**Acceptable Reactions Toward Apostasy**

*1 Timothy 4*

**Introduction**

1. **1 Timothy 3:14-15** – The church is the pillar and ground of the truth.
   1. Pillars and foundations are essential to the structural integrity of edifices.
   2. The local church is God’s means of supporting the truth, and defending it.
2. **1 Timothy 4:16** – That truth is GREAT.
   1. **Mystery of godliness** – metonymy (effect put for the cause) – truth is to the end of godliness (Godward piety).
   2. **This is GREAT** – in peculiarity (only one), and importance (power of God to salvation).
3. **As great as this truth is, some will depart from it, turning to lies instead. WHAT REACTIONS BY THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH ARE ACCEPTABLE WHEN APOSTASY OCCURS?**
4. Expose Error **(vv. 1-6)**
5. Apostasy is Possible, and Probable
   1. **(v. 1)** – Spirit (HS) ***“expressly”*** (explicitly) says.
      1. Prophecy concerning a certain apostasy. (*Not in symbolic language, but in explicit, plain language – not hard to understand.)*
      2. **Not a matter of IF but WHEN!**
   2. **(v. 3)** – Specific doctrines promoted in the apostasy.
      1. **Coming in the future** – warning for Timothy and brethren.
      2. *Who specifically? – Not stated, however, these are two characteristics of the Catholic church. (Clergy – forbidden to marry)*
   3. **This continues to be an ever-present danger today:**
      1. **Biblical doctrine of apostasy** – **cf. Hebrews 2:1-4** (rejection of truth); **3:12-14** (departing in disobedience)
      2. ***“[look] carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God” (Hebrews 12:15).*** (Like Esau – profane person)
      3. Those who deny this deny irrefutable truth.
   4. **This needs to be understood as a possibility, and likelihood even within the Lord’s body – People can, and will apostatize. Matter of WHEN, not IF.**
6. Error MUST be Exposed
   1. **(v. 6)** – Timothy is already nourished in the faith and doctrine, but would CONTINUE to be if he taught brethren about the coming apostasy.
   2. ***“these things:”***
      1. **(v. 3**) – the specific falsities.
      2. **(v. 1)** – nature of the doctrines espoused. (Deceptive, and demonic)
      3. **(v. 2)** – people promoting are hypocritical, and closed off to truth (seared conscience).
      4. (**v. 3)** – Forbidding things made acceptable by God:
         1. ***“by those who believe and know the truth”*** – not them only, but they especially understand the lawfulness of such – know truth.
         2. ***“sanctified by the word of God”*** – they are lawful because God’s word says so.
   3. **When error is followed, and promoted, APOSTASY ensues. We must understand the severity of such:**
      1. **1 Timothy 3:16** – It was a departure from the GREAT mystery of godliness.
      2. Thus, the outcome is eternal death.
      3. **WE CANNOT IGNORE SUCH THINGS. PASSIVITY IS UNACCEPTABLE.**
      4. ***“contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3)***.
7. Exercise Toward Godliness **(vv. 7-11)**
8. Reject that which is not from God
   1. The specific apostasy would come in the FUTURE. **Until then, Timothy needed to continually establish and prepare himself for it, and other problems** – *namely by dealing with current problems by remaining faithful to the truth.*
   2. **(v. 7)** – Reject fables – ***mythos*** – fabricated narratives from the minds of men, NOT GOD.
   3. **These things may not be inherently false in their message – often promoted a moral virtue.**
   4. **HOWEVER, they were not to be bothered, because they are not inspired, thus do not amount to godliness.**
   5. **Godliness** – Godward piety.
   6. **Exercise** – word often used among Greeks – physical exercise. (*Paul’s point is spiritual exertion to growth in godliness, and toward godliness.*) 🡪
9. Exercise Toward Godliness
   1. **(v. 8)** – ***“exercise”*** brings this point out naturally.
      1. **Physical exercise** – beneficial to a small extent.
      2. **Godliness** – beneficial now, and in the life hereafter. (**NOTE: 3:16** – *godliness is inherently connected with the word of God – to exercise toward godliness is to study and practice God’s word.*)
   2. **(vv. 10-11)** – That is what Paul, and Timothy, and all faithful Christians are working toward, and suffering for.
      1. Not adherence to, and growth in a pretend narrative…
      2. **…rather, trust in God, and obedience to God.**
      3. **(v. 11)** – Teach THESE THINGS – the things which come from God. THE TRUTH.
10. Execute Doctrine **(vv. 12-16)**
11. Implement the Doctrine in Your Life
    1. **(v. 12)** – It would not be enough for Timothy to teach the truth, he must live it himself.
       1. **Youth** – many youthful lusts to bring reproach upon the youth.
       2. **Abstain from these things, and do what is right** – thus avoid being despised. (At least being the cause of others’ despising you.)
    2. (**vv. 13-15)** – Timothy was to give time to studying God’s word, and filling his mind with it.
       1. **(v. 14)** – the ***“gift”*** is being able to discern between the good and evil doctrines through ***“prophecy”*** – **inspired teaching**. (From Paul, and scripture.)
          1. ***1 Timothy 1:18 – “according to the prophecies which led the way to thee” (ASV).***
          2. *I.e. inspired teaching has gone before you, and it is for you to take and uphold and teach in this warfare.*
          3. ***“with the laying on of the hands of the eldership”*** – i.e. along with – the gift was not given by these means, but in tandem with the appointment to minister in the gospel.
       2. **(v. 15)** – The way in which apostasy is avoided, and error is addressed is by means of the gospel truth. ***“give yourself ENTIRELY TO THEM”***
12. By Doing So You Will Be Saved
    1. **(v. 16)** – The effects of Timothy following such commands would be two-fold beneficial.
    2. **He would save himself** – by obeying God.
    3. **He would save others** – by teaching them to do the same, and being an example of such.

**Conclusion**

1. Apostasy is a REALITY.
2. Men will be led astray by error, and promote it themselves.
3. Those who are faithful to God must act as ***“the pillar and ground of the truth,”*** promoting truth, and defending it against error.
4. **We must understand what is at stake – SOULS – we must not take error and apostasy lightly, but seek to eradicate it.**