



“Leadership Against Apostasy”

1 Timothy 4

Lesson 5

In A Nutshell

Paul addresses the importance of battling false teachers in chapter 4. Our godly leaders need to take a stand against apostasy. That stand is easier to take when the people of the local church have strong convictions against apostasy. This lesson will help you strengthen those convictions.

To The Testimony!

The Counterfeit Leader— the Apostate

1 Tim.
4:1-5

1. We learned in Lesson 4 that the church is responsible for the ministry of God's truth in this age (1 Tim. 3:15, 4:3). Some Bible students have believed that this ministry of the church will be successful to the point of establishing the kingdom of God on earth in preparation for Christ's second coming. They were called *postmillennial*, meaning that they believed the success of the church age would usher in Christ's millennial reign on earth. Christ returns only after (*post*) His kingdom on earth is enjoyed by the church. In contrast, the premillennial view states that Christ must return before (*pre*) the millennium can be enjoyed on earth and that He will come after the church age. The church age is not a time of great success in their view, but rather a time of great struggle punctuated with times of apostasy or “falling away” from the faith. Verse 1 tells about these times of great apostasy or “falling away” in the last days, the church age. How does this falling away happen? Who causes it? Who are the agents of it?

- 1 Tim. 4:3-5 2. What two age old attacks on the truth does Paul mention as popular among apostates? What authority does Paul cite to combat this falsehood?

- 1 Tim. 4:6-9 3. Apostasy is supported by doctrines of demons and seducing spirits. The four philosophies in the chart below are four doctrines of demons, which men are following in the apostasy of today's false religion. They represent sayings that are unfaithful, unworthy of acceptance. By contrast, Paul gives us trustworthy instruction in verses 6-9. Read the definition of the philosophy below, state why it is wrong, and give a right view from verses 6-9, which addresses the error of that philosophy.

Philosophy:	Definition:	Error:	Scriptural Response:
eclecticism	choosing what appears to be best in many religions		
ecumenism	promoting a globally organized unity among religions		
pluralism	each religion should be respected as equally valid		
tolerance	sympathy for beliefs differing from one's own		

- 2 Pet. 2 4. Our study of apostasy would be incomplete without a reading of 2 Peter 2. With a fire that only a fisherman like Peter could express, he warns believers against men who "after they have known [the way of righteousness], . . . turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." This is apostasy. The dog returning to his vomit and the sow to her mire are Peter's descriptions of the apostate. They should be ours as well. Read 2 Peter 2 and list three descriptions of your own for apostates. With three sentences beginning with "Apostates are. . .", describe these men in your own words.

Apostates are
Apostates are
Apostates are

The Godly Leader—The Faithful Man

1 Tim. 4:6-10 5. Paul again cites a faithful saying in verse 9. He is referring to his comparison of developing godliness with physical exercise. How are physical exercise and developing godliness alike? How are they different?

1 Tim. 4:11-16 6. Paul completes this chapter by firing off a list of six solemn directives for Timothy, the leader of God's people. His last statement of the chapter gives us a sense of the importance of godly leadership (verse 16). This statement tells us what is at stake when it comes to the ministry of a godly leader. Begin with verse 16, identify what is at stake with the ministry of God's leader, and then list the directives that must be followed in order to have success in that ministry. Then finally summarize in your own words the ministry of a successful pastor.

What is at stake?	
What are the directives?	
V. 11	
V. 12	
V. 13	
V. 14	

V. 15	
V. 16	
What is a successful pastoral ministry?	

Real Life?

Joe had just landed his first real job since graduating from Christian college last spring. He was a good Christian young man, and he felt strongly that the Lord had provided this new position as an accountant for one of the leading firms. Joe had never lived in the South before, and part of his settling process was going to be deciding on a new church home. Joe was single. One of the features he was hoping for in a new church was a strong singles' fellowship.

Joe first tried Bethel Baptist Church because it was the closest to his condominium complex. He learned a lot that morning, and the pastor's instruction reminded him of the teaching he had grown up with back home. Joe thought that the church was unusually small though. As he looked around, he did not see anyone who seemed to be close to his age group. The pastor seemed somewhat concerned as he took the offering about a number of bills that the church had gotten behind on. Joe noticed that the general demeanor of the pastor seemed kind of down. He looked discouraged.

The following week, Joe stopped in to First Baptist Church. He was surprised at the size of the singles' class. They actually gave Joe a copy of their summer activities listing a series of camping trips, ball games, concerts, rallies, and special events on a weekly basis. The morning message was shorter than Joe was used to and the music a bit faster, but the people sure were friendly. He was surprised to hear that there would be no service that evening, but the singles were going to go down to the beach together for a sunset fellowship. They were expecting about 50 people Joe's age.

What advice would you give Joe in making the decision he faces about where to attend church?