

Beware

1 Timothy 4:1-3

A. Susceptible (v. 1):

1. Spirit – It is the Holy Spirit who determines what is taking place because He is the Spirit of truth (John 14:16-17).
2. Explicitly says – What is being said by the Holy Spirit is totally not hidden and it is so continuously being communicated there is no possibility it can be misinterpreted.
 - a) “Expressly, explicitly,” emphasizes that the Spirit has communicated in no uncertain terms. ^[1]
3. Explicitly says – The Holy Spirit illuminates the Word of God (1 Corinthians 2:10-15), He guides us to truth so that we can explicitly know what to do (John 16:13), and He reminds of the Word of God that we have studied (John 14:26).
4. Some will fall away – There are believers who depart even revolt and then withdraw from obeying God’s Word despite what they clearly know the Spirit of God is leading them to do.
 - a) The Ephesian church had been warned already about the coming of false doctrines (Acts 20:29–30). ^[2]
 - b) Throughout Paul’s letters, the Spirit speaks “in stated words” (expressly) that the church will see apostasy, a falling away from the true faith (see 2 Thes. 2). The word “depart” in the Gk. gives us our English word “apostasy.” He points out too the cause for the apostasy—not the “growing intelligence of scholars” but the satanic influence of demons so that professed believers deny the basic doctrines of the Bible. The problem is not with the head but with the heart! ^[3]

5. Some will fall away – Christ, in Matthew 24 verses 9-14 warns that as circumstances become worse, which includes people becoming more lawless and more and more false prophets rise, many believers will either depart from each, become enemies or hold to false doctrine (2 Timothy 4:1-5). Paul warns the leaders in Ephesus to be aware of false doctrine which will cause believers in the church to be seduced or depart from the church (Acts 20:28-30)

a) Jesus describes those who fall away as those who “have no root” (Lk. 8:13; cf. also Heb. 3:12ff.; 6:4ff.; 10:26ff.; 12:25ff.; Hughes, *Hebrews*, ad loc.).^[4]

6. From the faith – Those who depart they do so because they no longer have a deep conviction in what the Bible is teaching. Their confidence in the scripture, because a lot of trials has left them shaken, they are no longer willing to trust the Word each day as they make decisions.

7. Faith – These believers who depart from surrendering their lives to the obedience of God’s Word no longer pay attention to the movement of the Holy Spirit, convicting, reminding them of the scriptures, influencing them to search the scriptures for answers. They either become religious or they no longer go to church.

a) The definite article before the word “faith” marks it out as speaking, not of faith as an act, but of the Faith, that body of doctrine which forms the basis of what we as Christians believe.^[5]

B. Guard your Mind (vs. 1b-3a):

1. Give attention – By giving attention Paul is saying that these individuals are so devoted to what they believe it is as if they are at the altar with a complete commitment to make an offering. Their convictions are just as strong for the new ideas they believe in.

2. Give attention – When we decide to remove ourselves from surrendering to the movement of the Holy Spirit we immediately engage in false doctrine because as human beings we have to believe in something to make decisions (James 3:13-15). This is because God made us with a will. So the question will always be what is driving our decision making?

3. Seducing spirits – When a person gives attention to the a worldly philosophy they open themselves to what is contrary to God’s Word (Satan is the prince of the world meaning what it teaches is directly oppose to what God teaches) which allows Satan or his demons to so deceive them they believe Christ is wrong (Mt 27:63; 2 Co 6:8; 2 Jn 7).

a) Spiritual error is seldom due to innocent mistakes. It is more often due to the conscious strategies of God’s spiritual enemies (cf. Eph. 6:12). The teachings (*didaskaliais*) of demons are false doctrines taught by errorists whose views are instigated by demons.^[6]

b) 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.^[7]

4. Seducing spirits – Because Satan can take the truth and make it the enemy Christ instructs us not to follow human philosophy (Colossians 2:8-9) or use common sense (Proverbs 3:5-6).

a) As the repository and guardian of the truth, the church must be aware of the strategies of the truth’s enemies. It is crucial then for the church to understand what God has revealed about these enemies (cf. 1 Peter 4:1–18; Jude 17–18).^[8]

5. Doctrine of demons – Satan is not trying to just show us there is another way to live or to think. He is trying to establish his preachers (2 Corinthians 11:12-15), his philosophers, some very smart individuals who by their level of education, power or intelligence purport a dogma that convinces some believers they must hold in order to survive or be successful.

a) “Devils” is *daimonion* (δαίμονιον), demons. There is one devil (*diabolos* (δίαβολος)) a fallen angel, and many demons, not angels, but another order of being, who are his servants. It is significant that Paul finds the source of false doctrine in these demons who actuate members of the human race.^[9]

6. Doctrine of demons – Satan is going to be so convincing he will seek to convince our enemies that we are fanatics, fundamentalists, and conservatives, who have no clue what is taking place around us.

a) What are the marks of these false teachers? For one thing, they preach one thing but practice another. They are such hypocrites that they even “brand” their own consciences by their willful disobedience to God’s Word! They read the Word but explain it away through their self-serving lies. They teach a false piety—namely, asceticism, that is, abstaining from marriage and certain foods. There are some so-called “Christian” groups that have never studied Colossians 2 to discover that bodily disciplines do not automatically advance spiritual life.^[10]

7. To means of the hypocrisy - The persons who teach worldly dogmas they will pretend (like the Pharisees and Sadducees) to be wholeheartedly committed to God but like play actors they are only play-acting so they can deceive the hearts of the ‘unsuspecting’ (Romans 16:17-18).

8. Liars – Demons by their very nature (John 8:44) propagate falsehoods. They cannot teach anything else. So they influence influential people to lead astray even believers to accept lies with conviction.

9. Seared – To be seared ‘as with a branding iron’ means their consciences are hardened like you see with Pharaoh and the Jewish leaders. The Jewish leaders knew who Christ was, while on earth (John 5:39), but they put Him on a cross and mocked Him.

a) The “branding iron” was especially used on livestock; the “searing” may thus mean that the consciences of these apostates have become the property of evil spirits.^[11]

b) Has been explained as “branded” as slaves were, with the mark of Satan to indicate ownership.^[12]

10. Seared – There is absolutely no conviction that would ever drive these individuals to stop being hypocrites and liars because it is their consciences that are completely insensitive (guiltless) to the movement of the Holy Spirit. The searching of the Holy Spirit would have no impact on them to stop being hypocrites and liars.

11. Forbid marriage – The false teachers continuously restrained people to the point of hindering or preventing them from marrying.
12. Abstain from foods – These false teachers that were guiltless and hard-hearted continuously held people back from eating certain foods that God allowed.

a) There was some debate in the early church period about whether Christians should avoid meat sacrificed to idols or observe Jewish dietary laws (see Rom 14:1–23; 1 Cor 8:1–10:33; Col 2:16–23). ^[13]

C. **Hold Fast (v. 3c):**

1. To be gratefully shared – The fact that God has created food for everyone (we are not creators so without Him we can starve) we should all, when provided food, respond to Him with a joyous worshipful heart.
2. Believe; Faithful – Those who do not find what the false teachers are teaching to be reliable, these individuals steadfastly trust in the Lord, joyously thankful for what the Lord provides.
3. Know/recognize – the truth – The believers who joyously appreciate what the Lord has created for them, and steadfastly maintain their trust in God ‘know full well’ what the divine will of God is. Because they clearly recognize the Lord’s will they totally trust it and therefore dismiss what the false teachers are saying.
4. Know/recognize – the truth – Once the will of God is clearly understood, because we allow the Holy Spirit to guide us into what the Word truly means, we must be determined to turn away from all those who willfully teach false doctrine no matter how powerful or influential they may seem.

a) The words “believe” and “know” do not denote two classes but one. Those who believe are described as those who have a precise and experiential knowledge of the truth. The better rendering is, “for them,” not, “of them.” That is, these things were created for those who believe in order that they may participate in them. ^[14]

- ^[1] Knight, G. W. (1992). [*The Pastoral Epistles: a commentary on the Greek text*](#) (pp. 187–188). W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.
- ^[2] Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). [*Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament*](#) (p. 629). Victor Books.
- ^[3] Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). [*Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament*](#) (p. 629). Victor Books.
- ^[4] Knight, G. W. (1992). [*The Pastoral Epistles: a commentary on the Greek text*](#) (p. 188). W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.
- ^[5] Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 7, pp. 66–67). Eerdmans.
- ^[6] Litfin, A. D. (1985). [*1 Timothy*](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 739). Victor Books.
- ^[7] Litfin, A. D. (1985). [*1 Timothy*](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 739). Victor Books.
- ^[8] Litfin, A. D. (1985). [*1 Timothy*](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 739). Victor Books.
- ^[9] Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 7, pp. 66–67). Eerdmans.
- ^[10] Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). [*Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament*](#) (p. 629). Victor Books.
- ^[11] Keener, C. S. (1993). [*The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament*](#) (1 Ti 4:2). InterVarsity Press.
- ^[12] Knight, G. W. (1992). [*The Pastoral Epistles: a commentary on the Greek text*](#) (p. 189). W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.
- ^[13] Keener, C. S. (1993). [*The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament*](#) (1 Ti 4:1). InterVarsity Press.
- ^[14] Wuest, K. S. (1997). [*Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader*](#) (Vol. 7, p. 68). Eerdmans.