

# The Christian Arsenal

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## 1 TIMOTHY 4:1-16

Last week **chapter 3** ended with a wonderful hymn of praise to the Lord Jesus Christ. But, today we see a dramatic change of thought. Paul turns from praising the Lord Jesus Christ to condemning folks who have fallen away from the faith.

2 Timothy 4:1-5...

What does Paul mean when he says that folks will fall away from the faith?

This phrase “fall away” in the Greek means “to depart from”... “to remove oneself from the position originally occupied to another place.” This is the definition of an apostate.

And at least two Greek scholars I read this past week agree that this falling away doesn't refer to the false teachers who are teaching but to the folks in the church who will follow the false teachers.

Other commentators I read this week seem to believe Paul is referring to the ones who are teaching false doctrine.

I believe it can be applied either way...

Well, what is an apostate? Does an apostate really know God? Is an apostate saved at one time in his life and then lost? Has he been in the family of God at one time and then chosen to leave the family of God?

What can be said about all the folks who come from solid churches and go into Mormonism? Did you know that many, many Baptists do that every year? What does this mean?

I believe the Lord Jesus Christ gave us a clear example of an apostate...in fact in this example He even used the same verb.

In the parable of the sower, the Lord Jesus said that some will hear the gospel and it will be like seed that falls on soil that has a bed of rock right below the surface: “Those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation **fall away.**”

When Jesus used the words “fall away” they are the same words for “fall away” that Paul used in this chapter.

Falling away isn't anything new...folks have fallen away from the faith for a long, long time.

When you read through the books of the Old Testament we see many apostates... There was a king named Amaziah in the days of the kings of Israel and the Bible says, “he did right in the sight of the Lord, yet not with a whole heart.”

King Amaziah's religion was **external**. In his heart, King Amaziah didn't know God and he went into idolatry.

In fact **2 Chronicles** says this:

“Now it came about after Amaziah came from slaughtering the Edomites that he brought the gods of the sons of Seir, set them up as his gods, bowed down before them, and burned incense to them.”

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And at the close of King Amaziah's life the Bible says:

"Amaziah turned away from following the Lord..."

We saw the same thing with King Saul. He started out with God's hand upon him, but he ended up without God's blessing. WHY? Was God unfaithful to Saul? NO! Saul was unfaithful to God! He fell away!

**What an epitaph!!! "Here lies an apostate!"**

The New Testament has its share of apostates, as well. **Hymenaeus** and **Alexander** and others were a part of the church at Ephesus, but Paul said they had suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.

When we get to **2 Timothy** in a few weeks, we'll see **Demas** did the same thing. We'll see that **Demas** left because he loved this present world. We know that **Judas** did the same thing.

John MacArthur gave a very good description of the apostate:

"It refers to those who come very close to the truth that saves, only to leave."

The Apostle John said, "**They went out from us because they were not of us.**"

An apostate isn't someone struggling to find Jesus.

An apostate is someone who knows truth.

An apostate has been in the church long enough to know the plan of salvation.

An apostate may have even walked the aisle of the church and been baptized.

An apostate may have prayed the right prayer and said the right words.

An apostate knows Jesus, but Jesus doesn't know him.

An apostate never made a heart decision to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul tells us in the book of **Romans** that not only must **confession be in the mouth, but belief also must be in the heart!**

**We've all heard the little story of the little boy who was made to go sit in the corner because he had misbehaved. And he said, "I may be sitting down and being still on the outside, but I'm up running around on the inside."**

**A person may be doing all the right things and saying all the right things on the outside, but in his heart, something different is going on! And sooner or later, what is going on inside him will show.**

Apostates are folks who "profess" to know Jesus Christ...they **profess** Him, but they don't **possess** Him and He doesn't **possess** them.

Let me just say this...

Many times when professing Christians fall away, other Christians, true Christians are "shocked." They are disappointed and their faith may even be shaken.

But we need to remember...this is a fulfillment of Scripture! **Verse 1: "But the Spirit explicitly says..."**

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And even though we know it will happen, we are not to accept known false teachers complacently into our pulpits or our Sunday School classes because these apostates will cause folks to fall away from the truth they've heard. We're to guard against it!

Let's look at what Paul says about these folks...

## 1) They are energized by Satan...verse 1...

Ultimately, these folks lay aside the truth they've heard from the word of God and they embrace deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons...

## 2) They are hypocrites...verse 2...

These folks preach their lies in a subtle way...that's how they got into our churches. If they preached blatant heresy to begin with, we could spot them, couldn't we? But, they mix just enough truth so that they sound good!

And they do everything they can to lead others astray. They're not content to be unfaithful to the truth of God's Word...they want others to do the same.

They do everything they can to control. Why? Because they have never surrendered themselves to the control of the Lord!

And Paul mentions a "seared conscience." We mentioned this a couple of weeks ago...how we Americans have become desensitized to what television and the movies dish out.

I read of a study that found that children who repeatedly watch violence on TV will grow up to be violent.

Isn't that amazing? I could have told them that and saved them a pile of money! Our society has become immoral and violent and uncaring and ungodly because the conscience of our society has become seared as with a branding iron!

## 3) They deny God's Word...verse 3-5...

These folks were forbidding marriage and advocating abstaining from certain foods. These were things God had created and ordained.

God ordained marriage. God created marriage as a sacred institution.

Marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman. Some folks are single by choice. Some folks are single by no choice of their own. But, marriage is not to be forbidden because of the warped and perverted teaching of an apostate!

And God gave us food to eat...

Now, some foods are not good for us. As we get older, our body cannot tolerate some foods that we ate when we were younger. But, in the book of **Mark**, Jesus declared *all foods* clean...**Mark 7:19**. And in the book of **Acts**, God went to great lengths to teach Peter that *what God declares holy, is no longer to be considered unholy*...**Acts 10:14**.

**Listen, we're going to have tares mixed with the wheat in the church. One day, the Lord Jesus will take care of that.**

**EX: Wednesday night**...Bro. Roy Guenin said he was a little concerned about what folks would think of him...and he said something like: *"The wheat will be sweet and who cares about the tares?"*

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We don't know if the person sitting behind us or in front of us or beside us is a tare. God does! In the meantime, we're to guard against these folks who profess Jesus but do not possess Jesus from teaching and preaching in our churches.

**Well, let's move on...**

In **verses 6-16** we see Paul giving Timothy a pep talk. These verses are full of **encouragement, instruction, exhortation** and in fact, these verses are really a "crash course" on how to be "a man of God" or "a woman of God"!

Verse 6...

First of all we see that God's people need to be warned about false doctrine and religious apostasy.

I read this past week this excerpt from a work entitled **Autobiography in Five Short Chapters...**

**Chapter 1:** I walk down the street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I fall in. It isn't my fault. It takes forever to find a way out.

**Chapter 2:** I walk down the same street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I pretend I don't see it. I fall in again...but it isn't my fault. It still takes a long time to get out.

**Chapter 3:** I walk down the same street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I see it is there. I still fall in... My eyes are open. I know where I am. It is my fault. I get out immediately.

**Chapter 4:** I walk down the same street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I walk around it.

**Chapter 5:** I walk down another street.

What I'm trying to say is this. **Our pastor has a responsibility to guard us against false teaching.** Paul is writing Timothy and Timothy is doing the work of a pastor.

But, Peter tells us in **2 Peter** that God has given all believers all we need for life and godliness. And folks, if we come under false teaching and believe it...**it might be shame on them the first time**, but if we **keep** falling into a deep hole in the sidewalk when it comes to falling for false teaching by apostates, **it will be shame on us!**

God has given you and me His precious words of the faith and sound doctrine. God has given you and me His dear Holy Spirit to teach us and guide us around all the sidewalk holes. And it's ultimately up to you and me to make sure the teaching we believe lines up with this Word!!!!

But, not only do God's people need to be warned about false doctrine and apostasy, but God's people also ought to practice living by the Word of God!

Verses 7-10...

Paul shifts here through the rest of the chapter into a series of verbs that tell us that godly living should be our lifestyle. A godly lifestyle takes discipline. We don't "live godly" when we "feel like it"... Feelings are fickle. We're to diligently strive to find God's will for our lives and then live within that will.

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I read one time...“Most people don’t want to know the will of God in order to **do** it; they want to know the will of God in order to **consider** it.”

Look at **verse 10...**

This verse at first glance can be confusing. The Lord Jesus came to save all men. Not all men are saved, but all men can be saved! Yet, He is called the Savior of all men...**especially of believers.**

Let me tell you what I think this verse means...

The blood of the Lord Jesus is sufficient to cover the sins of all mankind. We know that’s true. There is no one outside the possibility of salvation. However, man must call upon the Lord to save him.

Even though God’s saving grace is available to all men...some accept it, but some men don’t!

But, men experience the grace of God every day! Think about it! Does any man deserve anything more than judgment? Do I? Do you? No.

But, lost men every day are walking around enjoying life...being a success...being blessed by God in having great families...beautiful children.

**See, God causes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust.**

Unbelievers experience God’s goodness and mercy in that they are not killed instantly the moment they first sin.

God’s grace is poured out upon them and

God’s invitation is extended to them and

**God sends His messengers to them over and over and over.**

And God’s salvation is available to them...

But, **the responsibility is theirs to accept salvation.**

I love the way J. Vernon McGee makes things so plain. He really does put the cookies on the bottom shelf...

**Let me read...**

“They say that a plane leaves the Los Angeles International Airport every minute, and I could get on any one of them. All I need to do is get a ticket and get on the plane. It’s a plane for everybody, you see, but not everybody will take it. Christ is the Savior of all men, but only those who believe will be saved.”

And we need to remember that we must read and believe the whole counsel of God!

1 John 2:2...

“...He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also **for those of the whole world...**”

But **John 3:16** tells us it’s the “**whosoever**” who **believe** who will not perish but have everlasting life.

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## Read verse 10 again...

Before we leave this subject, let me read to you a passage in *Isaiah* and listen to it with **verse 10** in mind...

“For He said, ‘Surely, they are My people, sons who will not deal falsely.’ So He became their Savior. In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence **saved** them; in His love and in His mercy He **redeemed** them; and He **lifted them** and **carried** them all the days of old. But **they** rebelled and **grieved** His Holy Spirit; therefore, He turned Himself to become their enemy, He fought against them.” *Is. 63:8-10*

God was Israel's Savior! He provided for them. He delivered them from their enemies. He was their Savior, however, in a **temporal** sense. But, it's clear from the end of the passage that we just read that He was not their Savior in the **eternal** sense! Not because of **His** unfaithfulness, but because **they** rebelled against Him!

And by the same token, God is the Savior of **all men** in the **temporal** sense. He does not send all men to hell because they are sinners. He gives them opportunity after opportunity to come to Him. But, He is the Savior especially for believers in the spiritual sense that they are delivered from sins's penalty forever!!!

**God has done His part! God sent His Son! God provided a way for all men to be saved! What more could He have done?**

**Each person has the responsibility to make sure that God not only is His Savior in the temporal sense, but is also His Savior in the spiritual, eternal sense.**

Well, let's quickly look at the remainder of this chapter in the time we have left...

Verses 11-16...

Look at the verbs used here... “discipline or train (v. 7); labor, strive (10); prescribe or command and teach (v. 12); show yourself as an example 9-12); and so on...

Paul is saying,

“Timothy, these folks who are in your care need to see a man of God leading them...a man who is disciplined for one purpose... the purpose of godliness.

Timothy, these folks have already seen plenty of the **other** kinds of leaders. **You** be a godly leader, Timothy. That godliness not only holds promise for this life but also for the life to come.”

And it's tempting for you and me to say, “Well, I'm glad Paul was talking to Timothy and not to me.” But, God has called **us** to godliness, too, in every area of our lives. I believe as believers we should be examples of godly living! God has said, **“Be holy as I am holy.”**

Paul tells Timothy to give special attention to the public reading of God's Word. Paul tells Timothy to exhort and to teach.

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*And since all pastors and ministers don't stay the course, Paul admonishes Timothy to remain faithful. Paul said, "Don't let that spiritual gift that God has given you be laid aside...don't neglect it."*

**What a mentor Paul was to young Timothy!** Don't you know there were times when Timothy would pull out this letter and just reread it...  
times when he was **discouraged**...  
times when he was **weary in well-doing**...  
times when he was feeling too **young** and **timid** and **ill equipped** to do the work at hand...  
times when he was **just lonely for Paul's voice**?

And Paul tells Timothy in **verse 14** to not forget that he has been set apart for the ministry...that he had had loving hands laid on him.

Paul had been called into the ministry by divine revelation on the road to Damascus. We're not told how Timothy had received his call, but at some point he had received it and had been ordained into the ministry.

And Paul brings this to his remembrance! He tells Timothy to **take pains** with these things...to **be absorbed** in these things...to **progress** in these things...to **pay close** attention to himself and his teaching so that those who hear him will be saved.

**What a charge! What a privilege we have to be God's children! We can't all be ministers who stand behind the pulpit, but we can all be His human instruments in the wonderful work of bringing folks in and building folks up in His kingdom.**

And I believe the bottom line of this passage today is that believers should not remain where they are. There's work to be done. And I want to ask you...

Are you guilty of being a timid Timothy?

**Are you content to simply stay where you are spiritually?**

Do you ever wonder why you aren't growing and progressing in your Christian walk?

Could it be that God has given you a spiritual gift and He has called you to use that gift for His glory and you're reluctant to do it? Folks, we're not getting any younger...the work you planned to do for the Lord must be done soon!

**God never calls us to do something that He hasn't equipped us to do!** God had called Timothy to preach and to pastor and Paul had to encourage him, but only in glory will you and I find out the full extent of Timothy's ministry.

Let me just say this...

The Christian walk is just about the only area of life that I can think of that  
if you're not **growing**  
and if you're not **progressing**  
and if you're not **advancing**  
then, you're probably **going backwards!**

Why? Because the enemy will come in and lead us into more and more **complacency** and less and less **commitment!**

And I don't believe we have to be preachers for all these principles to apply to us! I don't believe the Holy Spirit wrote these pastoral epistles for preachers exclusively. **I believe all these principles can apply to our own lives.**

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*“All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness.”*