

Life Group Notes 6/11/2023
Pastor Mark Warren 1 Timothy 4 Week 4

[If you have observations or questions feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net.—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.]

Note: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. The purpose is to unite, not divide; to facilitate discussion and to discern the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. The goal is to create memories from Sunday that will serve for a long time.** BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! **Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study. This study is also a great devotion, taken slowly through the week.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions Pastor Mark has raised this week, 6/4. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** Do not be daunted by the number of pages. As an editorial decision, I include each of the passages mentioned in full to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes, rather than having you, the reader, look up each reference. If your Bible is open beside you, you can transfer and annotate from these pages with ease. This week has several footnotes on people and principles in the history of the church. Footnotes are not meant to distract, but enhance the reading, and to help find answers to questions that arise. This week's footnotes include:

1. [On "demonic doctrines."](#)
2. [On seared consciences.](#)
3. [On the Shakers and other Holy Rollers.](#)
4. [On the gift of prophecy and the dangers of false doctrines.](#)

***Almost **New**: At the very end, I've included passages that were mentioned for SOAP journaling and further study during the week. ***

Mark opens up by reviewing the previous weeks' lesson to "outdo one another in honoring each other." **Have you had success? Noticed anything different in your own view? How hard has it been for you, with two services?**

Then he goes on to ask, "Is it possible for you to lose your salvation?" Answer him. Look up 1 John 2:18-19.¹⁸ Children, it is the last hour, and just as you heard that the antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have appeared. We know from this that it is the last hour.¹⁹ They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us, because if they had

belonged to us, they would have remained with us. But they went out from us to demonstrate that all of them do not belong to us.

1. Is it the last hour? How do we know? Why does it matter? How many hours do you have left?
2. How many antichrists can you name? (Don't name them...no arguing allowed.) How do you know?
3. Who is "they" in this passage? Are they "saved"? How do you know? Were they ever saved?
4. Remember Paul's warning to the Ephesian elders? (**Look at Acts 20:** ³⁰ *Even from among your own group men will arise, teaching perversions of the truth^[dm] to draw the disciples away after them.* ³¹ *Therefore be alert...*) Could these be the "antichrists" John, too, spoke of? (Note: John was last seen in the days he was bishop of Ephesus.) What distinguishes antichrists and wolves? Do they unite, or enforce division and separation?
5. Were they ever saved? Was Judas saved? (Note: This argument is too old and historic to prolong but notice the enduring nature of the question. Should an answer cause division?) Now look at what Timothy says:

Timothy's Ministry in the Later Times NEB

4: Now the Spirit explicitly says that in the later times some will desert the faith and occupy themselves with deceiving spirits and demonic teachings, ² influenced by the hypocrisy of liars^[a] whose consciences are seared. ³ They will prohibit marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴ For every creation of God is good and no food^[a] is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving. ⁵ For it is sanctified by God's word and by prayer.

1. First, to whom was this letter written? Was it written to the Ephesian church in general? Why not? What happens when the untrained and the immature read this? How do words addressed to leadership differ from words expressed to new believers? Do you agree?
2. How and when did Paul first learn that "in later times some will desert the faith and occupy themselves with deceiving spirits...?" (Look again at what Paul told the Ephesian elders, above.) Who was warning Paul that this was so? Have you ever had similar warnings from the Spirit, and avoided a misstep?
3. Now, look above: How does one desert the faith? What has displaced good doctrine? How damaging is false doctrine? (See footnote 3 below on the Shakers.)
4. What is the warning here? Is there a solid alternative to "deceiving spirits and demonic teachings?" Do spirits actually teach? (Remember, Who is Your Teacher?)
5. What is the source and the standard for right and good doctrine? Why is the scripture so vital to our instruction?

6. What, in a teacher, allows for teaching false doctrine? Where does the teacher get it from? What was Paul's warning, above, from Acts 20? What were the divisive elders seeking?
7. List the false doctrines Paul mentions? Have you ever heard any of these doctrines? Have you ever repeated any of them?
8. By what means does Paul dispel these doctrines? How do we know it's OK to marry? How do we know it's OK to eat what's put on the table?

⁶ By pointing out such things to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, having nourished yourself on the words of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. ⁷ But reject those myths fit only for the godless and gullible, and train yourself for godliness. ⁸ For "physical exercise has some value, but godliness is valuable in every way. It holds promise for the present life and for the life to come." ⁹ This saying is trustworthy and deserves full acceptance. ¹⁰ In fact this is why we work hard and struggle, because we have set our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of believers.

1. Where did Timothy get his teaching? List three sources. (Spoiler: Remember Timothy's life. Godly mother and grandmother, who brought him up in the OT scriptures. Travels for years with Paul...thus, Paul's teaching, both style and demonstration. He was a hearer and an eyewitness to the power manifested through right doctrine and faith.)
2. Regardless of your eating habits, what must you eat? Is there a difference between the "words of faith" and the "good teaching that he followed?"
3. What kinds of myths are being promoted today? Are they dangerous? Why are the godless and the gullible especially vulnerable?
4. What value does physical training have?
5. How does one "train oneself for godliness?" What is "godliness?"
6. Review 2 Peter 1: ⁴ *Through these things he has bestowed on us his precious and most magnificent promises, so that by means of what was promise you may become partakers of the divine nature after escaping the worldly corruption that is produced by evil desire.* ⁵ *For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith excellence, to excellence, knowledge;* ⁶ *to knowledge, self-control; to self-control, perseverance; to perseverance, godliness;* ⁷ *to godliness, brotherly affection; to brotherly affection, unselfish love.* ⁸ *For if these things are really your and are continually increasing, they will keep you from becoming ineffective and unproductive in your pursuit of knowing our Lord Jesus Christ more intimately.* Note what role godliness plays in this pursuit. What does Peter say are the results of this training? Compare this with what Paul says in verse 8.
7. Look at verse 10. How hard does Paul work? Why? Where is his hope? How do you compare? How excellent is the example Paul set for Timothy and for us?

¹¹ Command and teach these things. ¹² Let no one look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in your speech, conduct, love, faithfulness and purity. ¹³ Until I come, give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. ¹⁴ Do not neglect the spiritual gift you have, given to you and confirmed by prophetic words when the elders laid hands on you. ¹⁵ Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that everyone will see your progress. ¹⁶ Be conscientious about how you live and what you teach. Persevere in this, because by doing so you will save both yourself and those who listen to you.

1. Does age play a role in leadership? What gives Timothy credentials that surpass the elders of Ephesus? Looking again at these elders in the Acts 20 passage above, why was it a good idea to bring in a younger man from the outside? What events qualify Timothy to be an elder in Ephesus?
2. Look at the list of qualities Timothy is to exhibit. What do they look like in the character of a leader?
3. To what duties does Paul assign Timothy? What is the fruit of each?
4. Look at verse 14. How important is the gift of prophecy? How did Timothy receive the spiritual gift he had? When did he receive that gift? When did Timothy join Paul in the ministry?
5. What does the church lose when we teach that "prophecy is not for today?"
6. What tools of leadership does Paul recommend that Timothy use?
7. Why is Timothy's perseverance over time both instructive and useful to others? Why is it good for observers to see his progress? Does this pertain to leaders only? Or to all? Have you ever recognized a good leader before they themselves even suspect that they are called to lead? How?

Pastor Mark says, "We are not saved by works. We are saved by grace *for works*." What do our works do, then? Unto whom do our works belong? And if we hold back, who benefits? What happens if we do no works? Are we alive? He says, "It is always about our relationship, it never about works." Reviewing verse 1, he says, "There is something about devoting yourself to things that are false, you start believing a lie. Our conscience becomes seared when we stop allowing the Holy Spirit to prod us on to do the right thing."

1. How does this relate to cults and false teachers?
2. Have you ever been so distracted by a teaching or a conspiracy that you've forgotten to love a neighbor?
3. Is that possible today?
4. Is it happening? Do you know of anyone who has walked away because of this? Can we pause to forgive them, and to pray for their return?
5. How does the story of the prodigal son instruct us in "losing our salvation?" Did the son walk away? Did he squander his inheritance? Did he repent? Did he return? Had he lost all kinship with the Father? What did he gain in his return? What would have

happened had he not returned? Was there any benefit in NOT repenting? Why is this a good point, while we still have time to return?

Mark says, "Every day you're going to take an inventory. You're going to be persistent. You're going to return."

1. What assurance will you gain in this?
2. Have you gone for a time without hearing from the Lord, and discouraged? What did you do?

The Follow-up Application

1. Take a moment this week to think about the scriptures below in the S.O.A.P study.
2. Write down what you learned this week. Try to keep track of the new revelations you're getting this week.
3. Do you have unusual doctrines that you cherish, that do not lead to unity? Look at your own ideas. Write down questions you have.
4. Note this week what brings division around you, at home and at work. What is your role in making peace?

Take the time to pray.

Scribes Notes:

1. **On "demonic doctrines"**—Paul speaks of false doctrines with very little patience, and zero tolerance. What the NET translates as "demonic doctrines" are doctrines Paul actually ascribes to demons, that is evil, demonic spirits. Such doctrines are easily recognized as you can see if you have followed these notes. The chief characteristic of such a doctrine is that they feed controversy, enflame tensions and foster division. Such doctrines are always the basis of cults, whose founder claims a "revelation" that the "church has ignored since the days of the resurrection." This was Charles Taze Russel's claims when he broke away from Ellen G. White and the Seventh Day Adventist's in the late nineteenth century. This was Joseph Smith's and Brigham Young's claim when they led the Mormons to Utah. Paul instructs the Ephesians specifically in this very thing, in chapter 4:
² *With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;* ³ *Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* Note how Russel, Smith and Young...and all cult leaders, have failed in this basic principle.
2. **On a seared conscience**—The footnotes to the New English Translation on Biblegateway.com says this: "'Seared' or 'branded.' The Greek verb *καυστηριάζω* (*kaustēriazō*) can be used to refer either to the cause ("brand") or the effect ('seared'). **sn** Consciences are seared. The precise meaning of this phrase is somewhat debated. Three primary interpretations are (1) the consciences of these false teachers are "branded" with Satan's mark to indicate ownership, (2) their consciences are

"branded" with a penal mark to show they are lawbreakers, or (3) their consciences have been 'seared' (i.e., totally burnt and desensitized) so that they are unable to notice the difference between right and wrong. See G. W. Knight, Pastoral Epistles (NIGTC), 189." Notice the deliberate double meaning here. Have their consciences been branded with satan's mark? Have they been "numbered" as a detainee at Auschwitz? Or have they been entirely desensitized? The translator has to make a choice, but the Greek allows all three. The English word "cauterize" is derived from this word. To cauterize in medicine refers to searing a wound to produce a scab and prevent excessive blood loss. As pastor Mark pointed out, it prevents penetration...and elimination of materials from within. In spiritual terms, notice that the opposite of cauterization is circumcision...circumcision of the heart allows for magnified sensitivity and awareness of the Spirit's will and desire.

- 3. On the Shakers (and other Holy Rollers)**—The proliferation of Christian separatist sects and cults were characteristic of the nineteenth century, as the revival of religion and proliferation of protestant denominations dominated the sixteenth and seventeenth. One of these cults, the Shakers, whose village in NH today is an eye-opening museum, is explained in these terms in Wikipedia: The **United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing**, more commonly known as the **Shakers**, are a [millenarian restorationist Christian sect](#) founded c. 1747 in England and then organized in the United States in the 1780s. They were initially known as "Shaking [Quakers](#)" because of their ecstatic behavior during worship services. Espousing [egalitarian](#) ideals, women took on spiritual leadership roles alongside men, including founding leaders such as [Jane Wardley](#), [Ann Lee](#), and [Lucy Wright](#). The Shakers emigrated from England and settled in Revolutionary [colonial America](#), with an initial settlement at [Watervliet, New York](#) (present-day [Colonie](#)), in 1774. They practice a [celibate](#) and [communal](#) utopian lifestyle, [pacifism](#), uniform [charismatic worship](#), and their model of [equality of the sexes](#), which they institutionalized in their society in the 1780s. They are also known for their simple living, architecture, technological innovation, music, and furniture. During the mid-19th century, an [Era of Manifestations](#) resulted in a period of dances, gift drawings, and gift songs inspired by spiritual revelations. It might seem shocking in the 21st century to discover that there were Charismatic cults in the nineteenth and twentieth century that practiced all the gifts and experienced the phenomena of the most famous "outpourings" of the twentieth and twenty first centuries. Were the gifts real? Were their prophecies real? "Mother Ann," the titular founder of the American Shaker movement was known for several reasons. She believed in the imminent return of the Lord Jesus, and that one was to prepare his heart for that day. Hence there was no need to expect a subsequent generation. The Shakers, known for the outbursts of uncontrollable shaking in the presence of the Holy Spirit, broke away from the Quakers, the Community of Brethren, when they stopped quaking in the presence of the Holy Spirit. The claim was that the Holy Spirit had left the Quakers in their lack of enthusiasm. You learn at the Museum in Canterbury, NH, that the Shakers provided the state with free and safe foster care for lost children, and it was by this means that the society was perpetuated. The children voluntarily adopted the religion of the sect and returned to carry on the doctrines. When the state began to militate against any degree of "promoting religion," they no longer went to the Shakers for foster care, and the sect is slowly dying. The last lifelong

Shaker of Maine died in 1917. The Shakers leave a legacy of gentleness, fervor and excellence in everything they produced. Were they evil? Notice, too, the names were given to them by outsiders who observed and reported their exorbitant, often outlandish behavior in worship. The same happened during the Holiness tent revivals of Kansas in the late nineteenth century. The worshippers there became known as "holy rollers" in the local journals, due to their behavior during worship. Compare this behavior to what you know of Toronto, and Pensacola, Florida.

4. **On prophecy in the contemporary church and the dangers of false doctrine**—Paul reminds Timothy of the day the elders commissioned him by the laying on of hands. Look again at verse 14, "Do not neglect the spiritual gift you have, given to you and confirmed by prophetic words when the elders laid hands on you." Paul speaks often in his letters of the gifts he has conveyed, and of their importance in the life of the church. Timothy received gifts, as brought, according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 12, by the Holy Spirit, the gift giver. Very often these gifts are delivered to the individual by the laying on of hands, and by spoken, prophetic words that are heard and witnessed by all. Remember, a prophecy is a license to pray specifically concerning the revelation brought by that prophecy. Timothy is reminded not to forget the gift and that day and those words that were uttered, for by these words, he is able to war against all hindrances that the thief will bring, doubt and fear...and indolent forgetfulness. A gift can be neglected, but that same gift can be stirred up and exercised. Think of a promise you once heard. Isn't today a good day to remind yourself of that promise, and to return to prayer?

There is a doctrine in the church that the gift of prophecy "is not for today..." It is not in the purview of one footnote to dispel this falsehood which comes often from a pastor's own background, culture and traditions; and a total misunderstanding of the gift itself. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14 that a prophecy is given to the church for three purposes: edification, exhortation and comfort. The church has been known to forget this, and to suggest that prophecy is like fortune telling. When you read the prophets of old, it's easy to see that when the future is foreseen, the purpose of that word is not to foretell...but to prepare believers, and to comfort them in their fears. No one believes, pretends or teaches that edification, exhortation and comfort have lost their place in the church today. Many refuse to ascribe inspired words to the Holy Spirit Who has inspired them for the specific purpose of edifying the church. Some have learned to fear the word prophecy, yet when the gift is lost by our dogma and traditions, we hobble the church in that very arm by which she has been equipped to prepare and equip the saints for the work of service Pastor Mark is speaking of.

For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the SOAP (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) method to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Acts 20:30-31

Tuesday: 1 Timothy 6:3-4

Wednesday: 1 Timothy 6:5-7

Thursday: 1 Timothy 4:7-8

Friday: 1 John 2:18-19

Saturday: 1 Timothy 4:12-14