

False Teachers: Their Motives and Effect

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[0 : 00] We're, as you know, in 1 Timothy, Paul's letter to his son in the faith.

! I'm going to actually cover the first 11 verses, verses 7 through 11 tonight, four verses, so that's pretty fast for me.

And for two weeks now, and I think the lessons are available up here maybe, but for two weeks now we have been examining the deadly impact that false teachers have on the church, and that can even spill over into the surrounding culture, because the church is to be salt and light to the surrounding culture.

And I'm sure there are no false teachers in India. I'm positive. There are plenty in America. We looked first at the error of false teachers, their error.

And then we moved on there to the goal of false teachers. Again, there may be a lesson or two up here. This evening, though, we come to two more characteristics of false teachers, and that is their motives, the motives of false teachers, and the effect of false teachers.

[1 : 41] And the motive of false teachers, Paul was very clear, succinct. He says they want to be teachers of the law.

Real plain. 1 Timothy 1, 7, first part of that verse, 7a. They want to be teachers of the law. I'm going to be talking a lot tonight using that word law.

Typically, the application there is going to be the word. We tend to think of the law as the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments, several of the books of the Pentateuch that contain the Jewish law, the dietary laws, the civil laws.

But essentially, we're talking about the word. False teachers' goal is to be teachers of the word of God, so they can spread their poison.

False teachers have within them a strong and consuming desire to be teachers. Their whole life is to mislead people.

[2 : 48] And in Paul's day, prior to the completion of the New Testament, they wanted to be teachers of the law, the word. And that is a reference to the Old Testament.

They saw themselves as scholars of Old Testament Scripture. Well, they were coming up against a mighty man of Old Testament Scripture and the Apostle Paul.

False teachers, though, have several things in common. First, they are not motivated by truth. They all have that in common. And by the way, you know, if you say, well, I've never seen a false teacher, turn on TV.

They're full of them. They're everywhere. But they are not motivated by truth. Learning biblical truth and being able to preach or teach biblical truth is the last things on the minds of a false teacher or a false prophet.

Not wanting to know biblical truth means they have no desire to know the God of the Bible who is truth. Jesus Christ said, you know, on the way, the truth and the life.

[4 : 03] And not knowing or wanting to know the true God also meant that the false teacher had no concern for the people.

And they certainly had no concern. And they certainly had no concern in serving the people of the church who presumably and hopefully wanted to know more about God, wanted to know truth.

The greatest way a teacher can serve people is through knowing and communicating the truth of Scripture. That's their gift.

That's their calling. And having neither love for the word or love for the people meant false teachers had no desire in serving either one.

We'll get into a little bit later what some of their desires are. And it certainly applies not only 2,000 years ago, but it applies in the 21st century. So this begs the question, why did the false teachers

want to teach in the first place?

[5 : 06] Well, one answer is that they wanted the prestige of being a teacher. And I think that was probably a big thing in Ephesus where this took place, a big thing in Asia Minor, which we call modern-day Turkey.

They wanted the prestige of being a teacher. Some have suggested these guys were elders, these false prophets or false teachers in the church.

And if you are a Sunday school teacher, and there's a number of you in here, you may be thinking, no, not a lot of prestige in that. You know? I mean, barely a Sunday goes by that I'm not burned in effigy, you know, by the Villarreal table.

I can say that because Oscar's not here tonight. I am. That's right. Think, though, of Paul's day.

Who were the role models for the teachers that the teachers held in high regard in that culture?

Now, remember, Paul's preaching in the synagogue. The role models were the rabbis of Judaism.

That was their role model. And they were the role models that these guys looked at.

[6 : 19] And they were held in high regard in the Jewish culture, both in Israel and outside of Israel. And now these evil, false teachers were introducing such desires into the young church.

The greatest role models in that day was a sect of the Pharisees. Paul had been one.

Listen to how the Lord described them, Lord Jesus, in Matthew 23. But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men, for they broaden their phylacteries.

Did I get that right? And lengthen. I practiced that with Diane last night. Phylactery. And lengthen the tassels of their garments. They loved the place of honorate banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues and respectful greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by men.

Now, that's from the creator God of the universe, the king and sovereign Lord of the universe.

That's his description of these guys. And Paul's going to have more to say to us later, but let me read to you concerning false teachers in 1 Timothy 6, which we're going to get to about April, if we're lucky.

[7 : 45] If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing.

But he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.

And I don't know if I'm thinking of another scripture or someone added this in this one, but elsewhere Paul is talking about they're in it for financial gain. You think there's anybody in the televangelist world that are in it for financial gain?

You know, just one or two. So in other words, such false teachers are proud and they seek the applause of men.

It's for this reason that James offered a stern warning addressed to all those who desire to teach. Now, I've been teaching 32 years.

[9 : 05] I think 32, maybe 33. And don't think I haven't done business with this verse of scripture, this passage. Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment.

Let me assure you, the last thing I need is a stricter judgment. I know me, and the Lord knows me even better. And the last thing I need is a stricter judgment.

But I feel it's my call, my gift, and I'm going to do it until Jesus removes me or comes back. But there's no room for the proud of heart to be teachers.

There's just no room for that. And I still love the story. I've told you this so many times I'm embarrassed. But the great Harry Ironside, great minister, maybe our brothers haven't heard it, but he was a tremendous preacher, Moody Bible Church, Chicago.

But he told his staff, he said, I battle pride. I can't get over my pride. They said, here's what you're going to do. And then back in America in the 30s, they had wars boards.

[10 : 17] And like they would say, you know, the world is coming to an end and front and back. And they slipped. And so he put on their verses dealing with pride. And their staff had him walk in downtown Chicago at noon.

Everyone knew who he was. Everyone knew. So he did that for an hour, and he comes back, and he takes it off, and he tells his staff, boy, that was great. There's not another man in America would

have done that.

It just didn't work. One of the great Bible expositors was John Knox.

John Knox led the Scottish Reformation. I've been in his home. I've been actually to his grave site, which we think is in a parking lot right outside St. Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh.

And by the way, John Knox apparently is related to my wife. We've traced the Knox side back. It may be related. He understood the seriousness of preaching.

[11 : 22] And this is what the Scottish Bible commentator, William Barclay, has to say about Knox. He burst forth in most abundant tears and withdrew himself to his chamber.

However, his countenance and behavior from that day to the day that he was compelled to present himself to the public place of preaching did sufficiently declare the grief and trouble of his heart.

Knox was overwhelmed at the thought of preaching the gospel of his sovereign Lord and King. And I imagine all preachers go through it, true preachers go through it.

And I imagine Don has gone through that. You're going to get up there, and Don did Sunday twice, and stand in the place of Christ and preach the message of Jesus Christ.

That's a tremendous call. And what a burden. And Knox, I mean, it just trembled at that thought.

Luther, you remember Luther, when he was going to do his first communion in the Catholic Church, and he just froze.

[12 : 37] He froze. He said, I'm representing Christ. The great 20th century preacher, D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, wrote that teaching the word was such an awesome task that the godly man shrinks from it.

He went on to say that nothing but an overwhelming sense of being called and of compulsion should ever lead anyone to preach.

I had a guy tell me one time, he said, you'll know you've been called to be a preacher if that's all you want to do. If there's anything else you want to do, do it.

This was a pastor telling me this. If there's anything else you want to do, do it. So I took the easy route and became a police officer in a police shoot. This is the words of John Stott in his book, *The Preacher's Portrait*.

Very instructive. I cannot help wondering if this may not be why there are so few preachers whom God is using today. There are plenty of popular preachers, but not many powerful ones who preach in the power of the Spirit.

[13 : 52] It is because the cost of such preaching is too great. It seems that the only preaching God honors through which his wisdom and power are expressed is the preaching of a man who is willing in himself to be both a weakling and a fool.

Now, this is John Stossworth's pastor. I think I can clean this up. God not only chooses weak and foolish things, foolish people to save, but weak and foolish preachers through whom to save them, or at least preachers who are content to be weak and seem foolish in the eyes of the world.

We are not always willing to pay this price. We are constantly tempted to covet a reputation as men of learning or men of influence, to seek honor in academic circles and compromise our old-fashioned message in order to do so and to cultivate personal charm or forcefulness so as to sway the people committed to our care.

Wow. That's powerful words. The man who wants to serve God needs a healthy dose, a dose of humility, and he needs the compulsion of God's call on his life.

I remember with sadness years ago in this church, there would be a handful of guys in here that were remembering, but we had a guy in this church who decided, my son is going to be a preacher.

[15 : 34] God hadn't decided that, and his son hadn't decided that, but he had decided that. And you talk about putting a square peg in a round hole.

And we let him guest preach a couple times, and I was real kind. I said, don't give up the day job. He wasn't called to that. He wasn't. I'm not saying he wouldn't say everything.

That was not what God was calling him to. It just wasn't. And that, you know, because Dad wants you to do something, that's not necessarily the call of God.

So, men of God need a healthy dose of humility. And by the way, when I started this whole thing, I told you we're going to be telling what preachers need, but that applies to all of us.

Anyone in ministry, and if you're a follower of Christ, you're in ministry, need a healthy dose of humility and a call of God on their life.

[16:39] Now, when we reflect back to the time of Paul and Timothy, we discover that these Ephesian false teachers were totally lacking in these qualities.

They were anything but humble men. They were the opposite. And they were like John Stott said. They wanted recognition and people to, oh, my gosh, you know who that is? And I've always loved Billy Graham because he's so plain with people.

It just, you know, we've had people in this church even that have visited him at his farm in North Carolina. And he just opens up the house. Hey, you want a glass of milk? You want a sandwich? You know, he's just not puffed up at all. But the Ephesian teachers were anything but humble men, and they were not called of God.

They were not humble men. They were not men who had been called of God to stand in a pulpit in the place of Christ. That's a holy place. It's a holy place. Preaching of the word is a holy calling.

[17:47] Expositing the word of God. So why did such men seek roles of leadership in the church? They did it for the sake of their own satisfaction.

I've seen that a couple times here where guys actually campaigned to be deacons. You guys that are deacons said, why in the world would someone do that? I really actually saw that twice. And, you know, the church was very perceptive and turned them down.

And you can always tell a guy that's seeking a position because he starts showing up on Sunday night and Wednesday. You know, and when it doesn't happen, he quits Sunday night and Wednesday.

These guys did it for the sake of their own satisfaction. They wanted to be looked upon as the rabbis were looked upon within the Jewish congregation, held in high regard.

And to achieve that, they imposed upon the congregation a false legalistic heresy.

[18:55] And if you ever want to get on Paul's bad side, all you've got to do is come up with false legalistic heresy. In fact, if you read the first chapter of Galatians, he puts them in hell for eternity.

The anathema of God. They also, and this is so telling, the false teachers offered salvation based upon a works righteousness system of pleasing God.

You can please God if you will do, do, do, do, do, do. And, you know, I've told you before, that's the do-do crap. All you've got to do is do.

You know, the problem with doing is you never do enough to get comfortable. Have I really done enough? Mark it down. False teachers and false teachers work, believe in rather, a works righteousness system.

And boy, you can see that on television. And what's the main work they want people to do? Give money. Get out your pen. Get out your checkbook. And you are going to receive a blessing from God.

[20:09] Wow. I'm not going to go there. I was going to go somewhere, but I'm not going to do it. Works righteousness was then in Paul's day and is now a damning life.

Nothing need be added to Christ. Nothing can be added to Christ when it comes to salvation. It is, I believe, the predominant belief system in the world today.

I think a works righteousness, I think it's practiced by the world's religions, I think it's practiced by the cults, and I think that many denominations, I know that many denominations have gone down that road.

I sat at a lunch counter when I was an FBI agent in New York City with a good friend of mine, a fellow agent. And he said, I said, you know, what's your hope of eternal life? He said, well, I'm saved by grace.

I said, well, I'm glad to hear it. And he said, yeah, I'm kept my works. I said, really? I said, how are you doing? He said, not too good. But I'm going to do better.

[21:22] I said, you're never going to do better. You need to be kept by grace, by the grace of Christ from start to finish. And you're never kept by works because you can never do it.

Once you start in the Spirit, you can't complete in the flesh. So the false teachers sought preeminence. They sought personal power and prosperity.

That's a biggie. They sought prosperity. They still do. In the words of one pastor who is from California, and I really like him, and he was in Tulsa, which is the seedbed of a lot of this, and he said, you show me a man who is into Rolexes and Rolls Royces and private jets.

Sorry, Paul. And names universities after himself. Pretty specific. And I will show you someone who leaks all over. He leaks all over.

But that's what these guys are into. Well, this is the motive of false teachers. They want to teach. They want to mislead a congregation and lead them down their system of belief, which is false. [22 : 41] But what about the effect of false teachers? Very, very important. Beginning again in verse 7, the second part there through 11. Even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.

But we know that the law, the word, is good if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals.

That's the word of God. I just committed a hate crime. And kidnapers and liars and perjurers and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

Wow. Paul was a brilliant man. And he had an eternally brilliant, infinitely brilliant Holy Spirit telling him what to write.

It is impossible for teachers to teach accurately the word of God. Why not? It says right there.

[24 : 03] They do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions. They don't understand.

You know, there was a time when I thought foolishly, because I heard these quotes from guys that were professors of religion, like at the University of Chicago or, you know, whatever.

And I assumed, well, they must know what they're talking about. And I realized that isn't so. It isn't so. The word there, do not understand, indicates they were in a continual state of not understanding.

Well, that's pretty bad. They could not know the word of God because the spirit was not present to instruct them.

The word of God must be spiritually understood. It is only through the indwelling Holy Spirit that we can understand the deep truths of the word of God.

[25 : 15] I've heard it said, you know, unsaved men can learn some morality about the Bible, a moral base, but they cannot understand the serious thing, salvation by grace. If it is not, it is in fact foolishness to someone who doesn't have the spirit and foolishness for them to get up there and preach or teach.

I remember a story that Dr. McGee taught, told many, many, many years ago, and he's long dead. But he was a new preacher boy just right out of Dallas Theological Seminary with his Ph.D. or T.H.D., and he had a little revival in Sherman, Texas, just north of Dallas, up near the Oklahoma line. And he got there, and he was first night, you know, he's with the preacher in his home, and they're going to start the next morning, and he said, well, you'll have to see Granny while you're here.

A couple of deacons came over to meet Dr. McGee, and they said, you're going to have to visit with Granny before you. So finally Dr. McGee said, I want to meet Granny. Who is this Granny, you know? I've got to meet this woman. So they take him over after the night's preaching.

They took him over to Granny's house. Granny was about 90 years old, widow, lived alone. And Dr. McGee said, and I heard him say this, she opened up the Word of God.

[26 : 37] Unlike anyone I've ever heard in seminary, any professor I ever had, any preacher I've ever heard, she opened it up to a depth of understanding, unlike I've ever heard.

And one thing about Granny is she was blind. She'd been blind for like 30 years. I don't know if she read the Bible with Braille or people read it to her, but she'd been blind for several decades.

Never got past eighth grade. Uneducated woman. And finally, Dr. McGee on the last night, talking in private with the pastor, said, I'm spellbound by Granny.

I said, where did she learn all that? And the pastor said, well, you know, she had the Holy Spirit for your teacher. If you want a good teacher, the Spirit of God.

And you must have the Spirit of God to understand the deep truths. It is foolishness to the son of Adam, to the unsaved man, to the edemic man.

[27 : 45] Now, we are living out our lives in the 21st century. We are well removed from the Ephesian church, both in terms of time and geography.

But false teachers and false prophets plague the church in our day. They're everywhere. And they were a threat from the very start.

Paul wrote about them. John wrote about them. Jude wrote about them. Peter wrote about them. They were a blight on the church. And Jesus even said in the last days they're going to increase. There are going to be more false teachers, false prophets in the last days than there ever has been. And I showed you all a little five-minute video last week. A guy claims, I don't know if you were here, Shane, claims to be Jesus Christ, the guy from Puerto Rico.

Claims to be the greater than Christ and greater than God. It was blasphemous. But I wanted to give you all a taste. And I've told you last week, but for those of you who weren't here, when I was in the FBI and they had the James Jones deal and all those people died, the FBI estimated there were 1,200 false messiahs in the United States at that time who had a follower, who had followers. [29 : 05] Some a few dozen and some, you know, a few million. But they had followers. We have false prophets and false teachers.

Paul condemned those who were teaching falsely the word of God. Paul says, we know that the law is good.

Paul never condemns the law, ever. The law is good because it reflects the righteousness and will of God.

Paul is going after the men who misuse and misquote the word. And how often have we heard that from the television preachers?

I heard one just the other night that said, I'm sinless. I have no sin. I don't commit sin. I am sinless. [30 : 05] And someone said, well, why are you sinless? Because I'm righteous in God. Therefore, I'm sinless. Well, that person has missed the whole meaning of the gospel of grace.

And then 1 John says, if you ever come to the point where you say you're without sin, you lie and do not tell the truth. We have the imputed righteousness of Christ. Christ is sinless. Now, I haven't committed any sin for 20, 30 seconds, but still, we're not sinless.

We're not going to be in this life. Now, we strive for it. It should be the direction, but not to perfection. You're not going to reach it. But strive for it.

So Paul condemned those who were teaching falsely the word of God. And the law was written for the lawless, the rebellious, the ungodly and the profane.

The law was also written to show us our sinfulness and to drive us to a Savior.

[31 : 17] To drive us to someone to rescue us from our repeated violations of God's standards of holiness.

And I have people that tell me, you know, well, I just, I'm trying to keep the Ten Commandments. You can't keep the greatest commandment.

How can you keep any of the others? Love God with all 24 hours a day until Jesus comes back. We don't do that. We haven't attained that. The law does not save.

The law condemns. The law was not intended as an instrument to save. It is a mirror. We look into the mirror of the law, and what does it reflect back? A sinner in need of someone that can live up to the righteous standards of a holy God.

And who is that someone? Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus. Cast yourself on His mercy. Be cloaked in His righteousness. When God sees you, let Him see Christ living in you.

[32 : 29] Let Him see Christ living in you. Let Him see Christ living in you. Paul lists some of the individuals for whom the law was written.

And they were the ones who have no regard for God's law because they have no regard for God. Unholy people. Profane people.

Killers of mothers and fathers. We dealt with that here in this town a year ago. It was a grandson and grandmother. Murderers.

Immoral men. Homosexuals. Liars. Liars. And perjurers. That's quite a list. It's not inclusive. Paul then adds this to make sure no one is left out.

And whatever else is contrary to sound teaching. Paul said you've got to be a solid teacher, gifted teacher to teach and handle the Word of God.

[33 : 26] Paul then adds this, or rather to use the law properly, it must be used in accordance with and in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Guys, the gospel is everything. Jonathan and I spent an hour a week talking about the gospel.

We're going to keep doing that. It's everything.

It is a glorious gospel because it reveals God's glory. As believers, we are to be on alert for false teachers.

To do so, I'm going to suggest the following questions concerning a man's ministry. And I'm actually going to close with this. We're going to leave early tonight. What is his understanding of Scripture? You've got to show up and wants to preach. What is his understanding of Scripture? I remember the woman that showed up here and wanted to preach Sunday morning, a healing service. And one of the staff members said, go to that hospital right there and clean it out.

[34 : 34] When you do, come back Sunday and we'll let you preach. And she didn't make it back. So if God wants to get up in your pulpit or in your classroom, what is his understanding of Scripture?

Is his teaching biblically sound? Does it conform to the Word of God? And let me say that. I'm going to add this. And this is free. I won't charge for it. It's not in my notes.

There's nothing new. There's nothing new. You know, I read a lot of the Puritans and the Reformers. I can't add anything. Those guys were brilliant.

And they walked with God and they were humble men. And I can't add anything. All I can do is steal what they taught and preached.

But there's nothing. And when these guys come alongside, I've got something. I've got a new message from God. What did Steve Lawson say? It better be chapter and verse in Scripture.

[35 : 43] If you've got a Word from God, you better be able to show me in Scripture where it's written down. Does he place extra biblical teaching on the same level as the Bible?

Very important. Ask him this. Does he accurately handle the Word of Truth? Does it add to? Does it take away? Big one.

Does he seek love, honor, and the glory of God? Or does he seek self-love, personal happiness, and above all else, material wealth?

And that is huge. Is he in it for the money? Is he humble and selfless?

Does he seek preeminence? Does he seek preeminence? Very important when a guy wants to fill that pulpit. Do his followers understand and has he taught them the true gospel of Christ?

[36 : 57] And may I suggest that's the gospel that Paul preached? Read Galatians. Read Romans. It's the gospel that Paul preached. Because he got it directly from the Lord.

Does he understand the true gospel of Christ and preach that to his people? Can he even define the gospel properly?

Now, I don't make a habit of watching these guys on TV. When I'm flipping channels trying to get to 378, which is the good solid, but one of them will catch me. And the guy caught me the other day.

And he was talking about sending money so the gospel can go all over the world.

He had no clue what the gospel was. I guarantee you, Levi could sit down with him one-on-one and tear him up. Trinity Bates knows.

And boy, let me tell you, don't ever debate her about the existence of God or the gospel of Christ.

She knows. She'll rip you a new one. How old is Trinity? Nine. Be ten next month.

[37 : 58] Yeah. You know, taught by mom, dad, Diane. You know. Can he define the gospel of Christ properly?

I'd love to line up these guys that are making millions and ask them that. Does he use the law properly? That it's not there to save.

It's there to condemn and drive us to a Savior. And does he promote works righteousness or salvation by grace alone through Christ alone?

Nothing can be added. Nothing need be added. It's all of Christ. You know, which one does he preach? And most of those guys will preach a system of works righteousness and totally confuse good works.

Read Ephesians 2, 8 and 9. But never leave out 10. Because it tells us why God saved us by grace through faith. Because we are his workmanship designed for good works.

[39 : 00] We must be constantly vigilant. Especially as we see the day draw nigh. Now, I've always believed Christ is going to return in my lifetime.

If he doesn't, I'll have my mini rapture and I'll beat everybody else. And, you know, he may not return for 5,000 years. I don't know that. I think it's closer to today than 5,000 years, but I don't know that.

But until he comes back for his church, whenever that is, be vigilant. Question people. You know, what authority are they doing?

Mike and I hearken back to a time that when we had pulpit committees, if you were a graduate of a Southern Baptist seminary, you had to be all right. And we found out that wasn't necessarily true. That wasn't necessarily true.

Be vigilant. So that we and our loved ones and the blessed church of the Lord Jesus Christ, the invisible church, the visible church, the local church, would not be enslaved to the false gospel. [40 : 14] And there's nothing sadder than to see a church enslaved by the false gospel. And let me tell you, they're out there, guys, and even whole denominations have been taken captive. Whole denominations have been taken captive.

And it is so utterly sad to see. And it is so utterly sad to see. Thank you.