

“Healthy Orthodoxy or Sick Heterodoxy?” (1 Tim. 6:3-10)

1. Pathology of Pretend (Phony) Prophets (3-5c)

a. Divergent Doctrine (3)

i. Definitions:

1. Pathology = study of origin, nature, or course of a disease; also, deviation from healthy condition.
2. Heterodidaskaleo “different doctrine” or “teaches otherwise” Hetero = different or divergent from and didaskaleo = teaching/doctrine. E.g. 1:3-4, 6-7, 20; 4:1-5).

- ii. Divergence – from “sound” or “wholesome” ‘healthy’ teaching of Jesus and “doctrine according with godliness.” The Greek term for “sound” is *hugiano*, from which we derive hygiene. Those who don’t submit themselves to the true doctrine, arrogantly develop their own (influenced) unhealthy doctrines →

b. Arrogant Attitudes (4a)

- i. If you think bad hygiene is bad for us, how much worse bad doctrine to God?
- ii. Those who are so arrogant as to contrive “sick” teachings, will be those for whom the most severe judgment is reserved (Heb. 10:29).
- iii. Paul calls them ‘pompous ignoramuses.’ They think of themselves as ‘elitist Christians’ (Gordon Fee’s terms).
- iv. They claim esoteric (higher/hidden) knowledge while they are truly “know it alls” who ‘know nothing!’ →

c. Obstinate Obsessions (4b)

- i. Such are “sick” or “obsessed” with disputes and arguments (cf. 1:4). They try to deceive/lure believers into their meaningless talk and idle speculation in the name of “knowledge,” “spirituality,” and “faith.” Cf. 2 Pet. 2:18; Col. 2:18.
- ii. They have a morbid “sick” obsession claiming inside knowledge while peddling a diseased doctrine. The Greek *noseo* = sick, diseased connoting a perverted obsession.
- iii. This is, of course, in contrast to the “sound” “wholesome” doctrine of Christ. Titus 1:15-16 comes to mind.

d. Repulsive Results (4c-5a)

- i. You will know them by their fruits.
- ii. We may have disagreements here and even different convictions of methods and such (as all churches do) but we do not waste time quarreling about speculative wranglings. Nor do we have church politics with individuals vying for preferential privilege.
- iii. We can have unity because we don’t demand uniformity. But we do demand biblical subordination!

e. Perverted Priorities (5b-c)

- i. Not sure what came first (“corrupt mind” or false doctrine “destitute of truth”) and it is almost certainly a mixture of both greed and bad teaching. They both beget one another.
- ii. But because the false teachers creep in and deceive the flock, we must be disciplined in the Word in order to discern and overcome evil (1 Jn. 2:14).
- iii. Paul explicitly stated their motives of greed. They pretend to be godly in order to attain worldly gain.

2. Remedy of Righteousness (5d-10)

a. Acute Avoidance (5d)

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- i. Association is critical. Jesus was misjudged because He ate with sinners (drunkards, prostitutes, tax collectors). What is true is that He made Himself available to the earnest inquirers who would listen to what He said. He also took time for the rich such as Zacchaeus, Matthew, the young ruler, Nicodemus, etc. Who He did not affiliate with were those who would not give the truth a hearing, the ‘elite,’ those who sought to elevate themselves and those who exploited others.
 - ii. Paul instructs, “From such withdraw yourself.”
 - iii. With whom do you associate?
 - iv. Jesus not only avoided affiliation with the false teachers but condemned them (Mat. 23).
- b. Godly Gain (6-8)
- i. Paul turns from the greedy gain for which the heretics grasp and for which they pretend to be godly; and properly prioritizes true gain.
 - ii. “Great gain” is living righteously with contentment. Never be content with where you are spiritually, but always be content with what God has allocated you.
 1. There is gain in embracing your circumstances while striving for the Kingdom (Mat. 6:33).
 2. There is also great freedom in knowing you are only responsible for that which is in your capacity. I love the serenity prayer.
 - iii. V. 7. All their gain is for here and now but Jesus said to lay up our treasures in heaven (Mat. 6:19-21). You can’t always discern motive by singled out actions and events but you can deduce such from a lifestyle practice.
 - iv. V. 8. Paul just alluded to the OT texts of Job 1:21 & Eccl. 5:15a and now affirms such with the teaching of Jesus regarding contentment, trust, and impetus of godliness (Mat. 6:25-34).
3. Results of Rejecting the Remedy (9-10)
- a. The “desire to be rich” is the carnal desire to have abundance which needs not to seek provision from God. A self-sufficiency w/o gratitude, humility, obedience, and righteousness.
 - b. It ensnares those who fail to keep their guard up against such.
 - c. Such selfish priorities affirm and entice deeper into temptation which leads to “destruction and perdition.” One cannot serve both God and riches (Mat. 6:24). When one serves his own desires and the greed for abundance, his path ends in damnation and destruction along the way.
 - d. The false teachers Paul had in mind (and those related), were led astray by such lusts and compromised the truth of the Gospel thereby teaching and leading others from the true doctrine of the Gospel which produces godliness (Ro. 8:29).
 - e. For the love of luxury is the root of many kinds of evils. Their love for selfish gain caused them to teach ‘another gospel’ which forsakes self-sacrifice, service, righteousness, truth, humility, contentment, and salvation. But other than that I guess it’s not harmful.
 - f. I think of how obvious it is that such contemporary false prophets on “Christian TV” barely (if at all) mention the atonement, sin, righteousness, judgment, repentance, sacrificial service, longsuffering, and such. Their teachings and practices no more match up with that of Jesus’ and Paul’s than Balaam’s with the LORD. (See 2 Pet. 2 esp. vv. 15-17 cf. Rev. 2:14; Nu. 22-24 esp. 31:16)

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- g. They claim status as a prophet of the Lord, yet lead His people and others astray “from the faith, in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

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God is wholly holy! His righteous ways are foreign to us until we experience the transforming power of His salvific Word in our lives. Left to our carnal desires, we let our fallen minds, hearts, and wills lead us into selfish, prideful, anxious, and self-destructive lives which will ultimately lead to perdition (v. 9). Nothing is more profitable than spiritual health (4:8) and such “wholeness” (v. 3) only comes from applying sound doctrine. Conversely, greed and pride produce morbid/sickly obsessions (v. 4). The world has done a real job on sanitizing sin – making the selfish look virtuous. But for those with eyes to see, they will know such deceptive teachers and professors by their fruit (Mat. 7:15-16). They may be rich according to the world’s values, but they are blind, poor, naked, and wretched according to the holy One! His ways produce wholesome fruit, while their ways only produce rotten fruit.