

W O M E N ' S B I B L E S T U D Y

Equipped

F O R T H E F I G H T

Keep It Real!

1 Timothy 4:1-7

Lesson 5

Since false teachers had invaded the Ephesian church, it was important for Paul to remind Timothy and his congregation of the characteristics of a true minister. Above all, a real minister must be preaching the Word. Pastors can be busy performing weddings, officiating funerals, visiting the sick, counseling the downhearted, helping the homeless or traveling all over the world. All of these activities are good and wholesome, but none of them should replace his responsibility to teach the Word of God. Paul makes it clear to young Timothy that his greatest responsibility is to study and teach the scriptures and to spend time in prayer.

As an authentic minister of God, Paul tells Timothy not to waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales but to instead focus on training himself to be godly. Athleticism and physical fitness were highly valued by the ancient Greek and Roman cultures. Paul exhorts Timothy to put the same effort and commitment into his pursuit of godliness that others put into their athletic training. While bodily exercise has its benefits in this life, godly exercise is beneficial during this life and into eternity.

Just like the early believers, we are called to be authentic Christians who live out God's Word. This world is full of fake things: fake news and knowledge, fake diets and disciplines, fake people and pastors, fake politicians and preachers – you name it and someone can produce a phony look alike. In the midst of all this fake stuff, you and I can choose to be real. Not perfect, but real. We can choose to live according to God's Word so that when people look at us they will see the love of Jesus and know that He is real.

Open your Bible and begin with a word of prayer

This Week's Scripture: 1 Timothy 4:1-7

"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,²speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,³forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.⁴For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving;⁵for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. ⁶If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. ⁷But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness." NKJV

This Week's Memory Verse:

"If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed."

1 Timothy 4:6

1. What does verse 1 of this week's scripture say will happen to some in the latter times?

a. What exhortation about the spirits is given in 1 John 4:1 and what are we commanded to do?

b. According to 1 John 4:2-3, how do we test spirits? _____

c. What encouragement is given in 1 John 4:4? _____

d. Does this verse bring you comfort? Why or why not? _____

“Religion is man’s quest for God; the gospel is the Savior God seeking lost men. Religion originates on earth; the gospel originated in heaven. Religion is man-made; the gospel is the gift of God. Religion is the story of what a sinful man tries to do for a holy God; the gospel is the story of what a holy God has done for sinful men. Religion is good views; the gospel is good news.”

– Roy Gustafson (1915-2002)

2. What are the characteristics of deceiving spirits, according to verses 1b-3? _____

Group Discussion

Have you seen evidence of deceiving spirits in some churches today? If so, how does 1 Peter 3:15-16 say we should react? _____

“They will say it is wrong to be married and wrong to eat certain foods. But God created those foods to be eaten with thanks by faithful people who know the truth. Since everything God created is good, we should not reject any of it but receive it with thanks.” 1 Timothy 4:3-4 NLT

3. Given that whatever God creates is good, how did Paul address this issue about food in Romans 14:1-3? _____

- a. What did Jesus say about judging in Matthew 7:1-5? _____

“How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in your life you will have been all of these.”

– George Washington Carver (1864-1943)

4. Paul finishes this portion of scripture by stating that we are to resist “old wives’ fables” or tales, which are superstitions or traditional beliefs that are considered incorrect. What draws people away from God to follow after fables, according to Ephesians 4:17-19?

- a. We are not left to struggle on our own because God’s Word gives us the solution to victorious Christian living. Read Ephesians 4:20-24 and answer the following questions.

- What are we to put off (v. 22)? _____
- What are we to renew (v. 23)? _____
- What are we to put on (v. 24)? _____

- b. What do these commands mean to you personally? _____
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5. This portion of scripture ends with a command to “exercise yourself toward godliness”. To exercise means to engage in physical activity to sustain or improve health. Therefore, to exercise our spiritual lives means to work at it. What does Isaiah 40:30-31 say to keep us strong in the faith and do these verses encourage you? _____
