

This Goddess was held in high esteem throughout the Roman Empire, and was in effect headquartered in Ephesus where a large temple had been built to honor her. Accordingly, many Ephesians made a good living supporting the worship of her, including the making and selling of idols in her likeness.

The practice of child sacrifice was also prevalent, and the Nicolaitans were spreading doctrine in the area which taught that sex, idol worship, and drugs were all an integral part of worshipping Christ. They did this based on scripture that proclaimed that all of our sins had been forgiven; so therefore it was okay for Christians to do these things in worship—but not the pagan unbelievers who were still in a sinful state. This was certainly appealing to many; and it made Christianity look very similar to the worship practices of the followers of Artemis.

In 1 Timothy 4:3, Paul warned Timothy that people were teaching others not to marry and which foods they could, and could not, eat. These teachings came from the Gnostics who claimed to have special "inside" knowledge of more than just the scripture. Between the practices of worshipping Artemis, and the influence of the Gnostics, the Judaizers, and the Nicolaitans, you can see how intense the attacks were on the new church at Ephesus.

3. Years later, presumably while living there, John would write the book of Revelation, and record Jesus' letters to the seven churches. As recorded in Revelation 2:1-7, what did Jesus say about the church at Ephesus, some thirty or so years after its inception?

4. While all of this is true and informative for us, how does it apply to our lives and the church today? We no longer have idols that we worship, or temples that we build to them, or profit from their worship...right? How is Paul's teaching to Timothy relevant today? What idols do we have, what false teachings are out there, and how is sound doctrine being attacked and compromised today? We need to be mindful of these things in order to protect ourselves and our local church from falling prey to the schemes of the devil who "prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8) Jot down below some of the dangers that church doctrine faces today.

5. Based on the need for a solid defense of the truth in the battle against false teaching, what does Paul instruct Timothy to do in 1 Timothy 4:6?

6. We can also see from 1 Tim. 4:6 that to be a good minister of Christ we need to be aware of false teaching and false teachers; so that we, like Timothy, are able to "point these things out to the brothers and sisters." It is as much our responsibility to defend the truth as it is for any leader within the church. All of us must guard against a level of corruption that turns lies into "truths" within the church. In 1 Timothy 4:7, what does Paul tell Timothy, and us, that we are specifically to do?

7. Continuing from 1 Tim. 4:7, Paul then concludes this section with specific instructions to Timothy, instructions that are equally as valid for us today. He reminds us in 1 Timothy 4:10 that our hope is in the "living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe." List below the things he instructs Timothy to do, and by inference what we should also be doing:

As we move forward in our walk with Christ, let us redouble our efforts to weed out false teachers and false doctrine, being sure to keep the logic and wisdom of man' separate from the wisdom of God. We live in a fallen and compromised world, just as Timothy did. Paul's warnings to Timothy cry out to us today as well. By keeping the Gospel pure and untainted by the world, many will be saved. So let' commit to being a part of that work in His Kingdom, as we live our lives for Christ.

"We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God." 2 Corinthians 10:5a

In Christ,

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