

PASTORAL GLEANINGS ON GUARDING OUR HEARTS

I. Overcoming A Tolerance For Extrabiblical Thinking

(1 Timothy 1:4b et al.)

I. Introduction

- A. In 1 Timothy 1:4b NIV, Paul warned Timothy about teachers who were devoting themselves to “myths and endless genealogies” that promoted “controversial speculations rather than advancing God’s work.”
- B. This involved not only the departure from sound teaching as directed in 1 Timothy 1:3, what most churches generally strive to do, but also a departure from upright *thinking*, a great problem in today’s churches.
- C. We view the pastoral epistles on this subject for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

II. Overcoming A Tolerance For Extrabiblical Thinking, 1 Timothy 1:4b et al.

- A. We need to overcome a tolerance for the mixing of Biblical truth with fiction about Biblical passages:
 1. The “endless myths and genealogies” in 1 Timothy 1:4 were “man-made supplements to the law of God (see verse 7), mere myths or fables (2 Tim. 4:4), old wives’ tales (1 Tim. 4:7) that were definitely Jewish in character (Titus 1:14) . . .” (Wm. Hendriksen, N. T. Com.: Exp. of the Pastoral Epistles, 1974, p. 58)
 2. To explain, “from early times the rabbis would ‘spin their yarns’ . . . on the basis of what they considered some ‘hint’ supplied by the Old Testament. They would take a name from a list of pedigrees (for example, From Genesis, 1 Chronicles . . .), and expand it into a nice story. Such interminable embroideries on the inspired record were part of the regular bill of fare in the synagogue and were subsequently deposited in written form in that portion of *The Talmud* which is known as *Haggadah*,” Ibid., p. 59.
 3. “In our own day the same error occurs, and in many different forms . . . But one who begins to mix sacred history with fiction . . . tampers with the very essence and purpose of the inspired record.” (Ibid., p. 59-60)
 4. [A major illustration is the teaching that Noah was an evangelist who preached to get more people than just his family to repent and enter the ark to be saved from the Flood. However, Scripture presents God as telling Noah to build the ark for himself, his family and enough animals to preserve life for the post-Flood world, that the rest of the world of Noah’s day had already been condemned to be destroyed. (Genesis 6:1-8, 13-14, 18-22; 7:1, 15-16) Noah was indeed a preacher of righteousness as 2 Peter 2:5 reports, but he only critiqued his doomed generation – he did not evangelize it. (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 871)]
- B. We need to overcome a tolerance for multiple interpretations of Scripture that leave hearers with questions:
 1. The Apostle Paul opposed the focus on myths and endless genealogies since they caused “useless speculations” (*ekzetesis*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 239) or “disputes, questioning” (Thayer’s Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1963, p. 195), 1 Timothy 1:4b.
 2. To the contrary, teachers were to advance God’s work by faith to produce love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith, what comes from a dogmatic presentation of the truth! (1 Tim. 1:5 NIV)
 3. The great value of a dogmatic presentation of the truth is seen in Paul’s directive to Titus in Titus 1:6, 9 ESV where Titus was to select elders in every city on Crete who held “firmly to the trustworthy Word as taught, so that” they might “be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.” It is by the clear, dogmatic, affirmative declaration of Biblical truth that hearers can become firmly grounded in that truth that they might be able to lead and to disciple others in that truth.
 4. The means by which a teacher then presents the truth in a dogmatic and also a **correct** way is through means of his reliance on the Holy Spirit of God, 2 Timothy 1:7, 13-14.
 5. [A major illustration is the effort by many to view the “sons of God” who wed women in Genesis 6:2 as Seth’s godly line who wed Cain’s evil daughters. Yet, the “sons of God” phrase elsewhere in the Old Testament almost always refers to angels (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7), and the Genesis 6 context does not fit a reference to Seth’s line. The “sons of God” in Genesis 6:2 must refer to angels, but as a *critique* of demon possessed men who claimed divine origin, what fits archaeological finds of Ugaritic and other nations’ literature and the Genesis 6 context. (Ryrie S. B., KJV, 1978, fn. to Gen. 6:2; B. K. C., O. T., p. 36)

Lesson: We need to overcome extrabiblical thinking by (1) accepting what Scripture alone asserts without any fiction and by (2) not tolerating useless speculations on what the Bible teaches, but by relying on the Holy Spirit, to discern the correct interpretation and assert it dogmatically for edifying listeners.

Application: May we overcome extrabiblical thinking by not mixing Bible truth with fiction or tolerating multiple interpretations through relying on the Holy Spirit’s discernment.