

Recap of 5/13/18 (1 Timothy 4:3)

1. Paul identifies the source of false teaching in 1 Timothy 4:1,2 as demons propagating their error through human teachers. These human teachers are described as “hypocritical liars.” They are not innocent but deliberately forsake truth, saying one thing while doing the opposite. Their consciences are seared, that is, they have become insensitive and hardened or uncaring about the truth. They are insensitive to their own hypocrisy.
2. This teaching of demons (“doctrine of demons) promotes a system of salvation and sanctification (spiritual growth which is works based not faith based. What some call a legalistic asceticism. It is legalistic in that it imposes requirements upon believers which do not come from the Scripture or that are in direct violation of the Scripture (forbidding marriage, forbidding certain foods). It is ascetic in that it treats the body harshly by withholding biblical legitimate things in an attempt to please or to appease God. It denies the very things God calls good. They are avoiding these things to obtain God’s favor, thereby destroying faith and “inventing a perverted worship of God” (paraphrase of John Calvin).
3. Paul gives us the last word on food taboos in 1 Corinthians 8 & 10 and Romans 14. “But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and not better if we do.” (1 Corinthians 8:8).
4. “Beware of any religious teaching that tampers with God’s institution of marriage. And beware of any teaching that tampers with God’s creation. The false teachers who were infecting the Ephesian church taught that certain foods were taboo; if you ate them you were not spiritual.” (Wiersbe)
5. “The idea of abstaining from certain foods goes back, of course, to the Mosaic law. But Christ has freed us from the Law (Gal. 5:1-6). We are no longer under its restrictions regarding certain kinds of food,...’Only those whose faith is weak’ avoid eating meat and restrict themselves to a vegetable diet (Rom. 14:1,2). In spite of this, some still advocate and practice vegetarianism in the name of Christianity. Paul deals much more severely with this heresy in 1 Timothy than he did in romans. Evidently the false teaching of asceticism was spreading in the church and the apostle struck out forcefully against it as a negation of our freedom in Christ—which is true Christianity.” (Ralph Earle)