



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V22 N12 April 5, 2020

DEAR TIMOTHY

“The Test of True Believers ”

1 Timothy 4:1-10

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Single-mindedness

I focus on God and his priorities for my life.

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Matthew 6:33



Why bother training to be godly?

In Paul's first canonical letter to Timothy, he writes: “Train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come” (4:7b-8). His thought is simple enough. Put differently, the apostle tells his protégé that spiritual fitness is more valuable than physical fitness, so train yourself to be godly like an athlete might train to be in condition. Clearly, “train” connotes discipline; their meanings go hand-in-hand. And clearly, training and discipline together connote *effort*. Justification is no process and requires no effort on our part, but conformity to the image of God's Son (Ro 8:29) – whether called sanctification, spiritual formation, or discipleship – is a process and does. In the words of one commentator: “For Paul genuine godliness involved both right behavior and obedient action. Godly habits would not appear without *determined human purpose and effort*. Timothy was to persist in that Christian discipline which would prepare him for God's highest purposes” (Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, NAC, 107, italics added). The relation of all this to single-mindedness is self-evident.

On the meaning of training as it pertains to spiritual disciplines, one author writes: “What does it mean to enter training? It means to arrange your life around certain exercises and experiences that will enable you to do eventually what you are not yet able to do even by trying hard. Training is essential for almost any significant endeavor in life – running a marathon, becoming a surgeon, learning how to play the piano. The need for preparation or training does not stop when it comes to learning the art of forgiveness, joy, or courage. It applies to a vibrant spiritual life just as it does to other activities. Learning to think, feel, and act like Jesus is at least as demanding as learning to run a marathon or play the piano . . . *A spiritual discipline is any activity that can help me gain power to live life as Jesus*

taught and modeled it” (John Ortberg, “Training to Live Like Jesus,” in *Growth: Trying vs. Training*, 16).

Dallas Willard, who has written widely on the subject of discipleship, identifies two disciplines that involve *abstinence* – solitude and silence – and two that involve *positive engagement* – study and worship. On the first two, he writes: “By solitude we mean being out of human contact, being alone, and being so for lengthy periods of time . . . Silence is a natural part of solitude and is its essential completion. Silence means to escape from sounds, noises, other than the gentle ones of nature. But it also means not talking, and the effects of not talking on our soul are different from those of simple quietness. Both dimensions of silence are crucial” (*The Divine Conspiracy*, 357). Somewhat contrary to what Willard writes, I don't believe it's necessary to go on a retreat to practice solitude and silence. Go on a retreat if you can, but if you can't, go for a quiet walk, enjoy coffee on the patio by yourself, or drive to work sans media – no talking, no music with lyrics.

On the second two, he writes: “It is in study that we place our minds fully upon God and his kingdom. And study is brought to its natural completion in the worship of God. A student of plumbing or singing, for example, takes into his or her mind certain orders by purposely dwelling upon the relevant subject matter and activities in appropriate ways. That is how study works. And, of course, it always enables individuals ‘to do what they cannot do by direct effort’ (Php 4:8-9). Now we must not worship without study, for ignorant worship is of limited value and can be very dangerous. We may develop a ‘zeal for God, but not according to knowledge’ (Ro 10:2). Study without worship is also dangerous. To handle the things of God without worship is always to falsify them. In worship we are ascribing greatness, goodness, and glory to God. Worship imprints on our whole being the reality that we study” (363).



EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

1 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. 2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. 3 They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. 4 For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5 because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

6 If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. 7 Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. 8 For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. 9 This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance. 10 That is why we labor and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "later times" in v. 1.
- Underline "abandon the faith" in v. 1.
- Circle "seared" in v. 2.
- Circle "consecrated" in v. 5.
- Circle "these things" in v. 6.
- Box "rather" indicating *contrast* in v. 7.
- Highlight v. 7b.
- Bracket v. 9.
- Bracket the clause beginning "who is the Savior" in v. 10c.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Were Paul and Timothy living in “later times”? Are we? Explain.
 2. Who are the “some” who will abandon the faith? Believers, unbelievers, some of both?
 3. Identify *who* those who “abandon the faith” are following.
 4. The false teachers’ teaching is one part *legalism* and one part *asceticism*. Explain.
 5. Is Paul endorsing “table grace” in verse 5? Explain.
 6. Explain the *contrast* in verse 7.
 7. Explain what *training* connotes or suggest to you (cf., v. 10).
 8. Describe what training *for godliness* looks like.
 9. What value can godliness possibly have in the life to come?
 10. **Discussion:** Talk about why you *personally* pursue godliness by training in spiritual disciplines.
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Commentary On The Text

1 Timothy 4:1-10 is commonly divided into two related paragraphs. Verses 1-5 further describe the false teaching Paul warned about in 1:3-11, and verses 6-10 further instruct Timothy with regard to his response to it. On the first paragraph, one commentator writes: “Paul elaborated on the nature of the errors in Ephesus (4:1-5) . . . In 4:1-3 Paul warned against adopting ascetic practices that would prohibit marriage and also against abstinence from certain food. In 4:4 he argued that all of God’s creation is good. The expression of gratitude in a prayer of thanksgiving sanctifies everything which God has made (4:5)” (Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, NAC, 127-28).

The apostle begins in verse 1 by pointing out that the kind of thing going on in Ephesus should come as no surprise to Timothy because the Holy Spirit had already spoken of it. The Spirit had revealed that some in “later times” — the times in which Paul and Timothy lived and in which we now live — would abandon the faith, that is, renounce their former Christian beliefs, and as to the origin of their new heretical beliefs, “follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons” (v. 1). These defectors appear to be believers rather than unbelievers. Their heresy is the *product* of demons but is *promoted* by false teachers. As one commentator observes: “God’s spiritual enemies do not directly confront their victims with error. Instead they work through **hypocritical liars**, (lit., ‘men who speak lies in hypocrisy’). This is Satan’s standard operating procedure (cf. 2 Cor. 11:13-15). He selects likely representatives and renders their **consciences** beyond feeling (cf., Eph. 4:19), **seared** (from *kaustēriazō*, ‘to brand, cauterize’) **as with a hot iron**. In this condition they are ready to do Satan’s bidding” (A. Duane Litfin, “1 Timothy,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 739).

Their heresy is one part *legalism* and one part *asceticism*. (In our day it may also be one part *materialism*.) In the first place, they ordered people to abstain from certain foods, suggesting Judaism’s regulations regarding eating kosher. In the second place, they forbade people to marry, suggesting asceticism’s regulations regarding seeing abstinence and extreme forms of self-denial as a road to spirituality. Such heresy is still around today. Many still teach that keeping the law or doing good works in general is required for salvation and/or sanctifica-

tion. Think lordship salvation and rules oriented fundamentalism. Many others teach that extreme self-denial, in one form or another, is a crucial trait of spirituality — defined in terms of what one has given up. This kind of thinking is reflected in the following quote: “The practices of vegetarianism and celibacy are just examples; they’re not necessarily right for everyone. But I believe that some form of self-denial is necessary for everyone who wishes to see beyond the immediate and apparent. What you have doesn’t speak as much to your character as what you’ve given up” (Thomas Clark, “Modern Asceticism,” *The Daily Princetonian*, May 3, 2018). Asceticism sees self-denial as a spiritual end in itself. Training sees discipline as a means used by the Spirit to obtain a spiritual end. Timothy is to steer clear of all such heresy.

On the second paragraph, Lea and Griffin write: “Paul outlined some of the errors among the false teachers in Ephesus (4:1-5). He now focused on Timothy’s role in the face of these errors. First, he told Timothy what to do as he met the ungodly ways of the false teachers (4:6-10). The command to Timothy was: Develop godliness” (132). We need to do likewise when we are faced with false teaching, namely, recognize heresy for what it is and pursue godliness to insulate ourselves from it. The heart of this paragraph beats in verse 7: “Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives tales (i.e., false teaching); rather, train yourself to be godly.” Physical fitness is of value in the present life, but spiritual fitness is of value in both the present life and the life to come, suggesting that we bring our godliness, that is, our degree of sanctification and level of spiritual maturity, with us into the next life. There will be differences between people in eternity because our stewardship of in life matters! And since godliness has lasting consequences, Timothy is to exert whatever effort that training requires to develop it, and so should we. Without doubt, *training* clearly requires *effort*. According to verse 10, “we labor and strive” after godliness, “because we have put our hope in the living God.” And in another place Paul writes: “Everyone who competes in the games goes into *strict training*. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever” (1Co 9:25). And while the living God in whom our hope rests makes salvation available to all people, only those who believe receive it.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 *The Spirit clearly says* “The word which the Spirit spoke does not appear in any passage of Scripture. It may have been a truth God had revealed to Paul (cf. Acts 20:29). Paul could also have referred to the general teaching of a passage such as Mark 13:22. The word may have come through a Christian prophet in the context of worship (see Acts 11:27-28)” (Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, NAC, 128). “Paul may have been referring to the Lord Jesus’ teaching about coming heresy, to warnings the Spirit included in the inspired Scriptures, or to prophecies the spirit gave to believers and communicated to the churches in the Lord’s name” (Walter L. Liefeld, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 148).

v. 1 *later times* Cf., 2Ti 3:1. “‘In later times’ does not refer to the end times but to the whole time between the two advents of Jesus’ (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on 1 Timothy,” 2020 ed., 83, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1timothy.pdf). “At first glance it appears that the phrase [*en husterōis kairois*] ‘in the last times,’ refers to some time in the future, especially since the verb is a future tense (*[apostēsountai]*, ‘will apostatize’) and the phrase can be translated ‘in the later times.’ However, a close examination shows that Paul sees Timothy and himself as being presently in the last times” (William D. Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 46, *Pastoral Epistles*, 234, see discussion).

v. 1 *abandon* “The verb used here (*aphistemi*) occurs in a number of passages in classical Greek literature, in the LXX, as well as in the New Testament to describe an act of separation or withdrawal. The implication in its use here is not simply that they carelessly fall away, but that they abandon or ‘renounce’ (NRSV) the faith (i.e., the doctrine) that they formerly held” (Liefeld, 149). “Are these who ‘fall away from the truth (faith)’ believers or unbelievers? The Greek verb Paul used to describe their activity (*aphistemi*, ‘to withdraw from,’ lit. ‘to stand away’) and the noun he used to describe their action (*apostasia*, ‘defection,’ ‘apostasy’) do not answer this question. Either one could be in view. The context must determine whether the one departing is a believer or an unbeliever . . . It seems quite clear that Christians can stop believing God (Matt. 10:33; Mark 8:32; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 3:8). This does not mean, however, that they will lose their salvation, since salvation is God’s work, not ours (John 10:28; Rom. 8:31-39; 2 Tim. 2:13). One of my professors at Dallas Seminary used to say, correctly, I think, ‘I believe in the perseverance of the Savior, but I do not believe in the perseverance of the saints’” (Constable, 83).

v. 2 *hypocritical liars* “These apostates had developed cauterized consciences (‘seared . . . conscience), by refusing to respond to the truth that they knew. Now they called lies ‘the truth,’ and that is ‘hypocrisy’ (v. 2)” (Constable, 84).

v. 2 *seared* “These people have no sense of the wrongness of their actions for their conscience is seared, or ‘cauterized’, according to one possible meaning of the word *kauteriazō* . . . but it might mean that their consciences are banded with a hot iron to show their true owner to be Satan (cf. Lock)” (Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, TNTC, 92).

v. 5 *consecrated* “A Christian recognizes God’s good hand behind the things provided, and offers thanksgiving to the Lord. In this way the ordinary things to easily taken for granted (some of which are forbidden by errorists) become sanctified as occasions for worship and praise” (A. Duane Litfin, “1 Timothy,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 740). “The term ‘word of God’ may refer to the gospel message rather than to the Old Testament as Scripture . . . The gospel had brought them to a proper understanding of food, and they acknowledged by prayer that it was a gift from God” (Lea and Griffin, 131, 32).

v. 6 *these things* The full content of 2:1-4:5 or specifically the warning of 4:1-5? “The nearness of the latter passage makes it more likely that Paul wanted Timothy to warn the Ephesians against an enforced celibacy and asceticism” (Lea and Griffin, 133). “‘Asceticism’ is the idea that abstinence from physical things is essential for spiritual purity. Specifically, these teachers forbade ‘marriage’ and the eating of some ‘foods’” (Constable, 85).

v. 7 *train* “Paul introduced an athletic image with the words **train yourself**. The verb here is *gymnaze*, from which comes the English ‘gymnasium.’ But Timothy’s training was to be for godliness (cf. 1 Tim. 2:2), not physical fitness. Paul often used athletic analogies to drive home the need for spiritual discipline (cf. esp. 1 Cor. 9:24-27)” (Litfin, 740; see p. 1).

v. 9 *this is . . .* “The consensus of commentators is that this refers to the preceding statement” (Ralph Earle, “1 Timothy,” in *The Bible Expositor’s Commentary*, 11:373).

v. 10 *Savior of all people* “God is the Savior of ‘all,’ in the sense that He has provided a salvation that is available to all and has preserved their earthly lives. He is the Savior of ‘believers’ in a special sense, since they are those who have accepted His provision of eternal salvation. Salvation is sufficient for all, but efficient only for those who believe” (Constable, 89-90).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

In the face of those defecting from the faith by pursuing legalism and asceticism, train yourself to be godly so as to continue in the faith insulated from their heresy.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?
2. What does this passage teach me about myself?
3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

We think we can't memorize scripture but have no trouble belting out the words to a song after hearing it only a few times. We think we don't have time to read the Bible but can easily finish a book or two each month. Our prayer life might seem dismal, but we're all caught up on social media. Maybe, just maybe, we're lacking in discipline. I don't know about you, but I'm feeling a little convicted. Truth is I want to be disciplined, but like Paul in Romans 7, I don't do what I know I should. My heart's desire is to grow closer to Christ, but I also want to sleep just a little longer. I want to train to be godly for myself personally, but also for my family. Simple fact: we as parents are our kid's primary teachers for training in godliness. We are responsible to help them learn to pray, properly study the Bible, memorize scripture, and worship a holy God who loves them even more than we do. How will our kids learn to pray out loud in a group if we aren't doing that ourselves? How will they learn to worship unashamedly if we have our hearts and minds set on the distraction of the moment? Parents, this week, let's take steps to be disciplined and train our families in godliness. Let's memorize this week's verse and work on *The Scrolls* together with our kids. I'm praying we all grow in Christ as we train in godliness.

What Does The Bible Say?

What does the Bible say? Read 1 Timothy 4:1-10

1. What will those who abandon the faith follow?
2. What should you point out to your fellow followers of Christ?
3. What value does godly training have?

What Do You Think?

How can you train yourself to be godly?

What Do You Do?

Be "In Training" this week. Be disciplined to spend 15 minutes a day with God this week - 5 minutes each in reading the Bible, prayer, and worship.

CORE COMPETENCY: Authority of the Bible

I believe the Bible is God's book that tells me what to believe and do.

MEMORY VERSE: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- ☐ I completed my Bible Study
- ☐ I memorized this week's verse
- ☐ I brought my Bible to church
- ☐ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. She and James are Shepherds of the Bailey Community Group. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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