

Biblical Leadership: A Study of 1st Timothy  
Lesson 9 “How To Keep People From Falling Away”

I. Introduction - We are in a series on *1st Timothy*, which is a letter Paul wrote to Timothy in approximately 62 A.D. after he installed him as the pastor of the church in Ephesus.

A. This is personal letter, Paul wrote to mentor Timothy as Timothy took over one of the most significant churches in the 1st century (about 7 years after the revival that started the church). Paul wrote both to speak directly into Timothy’s life and also teach him how to address challenges the church was having (doctrinal, prayer, women, leadership, and how people handled money.)

B. We are called to make spiritual sons like Paul did with Timothy. Replication is the key to saturation.

II. How To Keep From Falling Away - Tonight we are going to study *1 Timothy 4:1-5* and learn a key leadership lesson about how to keep people on your team from falling away. As we study, we are going to see that the doctrine of demons will cause people to fall away. What will surprise us, is what the doctrine of demons is. It’s probably not what you think.

A. **1 Timothy 4:1-5**

1. *Verse 1* Depart from the faith means people can lose their salvation. They don’t lose it like we lose car keys, but we can renounce our faith.

a. **Matthew 24:10-13** The offended heart is the breeding ground of deception, which causes people to fall away/not endure.

b. **Hebrews 10:26-29, 36** The writer of *Hebrews* was writing to encourage people to not go under the law. Sin wilfully, means to reject Jesus and trust our good works to earn salvation.

c. We saw earlier that offense causes people to give heed to deceptive spirits. **What is the doctrine of demons? It’s not what you think.**

**We’ll see below.**

2. *Verse 2* Searing our conscience with a hot iron carries the idea of being beyond feeling. This can happen to people who willfully sin and believe lies over time. In context, it is false teachers who are doing this and teaching lies to others. Paul was warning Timothy about false teachers who would speak lies in hypocrisy (proclaim keeping the law but they didn’t do it). **Remember Acts 20:28-30.**

3. While there are many doctrines of demons, the two Paul cites are related to legalism/asceticism (not getting married and abstaining from foods to earn favor with God). Most people think of new age/witchcraft/ as a doctrine of demons. They typically don’t think of legalism, but that is the context. Jesus told the Pharisees, “You are of your father the devil” in **John 8:44.**

a. Why is legalism so harmful? It misrepresents the nature of God. God put it on the inside of us to want to eat food and get married so when we

are told that is sin, it confuses our heart. We know these things are good, but when we are told God doesn't want us to have that which He wants us to have, people end up rejecting Him and leaving the faith.

b. **1 Corinthians 2:12** God gives us His spirit to show us what we can have, not what we can't have.

4. *Verse 4* Now any food can be eaten as long as we receive it with thanksgiving. This passage totally reveals the change of the dietary laws of the Old Testament. They were all shadows, or pictures, of New Testament realities that find their fulfillment in Christ.

a. **Colossians 2:16-17** - Under the law, God used clean and unclean foods to symbolize the differences between the Jews and Gentiles. In Christ, we are all one. This means we can eat bacon - lol.

5. *Verse 5* The new covenant and prayer can sanctify that which used to harm us. In context, this is talking about food, but when we pray new covenant promises over ourselves God can turn situations that should harm us (enemies smearing our reputation - ex: Joseph. Sickness - John G. Lake example).

III. Conclusion - Great leaders keep the message simple (finished work of Christ) and ensure this message is communicated throughout the church/organization. This keeps people from getting deceived and falling away.

#### IV. Discussion Questions

1. What was your top takeaway from this teaching?
2. Why is legalism so seductive?
3. What areas in your life do you struggle with legalism? What are passages you can meditate to obtain God's perspective and be set free?
4. Have you ever known someone who walked away from Christ? If so, what led to that?
5. What are your favorite Old Testament types and shadows of Jesus and why?