

## The Four D's of False Teachers

I Timothy 6:3-5

### I. INTRODUCTION: I

- I. **2** In this lesson we want to discuss an unsavory, but necessary topic: The four D's of false teachers.
  - A. **3** These things are not pleasant to say or hear; but absolutely necessary if we would imitate the apostle Paul and teach the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27; Jude 3).
  - B. Discussion of such unsavory topics is critical in order for us to achieve spiritual maturity (I Cor. 3:1-3: i.e., move beyond "*babes in Christ*"; milk vs. solid food).
2. Often those proclaiming truth are slandered (e.g., Paul was slandered: **2 Cor. 10:10**: "*For his letters, they say, 'are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.'*").
  - A. While Paul was being slandered, false teachers were allowed free reign to spread their evil influence (**2 Cor. 11:13-15**: "*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. I 4 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. I 5 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.*").
  - B. Some brethren, it seems, are just too weak and squeamish to face the truth that false teachers and teaching are real; false teachers are constantly "on the prowl" and actively seeking to seduce followers of truth (I Pet. 5:8).
3. Sadly, some brethren, are willing to show greater patience, tolerance and acceptance of false teachers than teachers of truth!
4. These things ought not to be so (**2 Cor. 11:4**: "*For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted — you may well put up with it!*"; **Rom. 16:17**: "*Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.*"; **Jude 3**: "*Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.*").
5. I have seen preachers who boldly and plainly stood for the truth and clearly denounced error and they were accused by brethren as being the "troublemaker" (e.g., Ron Halbrook).
  - A. It reminds me of Elijah and the wicked king Ahab (**I Kgs. 18:17**: "*Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, 'Is that you, O troubler of Israel?'*").
  - B. The very opposite should be the case, accept the teacher of the truth and reject the teacher of falsehood (**I Tim. 6:3-5**: "*If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, 4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, 5 useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.*").
6. We must know the effects false teachers and their false doctrine have on the body of Christ; the four D's of false teachers.

### II. DISCUSSION:

#### I. **4** Deception:

**2 Cor. 11:13-15**: "*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. I 4 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. I 5 Therefore it is no*

great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”

- A. We must not be caught off guard; false teachers don't self-identify! They don't wear a name tag: John Doe, False Teacher!
- (1) On the contrary, they appear as ministers of righteousness; Jesus described them well: “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.” (Matt. 7:15)
  - (2) They use deceptive words that corrupt the word of God and the souls of men (**2 Cor. 4:1-2**: “Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. 2 But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.”; **2 Cor. 2:17**: “For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.”).
  - (a) False teachers use deceit to fool the otherwise faithful (**Eph. 4:14-15**: “that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.”).
  - (b) False teachers want you to think they are your best friend, but in reality they are your worst enemy; they don't have your best interests at heart! **Matt. 7:15-20**
  - (c) False teachers don't boldly come in the front door identifying themselves, they slip in secretly hoping to escape notice (**Jude 4**: “For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.”).
  - (d) False teachers have no intention of helping you, their goal is to exploit you (**2 Pet. 2:3**: “By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.”).
- B. We must put the doctrine of every teacher to the test of Scripture (Acts 17:11; **1 Jn. 4:1**: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”; **1 Jn. 4:6**: “We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”; church at Ephesus, **Rev. 2:2**: “I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;”; **Eph. 5:6-7**: “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not be partakers with them.”).

## 2. **5** Destruction:

**2 Pet. 2:1-2**: “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.”; **2 Pet. 2:15**: “They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;”; **2 Pet. 2:19**: “While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.”

- A. False teachers are self-destructive (**2 Pet. 3:16**: “but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet.”).
- B. But they also destroy those who accept their error (**2 Pet. 2:1-2**: “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in

destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.”; **2 Tim. 2:16-18**: “But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. 17 And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, 18 who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.”; (the church is harmed, **Acts 20:29-30**: “For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.”).

- C. False teachers destroy the good influence of truth (**2 Pet. 2:2**: “And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.”); Truth is blasphemed and discounted, cf. **Titus 2:7-8**: “in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, 8 sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.”).
- D. So we must be ever vigilant and strive diligently to grow in the knowledge of truth (**2 Pet. 3:17-18**: “You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”).

### 3. **6** Devour:

**Matt. 7:15**: “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.”

- A. They covet you for themselves, not you for the truth's sake (**Gal. 6:12-13**: “As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. 13 For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.”; **Col. 2:4**: “Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.”; **Col. 2:8**: “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.”).

- (1) Regardless of how “nice” false teachers appear to be, we must never forget their real motives (**Rom. 16:18**: “For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.”).
- (2) The means of this devouring (**2 Pet. 2:3**: “And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”):
  - (a) The tool of their trade is “feigned words”: The Greek word from which we get “feigned” is *plastos*; the word we recognize in English as “plastic”; it means molded, i.e., by implication artificial, fabricated (Strong & Vlné).
  - (b) They teach with words suiting the occasion of their covetousness (not with words that suit the need of the hearers; totally the opposite of teachers of truth like Paul, **1 Thess. 2:5**: “For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness — God is witness.”; **Acts 20:20**: “how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house,”).

- B. **7** We cannot sit idly by and let their false teaching go unchallenged...we have to do something! Their mouths must be stopped! **Titus 1:10-11**: “For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, 11 whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.”

- (1) Withstand with the truth (**2 Cor. 11:4**: “For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted — you may well put up with it!”).
- (2) Contend for the faith (Jude 3).
- (3) See the battle clearly (**2 Cor. 10:3-5**: “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,”; **Eph. 6:10-12**: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”).
- (4) Must identify false teachers (**2 Tim. 2:16-18**: “But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. 17 And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, 18 who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.”).
- (5) We must deliver false teachers to Satan (**1 Tim. 1:18-20**: “This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, 19 having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, 20 of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.”; **Rom. 16:17**: “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”).
- (6) Finally, we must turn away from them (**1 Tim. 6:3-5**: “If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, 4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, 5 useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.”).

#### 4. **8** Divide:

**Rom. 16:17-18**: “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. 18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.”

##### A. False teachers cause division where unity should exist (**1 Cor. 1:10-13**).

- (1) The person responsible for division is the one who teaches contrary to truth, not the one who defends truth (1 Kgs. 18:17; **Rom. 16:17**: “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.”; **1 Jn. 2:19**: “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.”).
- (2) We must always be pressing for unity, but never at the expense of truth (**Eph. 4:3**: “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”).

##### B. We repeat, but we must mark false teachers (Rom. 16:17).

- (1) They must be specifically identified and their false teaching must be challenged so the truth can limit their sphere of influence and protect innocent souls (**Matt. 16:6**: “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.”).

- (2) Refuse the factious man (**Titus 3:10-11**: “*Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, I I knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.*”).

### III. CONCLUSION:

1. Make no mistake, false teaching is ubiquitous! Islam, Catholicism, denominationalism, liberalism, plan of salvation, work, worship, organization of the church, “contemporary” worship, etc., etc.
2. Is battling false teaching pleasant? No! Is battling false teaching necessary? Yes!
  - A. Paul described the church as “*the pillar and ground of the truth*” (1 Tim. 3:15); hence, the church supports and provides a foundation for the truth.
  - B. That being the case, if we claim to be the one true church Jesus built (Matt. 16:18) we have the solemn and serious obligation to support the truth by battling error whenever and wherever it rears its ugly head!
3. If we are not willing to see the effects of false teachers and withstand them, we will be their victims and join them in eternal destruction (**2 Thess. 2:10-12**: “*and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. I I And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, I 2 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*”).

Adapted from a sermon (*The Effects of False Teachers*) by Joe Price.