek, the word for *instruct* suggests supplying for others from one's own resources. What does this convey to you about a minister's task?



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Doctrine is the Greek word *didaskalia*, which means *teaching*. It refers to the essential teachings of God's Word.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Greek word for *exercise* refers to *intense and rigorous athletic training*.

2. In 1 Timothy 4:6b, Paul used the word *nourished*, which means fed by, strengthened, or educated by. Why is it essential that a good minister be *nourished* by:

a. *Words of faith*

b. *Good doctrine*

- (1) According to 1 Timothy 4:6c, how had Timothy responded to *words of faith* and *good doctrine*?

(a) How is Timothy an example to you?

3. From 1 Timothy 4:7, note and comment on what Timothy was to:

a. *Reject*

b. *Exercise*

4. Use 1 Timothy 4:8 to contrast the benefits of spiritual *exercise* with *bodily exercise*.

- a. Link this with Matthew 6:33 and 2 Corinthians 4:18 to explain why this is *a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance*. 1 Timothy 4:9

- b. Share a way you want to *exercise* yourself toward *godliness*.

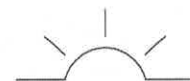
5. In 1 Timothy 4:10 Paul elaborated on what the exercise of *godliness* requires. Use 1 Timothy 4:10a to describe this requirement.

- a. Link this with Luke 9:23–24 and share your thoughts.

6. From 1 Timothy 4:10b, fill in the blanks in order to understand our motivation for godly exercise.

Because we _____ in the _____, who is the _____ of _____ especially of those who _____.

- a. How does this truth motivate you?



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The subject of godliness is mentioned sixteen times in the Bible; ten of those times are by Paul in his letters to Timothy.

7. Why do you think it was critical for Timothy to *command and teach* such things to the Ephesian believers? 1 Timothy 4:11

a. Why is it critical for you to know and practice these things?

FIFTH DAY: Read 1 Timothy 4:12–16

1. Although Timothy was a young man, Paul exhorted him to command and teach these truths to the Ephesian believers, not letting anyone *despise* or think less of him because of his *youth*. Rather, Timothy was exhorted to *be an example to the believers* (1 Timothy 4:12a). What does this convey about the significance of a believer's lifestyle?

2. From 1 Timothy 4:12b, fill in the chart to understand Paul's exhortation.

EXAMPLE	SCRIPTURE REFERENCE	PRACTICE
<i>In Word</i>	Colossians 4:6	
<i>In Conduct</i>	Philippians 1:27	
<i>In Love</i>	1 Peter 1:22; 4:8	
<i>In Spirit</i>	Galatians 5:16, 25	
<i>In Faith</i>	1 Thessalonians 1:8b-10	
<i>In Purity</i>	1 Peter 3:1–4	

- a. Using one or more of the qualities listed, share a brief testimony of someone who has been a godly example to you.
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3. In 1 Timothy 4:13, Paul gave Timothy three areas to *give attention to*. Cite a reason for the importance of each:
 - a. *Reading* (study of Scripture)

 - b. *Exhortation* (proclamation of Scripture)

 - c. *Doctrine* (teachings of Scripture)
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4. Read 1 Timothy 4:14 (NLT), *Do not neglect the spiritual gift you received through the prophecy spoken over you when the elders of the church laid their hands on you*. What did Timothy receive?
 - a. Why do you think Paul exhorted Timothy to *not neglect* this?

 - b. How did Timothy receive it?



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Pastor Warren Wiersbe pointed out that the Greek word for *progress* was a military term: *It describes the soldiers who go ahead of the troops, clear away the obstacles, and make it possible for others to follow.*²

5. From 1 Timothy 4:15a, note and comment on what Timothy was to do concerning *these things*.

a. How does this speak to you concerning our approach to the *things* of God?

b. What would result from doing *these things*? 1 Timothy 4:15b

6. In 1 Timothy 4:16a Paul urged Timothy to first *take heed* to himself and then *to the doctrine*. Why do you think Paul stated these things in that particular order?

a. Share a way you can *take heed* to:

(1) *Yourself*

(2) *Sound doctrine*

SIXTH DAY: Review

1. Write a brief thought concerning each of the following phrases:
 - a. *The Spirit expressly says*
 - b. *Some will depart from the faith*
 - c. *Sanctified by the Word of God and prayer*
 - d. *Nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine*
 - e. *Godliness is profitable for all things*
 - f. *We trust in the living God*
 - g. *Be an example to the believers*
 - h. *Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them*
 - i. *Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine*
2. Choose one of the above phrases, and use it to pray for the pastor of your church.