

READY FOR ANYTHING

THE LESSON: 1 TIMOTHY 4

...From all false doctrine, heresy, and schism; from hardness of heart, and contempt of thy Word and Commandment, Good Lord, deliver us.

The petition we're looking at today seeks God's deliverance from lies that are told about him and his message for us. For as long as there have been believers seeking to follow God, there have also been false teachers, pretending to point the way, but pointing in the wrong direction instead.

In the Old Testament, false prophets frequently claimed that no judgement would come upon the people of Israel even though they were living in opposition to God's law. In the New Testament, many of the false teachers were denying the Resurrection and suggesting that believers go backwards rather than fully embracing the new life in Christ.

Then and now, the best way to spot lies is to know the truth so well that you can tell right away when something is out of sync. God has equipped us with his word! The writers of the New Testament understood this and they were constantly encouraging Christians to immerse themselves in the scriptures (which at that time meant the Old Testament scriptures) so that they would not be easy prey for false teachers. You can really sense the frustration of those saints in some of their writing. Listen to this excerpt from the letter to the Hebrews:

"Though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil" (Hebrews 5:12-14).

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St. Timothy was a very young leader in the church at Ephesus and St. Paul was his mentor. In two short but dense letters, St. Timothy is given all sorts of instruction and encouragement on how to lead and be ready for anything, in an environment when attacks against the faith were all around.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE "FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES", WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON'T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.))

Psalm 119:11 says, "I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you". The At-Home Challenge during this unit is to commit a short passage of scripture to memory each week. If the suggested passage is too long, try picking out one verse or phrase that speaks to you particularly and commit it to memory. You will be amazed at how the words of scripture, stored in the heart, will return to you in the moments when you most need them.

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17: ¹⁶All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect.

Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen. (THE COLLECT FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT, BCP PAGE 97)

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PART TWO

1 TIMOTHY 4: **IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE TRUTH**

¹Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, ²through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, ³who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, ⁵for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.

⁶ If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. ⁷Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; ⁸for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. ⁹The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. ¹⁰For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

¹¹Command and teach these things. ¹²Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. ¹³Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. ¹⁴Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. ¹⁵Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. ¹⁶Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.