



WEEK 5

Ready Against Deception

Paul warns Timothy that the enemy's favorite weapon is deception - making lies look like truth. The Holy Spirit clearly told Paul that in the future, some people will abandon their faith because they'll believe demons who disguise themselves as teachers. These false teachers will make up rules that God never made and confuse people about what's right and wrong. Paul's solution is spiritual training. Just like athletes train their bodies for competition, Christians must train their souls for battle. This means reading Scripture, using spiritual gifts, teaching others, and setting a good example. Timothy might be young, but if he stays disciplined in his spiritual training, he'll be ready to spot and defeat deception when it comes.

THE SCRIPTURE: 1 TIMOTHY 4:1-16

¹ Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, ² through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, ³ who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴ For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, ⁵ for 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. ⁷ Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; ⁸ 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. ⁹ The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ Command and teach these things. ¹² Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. ¹³ Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. ¹⁴ Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. ¹⁵ Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. ¹⁶ Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS: WEEK 5

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever believed something that later proved to be completely false? How did you discover the truth?
2. What are some examples of deception you see prevalent in today's culture?

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3. Verse 1 says the Spirit "expressly says" that deception will come in "later times." What specific characteristics of false teaching does Paul identify in verses 1-3?
4. Paul contrasts false restrictions with God's good creation in verses 4-5. How does a proper understanding of God's gifts help us identify deception? What role does thanksgiving play in spiritual readiness?
5. In verses 6-8, Paul compares physical training with spiritual training. On the chart below compare these two types of training. Why does spiritual training have greater value, according to Paul?

<i>Benefits of 'bodily training'</i>	<i>Benefits of 'godliness'</i>

6. What does it look like to “train” yourself for godliness rather than “trying” to be godly? What’s the difference?
7. Verse 10 speaks of setting our hope “in the living God.” How does doing this equip us against deception? What does that look like practically in our lives?
8. Despite Timothy’s youth (v12), Paul encourages him to be an example. In what five areas should Timothy set an example?
9. Verses 13-16 emphasize teaching, reading Scripture, and using spiritual gifts. Why does Paul mention these things? Do you believe Timothy’s job was broader, or focused only on these areas?
10. The passage emphasizes perseverance (v16). Why is persistence crucial when fighting against deception? What might cause someone to give up in this battle?
11. Look back over the qualities that Paul tells Timothy to set an example in: speech, life, love, faith, purity. How are you exhibiting these qualities? Where do you need God’s grace to help you today?