

# Nine Ways to Apostate Proof Your Life Part 1

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[ 0 : 00 ]     Alright, please turn in your Bibles to 1 Timothy chapter 4, 1 Timothy chapter 4. Alright, as many of you know, it's a little bit of summertime and things get a little bit jumbled.

Believe it or not, we're in the middle of a short little mini-series. If you notice, the sermon title is, I've entitled this, Nine Ways to Apostate Proof Your Life.

Nine Ways to Apostate Proof Your Life. If you remember, on the 9th of this month, I preached on the subject of what's called Christian Deconstruction.

Christian Deconstruction, it's become a trending name. It is essentially, how do people who grew up in the church, professed faith in Jesus Christ, fall away?

How do they get there? How do they get to a point of deciding that they did not want anything to do with their faith? In fact, there's news, there's, I forget the name now, discussion groups where you can join and talk to other people who've been there as you have, who talk about these things.

[ 1 : 29 ]     In fact, one of the son of a well-known Christian pastor actually has a popular TikTok channel telling other people about how he has come out of the Christian faith, and you can too.

Talk about a message that is bound to hell. I talked a couple of weeks ago that I talked about that there's five primary reasons why people walk away from the faith.

There's five primary reasons that have come through studies. One is they're improperly disciplined. So when people tell them that there are mistakes in the Bible, they believe it.

They believe that there's these mistakes, and all of a sudden it's like their faith runs into a wall. This isn't what I learned, and they're unable to find someone to walk with them through some of these tougher challenges.

They are told that science and the Bible are incompatible, and people start to believe them. But if they actually knew what is taught actually in the Bible, what science truly is about, they will find that it's not true.

[ 2 : 40 ]     Third reason people lose their faith is we just happen to live in a new age of communication. Taking the example of the TikTok video that goes out, people are able to put out all sorts of atheistic, false teachings that people stumble into.

And the last two means that people lose their faith is in one case, it's either a pastor, an elder, maybe a youth group leader, hurt their feelings, and they have made that decision they will never come to church again.

Or it's just simply a Christian friend, someone who said they were a Christian, lives a life that is contrary to the faith. And they said, well, if it's not for them, then it's not for me.

So last week, I want to give you a quick overview of the context of this book, and David alluded to it when he read from the passage. This is a letter Paul is writing to his disciple Timothy.

Paul is in prison. This will be one of his last two letters that he will write. Timothy is now in the church of Ephesus. We have the book of Ephesians.

[ 3 : 51 ] Romans 20, or Acts 20 tells us about Paul's experiences in Ephesus. Paul pastored there for three years. It's a church he knows well.

He has set them up for great things, even that the whole letter of Ephesians gives a great foundation for the church. But somehow problems erupted, so he sends Timothy in to go solve some of the issues that are there.

Timothy finds out that there's unqualified teachers and leaders in the church. Not only are they unqualified, but there's false teaching being taught.

There's servants whose life does not reflect the glory of Jesus Christ. And worse, there is no gospel being preached.

In fact, there's actually a false gospel being taught. That things were so bad at this church that people were walking away from the faith.

[ 5 : 01 ] People who at one time or another sat under the feet of Paul, one of the greatest Christian teachers of its time, who heard, accepted the message that he spoke to them, but decided that it was no longer meant for them and walked away.

We can conclude that this church that Timothy is reaching is a complete mess. So last time I preached, we talked about the first part of Paul's response.

Let's take a look at our Bibles. Chapter 4, verse 1. It says, Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times, some will depart from the faith.

What Paul does, specifically in his first point, is he reminds Timothy that this is nothing new. This is going to happen. Don't be surprised.

I'm sure many of you can share those kind of stories. I know I have in my life people that I looked up to. I had a youth leader who was incredibly influential in my life that I actually chose my university to go to because of him.

[ 6 : 16 ] And when I arrived, he had walked away from the faith. It hurts, but it happens. The second way is, how does this happen?

It happens through bad theology. Bad teaching. Notice what it says. Defoting themselves to deceitful spirits and the teachings of demons.

If you want to hear more of this, please refer back to my sermon, which is online. But Paul is reminding that any teaching that is contrary to the Bible, God's Word, is demonic.

It's not an interesting idea. It is in fact demonic. It finds its source from the pit of hell itself. Don't give it no quarter. Don't pay attention to it.

Don't play with it. Simply stay away from it. And what is one of the primary tools that Satan uses? Verse 2, it says, Through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared.

[ 7 : 21 ] They lie. False teachers lie. What do they lie about? Everything. They lie. Notice what it says in verse 3. Who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving.

What that means is there's always a route to Satan's teaching that affects the church for the last 2,000 years. Satan's demonic doctrine either wants you to become more strict, more legalistic than what the doctrine of God says, or they want you to think, Did God really say that?

To have you move on the side of liberalism. Liberalism. It's either legalism or liberalism. It's been that way for 2,000 years.

When they get you to be more strict, they're adding to the gospel. And I want you to think about this for the second. They're trying to tell you that what Jesus did on the cross that he died on 2,000 years ago wasn't quite good enough to save you.

All that he endured. So if you could just help him. Help Jesus in his salvation of you by abstaining from these foods or these certain actions that somehow salvation would come.

[ 8 : 53 ] It has always been do a little more, do a little less. The reality is, when we read this letter, it should frighten us somewhat.

If those who were personally pastored and disciplined by the Apostle Paul left the faith, what hope do we have?

Let's be honest. I know some of you have family and friends who at one point were all into this Jesus stuff, this church stuff, but have walked away from it.

They don't want to come. They're critical of the church. They're critical of Jesus. So the question that should be going on in our minds are, how do we stop that from happening to us?

Like I said, my youth pastor was someone that I admired, someone I wanted to be like. He had a great influence in his teaching and it broke my heart. To find out when I finally get to university, he was a couple of years ahead of me, he was no longer walking in the faith.

[ 10 : 04 ] Well, if that happens to be a question on your heart, then it's a good thing. Because this morning I want to provide for you Paul's instructions on how to apostate-proof your life. How to keep from following away.

Like I said, I've entitled this sermon, Nine Ways to Apostate-Prove Your Life. And I want to provide for you over the next couple of sermons, ways that you can avoid this from happening in your life.

Before I go any further, let me pray. Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, this is indeed a heavy subject. I'm not ignorant. There are certainly people here who have been with the church, walked away from the church, come back to the church.

I know some people have some deep hurts and they are legitimate hurts. There's been horrible examples in the church. But Father, I truly want our people to understand that those aren't from you, those are from hell.

That those are the type of teachings and examples that are meant to lead us astray. Father, I just ask that if it's not us who needs this message, may we pray for someone who does need to hear this message.

[ 11 : 23 ] May we sit here to learn to understand what Scripture says so that we may be able to relay these incredible eternal truths that you have for us.

That you haven't left us blind or needing more. That you have, there's not a mystery for us to figure it out, but it's found clearly in this text.

Father, I pray that you make my voice strong. Father, I pray that you give us even stronger ears to hear. In your name we pray, amen. First thing I want you to do is I want you to look at verse 6.

The first way to apostate proof your life is to fix your life on Jesus or to fix your eyes on Jesus. Take a look at verse 6. It says, If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus.

Now I want to ask the question first, who doesn't want to please Jesus? Right? There's the motivation that is found here. To be a good servant of Christ Jesus.

[ 12 : 31 ] Now note it says, put these things. What are these things that Paul talks about? It's basically the combined teaching that Paul has been teaching for years and is now writing to them now.

If you know anything about Timothy, he has heard Paul teaching for years. And in fact, the Bible actually names Timothy's mother and grandmother and how influential they have been to the faith for him.

So let's be honest. People don't fall away from the faith because they don't know what to do or they don't know how to be a good servant.

People tend to fall away from the faith because they choose to ignore what they know. Choose to ignore what they know. The Bible has a term for that.

The term is fool. Proverbs 1.7 says, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

[ 13 : 38 ] So the question is, what is the biblical wisdom Timothy is being commanded to follow? Continue on in verse 6. Being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine you have followed.

Like I said, Timothy grew up under the tutelage of Paul and his mother and his grandmother. So what is the good doctrine that Paul speaks about? Well, Titus 1.9 simply says, hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught so that he may be able to give instruction and sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

Colossians 3.1 says, if then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

2 Timothy 2.15, which isn't written by the time this text was, it says, do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

So when I talk about what does it mean to fix our eyes on Jesus, it's to fix our eyes on God's word, the good doctrine. It's interesting, some people say discernment is the difference between understanding the difference between good and bad.

[ 15 : 09 ] That is not actual discernment. Discernment is being able to distinguish between what is good and what is mostly good. Right? It's been able to know that something is one or two degrees off.

So the first way that you would seek to apostate proof your life is to fix your eyes on Jesus and his word. We do this by being wise and applying biblical truth to our lives.

It means applying what we've been taught, what we have learned. We know that James says, do not be hearers of the words, but doers of the word.

Why? Because it says simply in verse 6, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus. Is that a motivation for you?

That you could be known as a good servant. I'll tell you what I fear. I don't fear being a bad servant of Jesus Christ. That doesn't register with me that I want to take a bad path.

[ 16 : 14 ] But I'll tell you what I do fear. I fear being inconsequential. I fear being inconsequential. I fear that my life will have no consequence.

That it will not reflect Jesus Christ. It's neither good nor bad. It's just fruitless. It's motionless.

There's nothing that is accomplished. It's the fear at the sum total of my life will mean nothing. My fear is to squander what I have taught, what I have learned.

I've been blessed to sit under some many incredible pastors and men and women of faith who taught me many things. And I would be remiss to continue teaching those to you and to others.

For some of you who've sat under biblical preaching for years, that is the same challenge that you should have as well. My question for you is, is your life motto to keep from doing bad or is it to grow in the faith of Jesus Christ?

[ 17 : 25 ] Christ. You've learned a lot of biblical wisdom here, Timothy. So we have to make sure we apply it. We don't squander it.

You want to root yourself to God. The way it begins, the way we protect ourselves from falling away from the faith of Jesus Christ is to root ourselves in Jesus and his word.

The second way to apostate proof your life is found in verse 7, which is don't waste time with irreverent and silly myths.

Don't waste time with irreverent and silly myths. Now notice in verse 7, Paul simply says, have nothing to do.

That isn't some folksy kind of wisdom. It's actually a command. It's not a suggestion. He's telling them, have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths.

[ 18 : 28 ] This isn't optional. What does that word irreverent mean? It means ungodly, unholy, profane. Now remember the context of this book.

False teachers are entertaining them with new teachings. Now a couple of weeks ago when I last preached, I told you that there are several well-known teachers who start entertaining questions.

And they start to tempt the congregation with thoughts of, did God really say that? Is sex really only meant to be experienced in marriage?

Right? They just start to ask these questions. And then they pull away. I'm not so sure what the Bible says on that. They follow the same storyline every time.

And it's always a direct contradiction of God's word. But it's wrapped in niceness. Cleverness.

[ 19 : 34 ] Now, what does silly myths mean? Well, almost from the Greek, it means old wives' tales. And we're familiar with that, right? Coffee stunts your growth.

If you go swimming within an hour of eating, you're going to get cramps and drown, right? If you go outside with wet hair, you're going to catch a cold. And I can tell you my wife's favorite wives' tale is that apple cider vinegar cures everything in life.

The reality is they're just fables. But how do these things affect our faith? First of all, it's a complete waste of time. It gets us fixated on the things that really don't matter.

And what's interesting, and I was just talking to Dave a little bit about this, we get letters. I get these letters. Maybe every six months, a letter comes to me. And it's old snail mail letter. It's really polished.

And it's never signed. It's never signed. But it's about five or six pages. And it talks about the Christian faith and how to make sure that we celebrate Easter on the very right day.

[ 20 : 46 ] If we celebrate on Sunday, not on Monday, we're going to hell. If we celebrate Christmas in any way, we're going to hell. If we don't use the King James Version of the book, we're going to hell, right?

It's got all these rules, all these fears. Those are the definition of silly myths. But people get into them.

They talk about them. You've heard numerology. I remember that book. But today I'm going to give you two examples that I'm quite certain you know about these examples. One is irreverent.

One is silly. I'm going to name two books for you. And I know when I name one of these books, some of you are going to go, ouch!

I like that book. I thought that was a Christian book. And how do I know? It's because once on Facebook I posted a picture of this book in a Christian store.

[ 21 : 41 ] And I made the comment about this store is not too discerning. And boy, did I ever get pushback. The irreverent book that I am speaking about is The Shack.

If you remember The Shack, a lot of people were really moved by the fact of The Shack. Well, the fact of the matter is The Shack is not a Christian book. It is in fact an anti-Christian book.



[ 26 : 15 ] It promises God's blessing simply for the asking with no further responsibility to God or anyone else. when we come to what Jesus says about preaching there is our praying there is no such promises anyway the whole point to stay away from irreverent and silly myths they're a waste of time and they can condemn your soul you with me so if you want to apostate your proof cling to Jesus and have nothing to do with irreverent and silly myths the third way to apostate your proof your life is to train yourself for godliness train yourself for godliness note the contrast in verse seven have nothing to do with irreverent silly myths rather train yourself for godliness and it's kind of interesting and I was just thinking about this I'll get to it in a second but I really believe Paul is calling attention to those who want the quick fix to spiritual maturity just as we see those who want quick fixes for weight loss or muscle gain today we've seen that there's some myths develop some sort of spiritual importance or we want to elevate ourselves in Christian community we believe that godliness means attention there's a whole industry designed to make people understand or believe that there's a fast way to Christian maturity in fact my quick my one of my pet peeves if you go to a conference and you come back and I've been to a lot of Christian conferences and that the takeaway I've seen from people is if we can do things exactly like that church if we can have the exact same pews the exact same sound system and the exact same songs that will make everything change in the church it'll go from unhealthy to healthy no takes time hearts need to be cultivated they need to be grown people need to be disciplined in fact the biggest problem that is facing this church of Ephesus is there's unqualified leaders and servants and the reason why there's false teaching is because they're not qualified to be doing the work that God has called them to now I want to answer the question what is godliness it's a technical term it means a life totally consecrated to God a life consecrated to God it's carrying on an emphasis of the observable aspects of this life one commentator writes it is not the self-centered ascetic struggle of the individual for his own moral and religious perfection but the training necessary for the unhindered pursuit of God's purposes amen to be godly is to mean to shed all that useless earthly garbage that we have in our life and we prepare ourselves to be used for God's purposes amen to get rid of why are you wasting that time with irreverent teaching why are you wasting time with those silly myths it is about living a life that is totally unhindered to God now I know a lot of people when they hear that word holiness or godliness it means that I have to be perfect that's not what those terms mean because I'm going to tell you right now if you're striving for perfection you are going to be one of the most depressed people in the world in fact you will depress yourself out of church you will depress yourself out of the faith because you

will never be perfect it's never going to happen that's why jesus doesn't say hey be like me we hear that all the time be like jesus we can't be like jesus he's perfect we are not he actually makes it easy for us be meek be humble forgive one another pursue righteousness you take care of those things and you will experience growth i always likened it and i still remember this analogy when i was in college is that if you were a sword to be used to be cut for the kingdom you want to make sure you're sharp and clean rather than dull and rusty because you do not know when jesus christ is going to call you into the fight john calvin simply stated that godliness is the beginning middle and the end of christian living how important is this word godliness paul uses it 15 times in his books so how does one get godliness well first we note that we have to train for it what does that mean if you have to train for it it's not natural it's not natural you have to make a decision that you want it then you need to prepare for it anybody here know any professional athletes or olympic athletes at all no never met any of them if you know their lives there's not a single one of them gets to the olympics or to become a pro athlete because they're naturally good they get their natural goodness gets them better than us right but once they make that next level it has got nothing to do with natural ability it has something to do with hard hard work i remember i grew up in a city there was a young girl she's a year older than me and she had the pleasure of winning a silver medal for canada at the summer olympics she had no life she trained all the time her school and we are in northern ontario where snow is around i think nine to ten months of the year they had made an indoor track in the hallways for her she was a sprinter and she would train all year long did she go to prom no did she date no did she have any life outside of training no but she did it to receive the goal same way of the christian life we have to train ourselves train the root word is gymnasio it's where we get the word gymnasium it means to grow to get better to be disciplined why so we can bring about change but i want to tell you something training takes time and if you're familiar with the writings of paul you will know that he uses the word walk a lot he uses walk everywhere and when he uses the word walk what he means is he has a deliberate action that is done over time you with me on that you don't need to be gifted to walk right don't need to have that natural ability to walk you just walk you're going from one place to another anybody can do it it's a deliberate action that you decide to do i'm going to walk to brackendale takes the decision i map out the path and i walk we do so because it's purposeful now notice what he says in ephesians 2 10 says we are his workmanship created in christ jesus for good works which god prepared beforehand what we should walk in them do what we've been trained

do what we learned ephesians 5 8 for at one time you were darkness but now you are light of the world light in the lord walk as children of light carry on living with purpose ephesians 5 15 look carefully then how you walk not as unwise but wise so godliness is an intentional purposeful action good works doesn't save you but good works is the product of walking for jesus christ amen they flow from you godliness is a disposition that we literally put on it's a mindset you have to work at it it's not easy think of it as walking or moving towards jesus a changed life by jesus will lead to good works slowly but surely as one walks themselves to christian health i encounter people all the time who believe that if i do a few outward actions if i can learn a few tidbits of information i will truly have spiritual understanding it doesn't happen that way maturity takes time so this training this working out our faith this walking how important is it verse 8 take a look at the text says for 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 now listen people try to use this text to justify working out all the time right you just need to be around ray crewmate for three seconds i'm just teasing you know ray's fit it takes hard it's effort you get big get strong but the reality is it's the same thing spiritually just doesn't happen raise a product of 20 30 years of fitness you know he's been doing this since high school and it gets them big and strong and for us it's different but what paul's telling us is that pursuing god is more value it's value forever it's a value that cannot be compared verse 9 the saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance for 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 how important is godliness where does it rank in our top priorities to paul and timothy it was everything like manual labor there is toiling to it something you strive for you sweat over the idea is to agonize over this you know where most of the agony is it's against our own flesh we want to be lazy we want to binge tv for x amount of hours rather than spending time listening to sermons or doing a bible study how many of you know how to exegete a passage to take a part of scripture and to dissect it and see what the message is to read it with comprehension most people know how to read it take out some personal application but if you were to teach it to another would you feel comfortable and it was interesting i was

talking to someone who has a different theological position to me and he was asking me why i'm so nice to him and i was kind of like what do you mean why would i be unnice to you and he says well i know this other pastor and he's not really that nice we kind of butt heads and i said oh i totally disagree with your position i don't have a problem with that i'll teach you but i said if you were a preacher preaching that from the pulpit you and i would have words at that point because it's i just said as far as i'm concerned you're just working out your faith the holy spirit's much better uh person to depend on than me to tell you what's right or wrong but as you grow but if you started teaching that then i'm going to sit down with you and we're going to have words over this because all of a sudden you have a much greater responsibility with what comes out of your mouth you just talking about your points of view with me on the golf course is pretty much meaningless but if you're going to teach this to other people i'm going to say oh red flag my friend you need to really sit down and understand what you're saying before you spread that to other people no matter how sincere you are you see we have this flesh we fight against we have this world system that works against us we have a devil and his minions working against us and not only that we live in a broken sinful world the reality is it's not just our sin that we faced people have sinned against us they have brought hurt against us some of the stuff is vile sometimes we come from a country of war starvation where there's no peace all those things affect us we have to toil against them colossians 129 paul says for this i toil with all energy that he powerfully works in me why because our god is alive in contrast to the dead god that lived in this beautiful city of ephesus ephesus had this huge temple to diana or artemis which covered the whole city and everybody was there to worship her but you know what the difference was paul knew his god was real they worshiped a made up imaginary god this is why paul could say i have hope set on the living god you see this is not a hope that is based on future possibility that may or may not come true but no it is a confident anticipation of that which we do not yet see these words that paul writes here are written in the present tense we see the emphasis on the continuing assurance that a believer has that his hope will be be actualized what does that mean our god is real amen he's going to do what he's going to do and that should motivate us to be able to pursue these things because our god matters you see paul doesn't mind toiling for the gospel because he knows that god is alive because god is alive he will accomplish all that he has planned to accomplish and i want to bring to your attention this section of this verse that causes some to stumble in their understanding it says verse 10 second half he says who is the savior of all people especially of those who believe it's kind of weird right god is the savior of all people especially to those who believe essentially what he's talking about well people it means that jesus christ god is the savior of every tribe every nation every tongue of this world that god is calling people to himself from every nation

doesn't mean everybody because we know some people aren't going to believe but from every nation every tribe and every tongue people will believe and why is this important it means you didn't need to be jewish anymore gentiles the way of salvation the way of godliness is open to us as well god is the savior of all men that is to say he is the savior of those who believe the fact of the matter is it is god's desire that you know him it is god's desire that you worship him it is god's desire that you know holiness and godliness so this morning when we talk about what it means to fall away from the faith there's the first three ways to apostate proof your life is to seek god and his wisdom stay away from irreverent and silly myths and to train yourself for godliness if you're confused what that means to train yourself praise god because paul's going to give us the answers which we're going to talk about next time i preach on this series and what's amazing is the emphasis that paul places on the church where this growth occurs and we're a church and we get to be a part of everyone's task of growing in godliness let me pray dear lord heavenly father we just thank you for your word we thank you for timothy who you use to encourage paul at times and paul encouraged at times that he was willing to be trained disciplined and to go forth and to go forth and to go forth and to go forth and to go forth and to messy circumstances he's willing to be slandered and given a hard time but he chose to preach your word he chose to preach truth father i pray that we all would have a paul in our life and a timothy in our life that we would have someone that builds into us that teaches us your word and that we become timothy and we teach these truths to others as well this is the way this is the way you've always designed it to be to disciple to teach everything that jesus christ has taught there's someone here who has walked away from the faith and come back or just checking things out i i pray for special mercies for them i pray that you will give them special understanding i pray that they'll be able to release the hurt or the the pain being hurt by others perhaps it was neglect perhaps it was wrong teaching perhaps it was short-tempered friends perhaps it was legalism perhaps it was liberalism there's so many tools that are at the disposal of satan to discourage our faith but for those of us who know christ there is a hope and we center our life on that hope i pray that we would certainly seek after you maybe we throw away those reverent and silly myths that we would dedicate ourselves to godliness to train ourselves to be used by you to have eternal purposes and eternal consequences i pray that no one's life here would be irrelevant i pray that we make the decision that not to our fear wouldn't be to live a bad life

[ 46 : 36 ] but our fear would be to live an irrelevant life pray that we would all choose to desire to please our master that god would reach down in our lives and teach us and tell us that we are indeed good servants because we were following his doctrine god there's so much complexity yet simplicity to this faith i pray you give us an understanding for it and at the same time keep the evil one away we ask these things your most gracious and heavenly name amen