



1 Timothy
Contend

Book 3

Contend

1 Timothy

First Timothy is the first of two letters written by the apostle Paul to his young co-worker and close companion, Timothy. At the time this letter was written, Paul was probably in Macedonia, and Timothy was in charge of the work in Ephesus. Timothy was the son of a Greek Gentile father and a devout Jewish mother, named Eunice. Paul wrote 1 Timothy in order to advise his young co-worker, Timothy, concerning issues that were arising at the church in Ephesus.

This letter is a clear call for the church to live out the ethical implications of the gospel in tangible ways. Paul encourages and instructs Timothy as a young leader. He grounds the everyday behaviour of Christians in the gospel. False doctrine was coming into the church in Ephesus, and this was causing behavior which was not compatible with the gospel. Visible change needs to take place in those who believe in Christ. True gospel will always lead to godliness in the life of the believer.

When you receive a letter or an email, do you simply jump to the middle of the document and read that only? Quite unlikely. Remember, this is also a letter written from Paul to Timothy. While it is very important to read through the section of text you are studying each day, it is also important to read through the entire letter as well. If possible, read through the entire book of 1 Timothy in one sitting. Read it for the logic and the flow. Become familiar with it. This will give you a better starting ground to understand the text. Some questions to ask yourself as you read the entire letter:

- Why were these words written to Timothy at this time?
- What is Paul's attitude as he writes the letter?
- Are there any specific details mentioned (or explicit statements) which reveal why the letter is being written?

Then, as you read the specific passages that are indicated in the devotionals, ask yourself how the passage fits into the overall flow of the letter. The fact is that 1 Timothy is a personal letter and we can relate to it in a personal way--first by getting to know the early-church context and then by applying it to our own.

July 6/7

1 Timothy 5:1-16

Sermon Notes:

Day 1 - Read 1 Timothy 5:1-2

1. Why would Paul tell Timothy not to rebuke an older man? What does he give as an alternative? Does this mean an older man cannot be corrected? Explain.

2. When you read verses 1 and 2, what stands out about how we are to treat others?

3. Do we treat our brothers and sisters in the church body as family? Does our Western culture understand this?

4. At the end of verse 2, it says "...in all purity." What does that mean? Why would Paul stress that we treat each other "in all purity"?

Day 2 - Read 1 Timothy 5:3-16

1. It can be helpful at times to look up a verse in a parallel translation to gain understanding of the meaning. Take notice of how verse 3 is translated in 5 different versions:

Honor widows who are truly widows. (ESV)

Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. (NIV)

Honor widows who are widows indeed. (NASB)

Support widows who are genuinely widows. (HCSB)

Take care of any widow who has no one else to care for her. (NLT)

What do you learn about this verse having looked at parallel translations?

2. A primary concern in the church was to identify which widows should be provided for by the church. Why would Paul set boundaries/parameters for the care of widows? Read through verses 3 to 16 and jot down what those parameters were.

3. How is it that someone who is self-indulgent is dead even while they live (verse 6)?

4. Why is the failure to provide for relatives, especially members of one's household, so serious? And why is this worse than an unbeliever? How is this equated with denial of faith?

5. Is providing for family living out the gospel? How and why?

Day 3 - Read 1 Timothy 5:9-15

1. Verses 9-15 list guidelines for determining those who are "truly widows." Why is this important? Is this also important for today?

2. One of the qualifications of a "true widow" is the reputation for good works. What are those good works? List the 5 that are mentioned in verse 10.

3. Why would marriage be an issue for younger widows? How would their passions draw them away from Christ? Look at verse 12.

4. What does it mean to be idle? Why is being idle a problem? What other negative behaviors can it lead to? How can this behavior affect a person's witness to those around them? See also 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12.

5. Is there something you do, or a behavior in your life, that would cause others to question your faith? Take time to bring that before the Lord right now.

Day 4 - Read 1 Timothy 5:14-16

1. We read in verse 14 that we should give the adversary “no occasion for slander.” This continues on with a theme of concern in 1 Timothy about the impact of believers’ actions on the perception of unbelievers. See 1 Timothy 2:2, 3:7, 5:7, and 6:1. Is this still important today? Should it be?

2. “For some have already strayed away after Satan” (verse 15). What does that mean? Have you seen people being led astray? What has pulled them away? What can we do about it?

3. If a widow has relatives who can care for her, does that mean she is not “truly” a widow?

4. Do we as families take care of other family members who struggle to make ends meet? How does our individualistic culture deal with such things?

5. Why is it important that we don’t burden the church if it isn’t necessary?

July 13/14 1 Timothy 5:17-23

Sermon Notes:

Day 1: A Call to Esteem Faithful Church Leadership - 1 Timothy 5:17-18

“Leaders can make or break a church. What makes leadership so solemn a responsibility? {Because} if a church is to continue to exist and to carry out its God-given task, it must support and trust its leaders. For God has ordained that the fellowship of believers be led by people called to that task (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11).”

Timothy was one of those called to the ministry of church leadership. As the pastoral overseer of the Ephesian church, Timothy was charged not only with leading by example in his own shepherding but to engage with Paul’s practical principles for regulating and maintaining church leadership. These are principles that we as a fellowship of believers, i.e., a church body, can also be challenged to engage with and practice.

Paul called Timothy to esteem faithful church leadership; that is, to doubly honor those elders who had remained devoted in their church leadership duties, especially the tasks of preaching and teaching. What did this honor look like when extended to the elders by the Ephesian church? It was two-fold in that it reflected respectful submission to authority as well as remuneration by the believers.

1. If you consider yourself a committed member/attendee of your local church body, do Paul’s words here give you pause to consider whether you view your pastoral leaders with honor?

2. Do you give credence to the idea of esteeming your pastors for the ministry that they do?

3. Do you think all pastors representing all ministries in your church are worthy of double honor or just those who represent the “upfront” ministries like preaching, teaching or leading worship? As you consider Paul’s call to esteem faithful church leaders, what might that look like for you in practice?

Day 2: A Challenge to Stand Against Unfaithful Church Leadership - 1 Timothy 5:19-20

Paul challenged Timothy to stand against unfaithful church leaders: those whose hearts were not devoted to exercising godly leadership within the church. Yet in doing so, Timothy was to exercise restraint and caution; i.e., not letting himself get caught up with gossip and empty accusations directed toward any leader by those who may have had a personal vendetta against them. Only those elders whose behaviour consistently reflected ungodly faith and practice needed to be dealt with publicly.

1. In considering the theme intimated by verse 19, do you find yourself drawn to contributing gossip and empty accusations against a particular church leader you may not like?

2. Conversely, do you find yourself drawn to taking a stand and defending a church leader when you know they are being unfairly accused?

3. Considering Paul's earlier endorsement of church leaders being worthy of double honor, do you feel that it is right for church leaders to then also be held to a higher standard of faith and practice than your own?

Day 3: A Charge to be Faithful in Serving God - 1 Timothy 5:21

In a subtle way, Paul is issuing a charge to Timothy to be faithful in serving God. By the very fact that Paul sets his charge in full view of God, Jesus, and elect angels, lets Timothy know that this is no lightweight subject matter. It is a sobering reminder to Timothy that he “do nothing out of favoritism” and “without partiality” (1 Timothy 5:21, NIV), whether it is measuring out equal honor to all faithful elders who deserve it, and not just those who are favoured, or whether it is taking equally hard discipline stances against all elders, not just those who are unfavoured.

1. Though you may not be called to a church leadership role specifically, do you still take seriously Paul's charge to be faithful in serving God in your local church community, especially as it is “in sight” of God?

2. Consider the following statement: “An awareness of the presence of God in the believing community is a strong inducement to obedient Christian living.” Do you agree or not?

3. Do you think having an awareness of the presence of God in your own life is a strong incentive for you to engage in your local church community?

4. At its base level, do you think Paul's charge to Timothy to be a leader who shows no favoritism and who harbors no partiality comes easy to church leaders in our current culture?

Day 4: A Charge to Use Caution and Care in Ministry - 1 Timothy 5:22-23

On the face of it, Paul's charge to Timothy here seems to warrant a "well, duh" type of response. As the central church leader in Ephesus, it seems quite obvious that the best course of action for him as a ministry leader is to ensure he does not make hasty decisions; that he does not get enticed by others' sin snares and that he commits himself to purity in all areas. By the same token, Paul's advice to Timothy to imbibe in a little wine now and again for the sake of his own health seems rather humorous yet practical! Added together, these mentoring tidbits reflect prudent best practices for Timothy.

1. Reflect on your own church ministry role whether as a paid or lay leader. Do you find yourself making hasty or rash decisions for the sake of "doing ministry" effectively - without stopping to consider the negative ramifications that may come out of that hastiness?

2. Reflect on your own church ministry role, whether as a paid or lay leader. Do you feel a greater urgency to pray God's protection over you and your family because of your role? In other words, do you feel the temptations and attacks of the Enemy more pronounced than if you did not serve God as a leader at all?

3. Consider Paul's mentoring relationship with Timothy, especially as it is seen in verse 22 (church leader caution) and verse 23 (church leader care). If you are a church ministry leader, do you a) have a mentor in your life and b) do you let them speak into your life in any and all areas?

July 20/21 **1 Timothy 5:24-6:2**

Sermon Notes:

Day 1 - Read 1 Timothy 5:24-25

1. How are sins and good deeds alike in this passage?

2. What kind of reputation do you think you have in your church? Is it different from your reputation in the community? Is it different from your reputation at work? Is it different from your reputation at home?

3. Are you nicer to the people you work with or the people you live with? Why? What needs to change?

Day 2 - Read 1 Timothy 6:1-2

At the time Paul wrote his letter to Timothy, slaves made up a large portion of the working population in the Roman Empire. One-third of the inhabitants of Rome were slaves, and they were firmly rooted in the economic system. All slaves were owned by masters. Many slaves engaged in hard labour, but others were clerks, draftsmen, teachers, soldiers, craftsmen, and other types of workers. Some were bound with little freedom of movement or choice, while others could travel, buy, and trade, and some actually received an education.

Even so, slavery must not be considered good or acceptable in terms of Christian ethics. Paul encouraged slaves to obtain their freedom if legally possible (1 Corinthians 7:21), and he condemned the practice of slave trading (1 Timothy 1:10). Slavery is an oppressive system of subjugating people.

Many new believers in the first century were slaves. Paul, in an unexpected reversal, gave them strong words on how to treat their masters.

1. How many commands does Paul give in this section? What are they?

2. Taken together, what type of lifestyle do they comprise?

3. What attitude should slaves have toward their masters? For what purpose?

4. What would this type of attitude look like in your context and setting?

5. What does this communicate about work ethic and attitude?

Day 3 - Read 1 Timothy 6:1-2

1. When we think of slavery, we typically think “human-to-human.” What other types of slavery are there? Please name some.

2. See also:

- Philippians 1:1 - Paul and Timothy are self-described slaves
- 1 Peter 2:16 - “servants” equals slaves
- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - like a slave “You are not your own” because “You have been bought”
- Matthew 6:24 - Jesus described God as our “Master”
- 1 Corinthians 7:22-23

3. Is there ever a time when slavery should be considered a good thing? Why or why not? What’s the difference?

Day 4 - Read 1 Timothy 6:1-2

1. When was the last time we read the word “honor” in 1 Timothy? (Read previous text in 1 Timothy.)

2. How was it used in that context?

3. How is it being used in this context?

4. What’s the connection?

5. Please meditate on the following verses.

Ephesians 6:5-9 (NLT)

5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ. 6 Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. 7 Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. 8 Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free. 9 Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Don't threaten them; remember, you both have the same Master in heaven, and he has no favorites.

Colossians 3:22-25 (NASB)

22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. 23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. 25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

July 27/28 **1 Timothy 6:3-5**

Sermon Notes:

Day 1 - Read 1 Timothy 6:3-5

1. According to verse 3, how can we tell the difference between a false teacher and a true one?

2. What two things must sound doctrine be in accord with? Why is it important that both these things be in agreement?

3. What does a life of godliness have to do with sound doctrine and teaching? How does what we believe impact how we live?

4. Read 1 Corinthians 8:1-3. If knowledge “puffs up,” how do we study the Bible to avoid theological error yet avoid spiritual pride and conceit?

Day 2 - Read 1 Timothy 6:3-5

1. According to verse 4, what motives do false teachers have?

2. What kinds of conduct does a false teacher with these motives exhibit? List some examples of this kind of conduct you have personally seen.

3. Does this mean that all theological controversy is wrong? Explain and use scripture to back up your answer.

4. Why can't we just focus on teaching sound doctrine and not criticize each other? How does sound doctrine promote unity?

Day 3 - Read 1 Timothy 6:3-5

1. How do we know what theological issues are worth fighting for, and which ones are speculation that lead to needless controversy?

2. What does Paul mean by people who are “deprived of mind and deprived of the truth”? Refer back to 1 Timothy 1:7.

3. According to verse 5, what is the core false teaching of this passage? Name some modern equivalents of this teaching.

4. What dangers do we face in pursuing these kinds of teachings?

Day 4 - Read 1 Timothy 6:3-5

1. What other Scripture passages speak of putting eternal things before material things?

2. Why do those who promote the “Prosperity Gospel” have a greater reach today than they had in the past? What tools do they have at their disposal that those in Paul’s day did not have?

3. Is it wrong to offer the gospel as the solution to a person’s needs? Use Scripture to support your answer.

4. In summary, what does true doctrine promote in contrast to what false teaching promotes?

(Sources: ESV Study Bible, Religion for Fun and Profit by Steven J. Cole accessed on Bible.org)

Aug. 3/4 1 Timothy 6:6-10

Sermon Notes:

Day 1 - Read 1 Timothy 6:6

1. Verse 6 starts with the conjunction “but.” What is verse 6 being compared to or contrasted with?

2. What do you think Paul would describe “godliness” as? How would he define “contentment”?

3. Why is contentment worth so much that Paul would say it is worth “great gain”? What actually is “gain” or what is “being gained”?

Day 2 - Read 1 Timothy 6:7-8

1. If we brought nothing into this world, then one could say we can’t claim any of our possessions as our own (1 Timothy 6:7). Why are we tempted to think our possessions are ours?

2. We can’t take anything tangible “out of the world,” but can we take intangibles?

3. Verse 8 states that food plus clothing should lead to contentment. We usually think of the basics in terms of food, clothing, and shelter. Why would one be left out?

4. If we are limited to food and clothing as what we base our contentment on, we therefore cannot base it on a car, house, friends, possessions, resume, reputation, RRSPs, healthy children and so forth. How do you view the latter part of this list? Do you deserve those things? Have you earned them? Are they yours? Why might you be in temporary possession of them?

Day 3 - Read 1 Timothy 6:9

1. 1 Timothy 6:9 talks about the “desire to be rich.” This is not about rich people (yet); it is about the desire to be rich. Does the text say that those who desire to be rich might fall into temptation? What word or phrasing is used?

2. How does a snare operate? Is it always obvious? Does a snare always trip immediately upon entry?

3. This desire leads to other things. The indication is that the desire to be rich will lead to “senseless and harmful desires,” and then proceed on to “ruin and destruction.” The text is not specific here, so could you brainstorm for a few ideas and give some shape to how that might look? What senseless and harmful desires might spring out of the desire to be rich? What would ruin and destruction look like for us in Abbotsford in 2013?

4. Would you say that ruin and destruction come in this life or the next? Perhaps both?

Day 4 - Read 1 Timothy 6:10

1. 1 Timothy 6:10 uses the phrase “the love of money.” Do you think there is any difference compared with the wording in verse 9, “desire to be rich”?

2. Notice how Paul’s use of the word “wandered” conveys a description of the move away from faith. Is the move away from faith deliberate and decisive or more subtle and over time?

3. Who is responsible for the piercing?

4. Contrast these verses with the content of 1 Timothy 6:17-19. Verses 17-19 are directed toward the rich and give an outline of how the rich are to live. There are two things to keep in mind here: a) verses 6-10 are directed to all of us, for we may all desire to be rich, and b) we also need to give consideration to the question of whether we are rich or not. Rich as compared to whom? Our neighbours here in town, our fellow Canadians, or as compared to people in other parts of the world?

Aug. 10/11 **1 Timothy 6:11-16**

Sermon Notes:

Day 1 - Read 1 Timothy 6:11

1. As we read in verse 11, Paul draws a direct and intentional contrast between Timothy and the false teachers from the previous text (“But as for you...”). What things need to be fled from?

2. What are the 6 things that need to be pursued? List each one and explain why each is important to pursue.

3. With the list you have just made in Question No. 2, is there an area that you need to work on and “pursue” more? Spend some time asking God to give you wisdom in how to make this more applicable in your life today.

Day 2 - Read 1 Timothy 6:12

Our theme for Timothy is “Contend.” The dictionary defines contend as:

- struggle to surmount (a difficulty or danger)
- engage in a competition or campaign in order to win or achieve (something)

1. As you’ve been spending time in 1 Timothy, what have been some things you have learned that he has been contending for? You may need to look back and read through 1 Timothy again.

2. What is the result of fighting the good fight? See also 2 Timothy 4:7-8 and Philippians 3:12-14.

3. What does Paul mean when he tells Timothy to “take hold of the eternal life to which you were called” (verse 12)?

4. Is it important that Timothy’s good confession was done in the presence of many witnesses? Is this important for us today as well?

Day 3 - Read 1 Timothy 6:13-14

1. In verse 13, we see Paul giving Timothy a “charge.” What does that mean? There are many times in this letter that Paul charges Timothy. Read 1 Timothy 1:3, 1:5, 1:18, 5:21, 6:13, and 6:17.

2. What was Jesus’ testimony before Pontius Pilate? See Matthew 27:11 and John 18:37. What is important about this testimony?

3. Keeping the commandment is part of the charge. Why would it be important to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach?

4. Are you living in such a manner that neither your personal life nor your ministry would bring any blot on the name of Christ? Why is integrity so important?

Day 4 - Read 1 Timothy 6:14-16

1. Why is it important to be looking ahead to the return of Jesus? How should this affect us? Our lifestyle? Our witness?

2. Verses 15 and 16 are a doxology, which is a statement glorifying God. How does this doxology glorify God? What truths are stated about God?

3. Verse 16 mentions “unapproachable light.” What is the unapproachable light?

4. Why is it important for us to focus on and remember the greatness of the One who has called us? Take time now to reflect on the greatness of God. Thank him for who he is and what he has done.

Aug. 17/18 1 Timothy 6:17-19

Sermon Notes:

Day 1 - Read 1 Timothy 6:17-19

Chapter 6 of 1st Timothy has a few things to say about money and riches. If you need a refresher, read 1 Timothy 6:3-10 again. In verses 17 to 19, we see that Paul is giving Timothy advice on how to approach Christians who are rich. Notice that Paul is not condemning riches here but he is still very aware of the temptation and evil they can lead to (verse 10). A word of caution, therefore, is needed for wealthy Christians in the community.

1. What does the term “riches” mean to you? What things in your life add to the value of how rich you are?

2. What is God’s definition of “riches”? See also Revelation 2:8-9 and Luke 12:13-21.

3. It is good to have wealth, provided we use our wealth for God and good deeds. God defines richness differently than the world does. In what ways should you change your own thinking about richness? In what ways can you make practical changes in your daily life?

4. This can be a heavy topic to spend time on. Take some time to pray to God about it and perhaps ask God to show you how to think more like him in regards of how to be rich.

Day 2 - Read 1 Timothy 6:17

1. Verse 17 is sound advice from Paul. In what ways do his words in this verse go against the grain of our culture?

2. As Christians, we can sometimes get it into our heads that because we have to live an obedient, sacrificial life that joy is sometimes hard to find. Yet we learn in this verse that one part of obedience is getting to enjoy what God has blessed us with to enjoy. In fact, God “provides us with everything to enjoy.” What are some of these enjoyable things in your life?

3. If we put our hopes in God instead of being independent and autonomous in a self-sustaining and self-focused way, we get to see these riches more clearly every day. How does hope in God help to change a person’s perspective on riches?

Day 3 - Read 1 Timothy 6:18

Living in a society that values money so much can lead us to being too busy. A possible deception is the temptation to acquire more and more wealth. The business of life overtakes us even though it is not necessary. Verse 18 gives the rich man a cure. One of the best things we can do to break away from always looking after ourselves first is to help someone else.

1. Think back to a few times when you were generous to others or helped someone.

2. How often do you choose to share what you have been blessed with, with others? How does this make you feel?

3. In what ways is it difficult for you to be rich in good works? Note 1 Corinthians 13:3. Do you sometimes commit to good works and volunteer service without love?

4. God has blessed some of us with more so that we can be a blessing to others. Read 2 Corinthians 8:14-15. Is there something that you can do to bless others?

Day 4 - Read 1 Timothy 6:19

1. What is the future we can store up good works for? Can you think of any other scriptures that support this idea?

2. Again we come to a crossroads where we have to decide whether we hold God's view of the way things should be or our own view. Our culture plans for our earthly future and earthly life; however, God wants us to plan for heaven and our spiritual life.

3. The "foundation for the future" is difficult to always strive for because it is unseen, that is, it requires faith. Do you believe that the good works you do for God have an eternal consequence?

4. Verse 19 states, "...take hold of that which is truly life." What parts of the true spiritual life are already a part of your life? Take some time to thank God for this today.

Aug. 24/25 **1 Timothy 6:20-21**

Sermon Notes:

Paul's final instruction to Timothy is to guard the deposit entrusted to him and avoid getting involved in godless controversies and false knowledge. As a leader in the church, Timothy had to ensure the gospel of Jesus Christ that he had received would continue to be the center of the community's existence. Many other agendas and belief systems were jockeying to replace the gospel, and many people were in grave danger of being led off track by those who claimed to have a special "inside track" to God. If Timothy failed in this charge; if allegiance to Christ, his Word and his gospel were replaced with the secrets of the false teachers, this community would no longer be a church but yet another pagan assembly of idol worshippers.

Day 1 - Guard the Deposit Entrusted to You

1. Paul describes Timothy's responsibility to teach the truth of the gospel and the teaching of the apostles as a "deposit" to be guarded. What doctrines do you believe form the foundation of the Christian faith? What is our deposit?

2. This command to guard the deposit is a summary statement of the whole book. Take a look at the previous chapters you've read. What attacks has Timothy been specifically commanded to guard against?

3. Timothy was charged to accept responsibility for the preservation of the gospel; his mother, his grandmother and Paul entrusted it to him. How did you come to receive the gospel? Who entrusted you with the message? How did it happen?

4. Paul desired that Timothy understand the danger false teaching posed to the community. Who have you been entrusted to teach and disciple? How many people would be affected if you were led astray?

Day 2 - Guard the Deposit Entrusted to You

1. In order to guard the gospel and protect the church, we must train our hearts and minds to distinguish between sound doctrine and false doctrine. How do you think we can become more attuned to recognizing both the difference and the implications those differences can have?

2. What practical steps have you taken to train your mind and grow in the knowledge of this deposit? How effective have they been?

3. What opportunities are available to you in the church and the wider Christian community for your growth in understanding and defending the gospel?

4. Are there people in your life you can count on to challenge you to grow in this area? Do you have people you can trust who will help you learn to distinguish between true and false doctrine?

Day 3 - Avoid irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge...

1. In order to guard the deposit entrusted to him, Timothy had to be able to recognize the counterfeit knowledge being put forward which would work against the gospel. Can you identify any ideas or teachings contrary to the gospel that have influence in your community?

2. Have you ever sought to engage in defending the truth against false ideas? What did you learn from the experience?

3. Paul commands Timothy to avoid this irreverent talk and false knowledge, and some may take this to mean that Christians should not engage people who are proclaiming false doctrine. However in light of the rest of this book, it is evident that Paul is not commanding Timothy to withdraw, but rather to engage and rebuke and let the truth of the Word of God speak for itself. How does scripture speak to the challenges raised by the false doctrines we face in our context?

4. The wayward teachings in Ephesus involved finding access to secret knowledge that would improve one's spiritual condition. Paul calls this false knowledge because the secret of our spiritual renewal has been fully revealed in Christ. The gospel message is the best possible news we can ever receive. What do you think makes the gospel unique among all other supposed paths to spiritual wellness?

Day 4 - ...for by professing [false knowledge], some have swerved from the faith.

1. Paul states in verse 21 that some people have chosen to follow after ideas that lead them on a path away from faith in Christ. Their sincere journey for spiritual fulfillment has led them away from their only hope of salvation. We live in a world that wants to tell us that there are no wrong answers; that every person's quest for spiritual fulfillment is their own and that an individual's success can only be defined on their own terms. Do you believe that it is necessary for people to have a right understanding of the gospel to be saved?

2. Do you know people who have departed from the faith in their own quest for fulfillment and truth? What ideas do you think prompted that departure?

3. Do you know people who are exploring controversies and seeking after some kind of special knowledge that you think may be leading them astray? Have you ever talked to them about it? What tools do you have at your disposal to respond?

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