

## Furthering the Administration of God

1 Tim. 1:3-7

### Introduction:

1. A consultant to businesses and organizations said that his job was to get the companies to ask and rigorously answer two questions: “What are we supposed to be doing? And, How well are we doing it?”
2. I think it is important for us as Christian individuals and as a congregation to ask and rigorously answer these two questions.
  - a. The first question defines what our purpose is.
  - b. The second defines what we need to be doing to accomplish it.
3. I think this is the kind of thing Paul is trying to get at in 1 Tim. 1:3-7. It seems that some Christian teachers had gotten sidetracked from their ultimate objective. Paul would have Timothy to bring things into better focus for them. He wants their objectives to be clear. And he wants them to narrowly address the work of God.
4. Reading of 1 Tim. 1:3-7.
5. It is easy for us to get distracted, even to get sidetracked, on to things of lesser importance and sometimes of **no** importance to the work of God.

### Discussion:

- I. Our ultimate objective is to be that which “furthers the administration of God.”
  - A. What does it mean to further the administration of God? What is the administration of God?
    1. The reference to “the administration of God” is from the NASB.
    2. The KJV refers to “godly edifying.”
    3. The NIV speaks of promoting “God’s work.”
  - B. The Greek word translated here is (“oikonomia”) “stewardship.”
    1. You may be reminded of the parable of the unrighteous steward in Lk. 16 who was put in charge of the management of the rich man’s possessions, but instead of managing the business successful he squandered the rich man’s possessions.
    2. A steward is therefore a manager or an administrator that is to take care of the business affairs for another. George Bush is a manager or administrator in our government. News reporters sometimes refer to the Bush Administration.
  - C. What does all this mean as applied to 1 Tim. 4?
    1. God has a work to be done. It involves instructing people in the way of God.
    2. These teachers or instructors are stewards, managers, administrators of the instruction of God.
      - a. In 1 Cor. 4:1-2 Paul refers to preachers and teachers as a servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
      - b. Overseers (elders) are God’s stewards (Titus 1:7).

- c. Christians generally are stewards of the gifts that God has given them (1 Pet. 4:10). These gifts are to be used in serving one another.
- 3. Christian teachers are to do that which furthers the work of God in their teaching.
  - a. They should not do anything that would detract from it.
  - b. The Christian teachers at Ephesus were teaching “strange teachings.” They were paying attention to “myths and endless genealogies” which gave rise to speculation (questions).
  - c. I am less concerned about what these “strange teachings” were and more concerned that they were giving their attention to teachings that did not accomplish the objective of furthering the affairs of the house of God.

II. What kind of teaching furthers the stewardship of God and what kind of teaching does not? How can we tell the difference?

- A. One kind of teaching leads to “questionings” (KJV), “mere speculation” (NASB), “promote controversies” (NIV).
  - 1. The Greek is “ekzetesis”—meaning dispute. Used in 1 Tim. 6:3-5. An important passage in this discussion. Refers to some who have a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction.
  - 2. There may be times that dissension and debate is appropriate, as in Paul and Barnabas’ disagreement with those who demanded Gentiles be circumcised in order to be saved (Acts 15:2).
  - 3. But there are times when promoting controversies needs to be ended (Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Tim. 2:14-18) and we need to get back to work on furthering the stewardship of God.
- B. Sound, healthy teaching results in love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

III. But if there are occasions where dissension and debate is appropriate, like in Paul and Barnabas’ disagreement with those who demanded Gentiles be circumcised, how do we make a decision when we should be involved and when we should not? Guidelines for determining involvement.

- A. Is it a question of something that is clearly revealed in Scripture?
  - 1. God has not always revealed everything that I would like to know.
  - 2. I realize that I am spiritually immature. Contributes to my confusion.
  - 3. Learned more over the years and some of the things I was very confident about in my earlier years I am not so confident about now.
- B. Is it critical?
  - 1. Some things are matters of no great consequence.
  - 2. Different people have different judgments about these things.
- C. Do I have to decide this?

1. Sometimes there are judgments that can be made that avoid forcing anyone to violate their conscience, even in cases of disagreements over what the Bible says.
  2. We can find mutually agreeable practices.
- D. Is it really a matter of what the Scripture says or is it about the disputants egos?
1. Those in 1 Tim. 1 wanted to be teachers of the Law even though they did not understand what they were saying or the matters about which they made confident assertions. Appears to me they are looking to elevate themselves, rather than furthering the administration of God.
  2. Those in 1 Tim. 6 supposed that godliness was a means of gain.
    - a. Often interpreted to have reference to financial gain.
    - b. May have reference to ego gains. Verse 4 describes them as conceited.
  3. Those in Rom. 16:17ff were slaves of their own appetites. May have been their ego appetite.
  4. People often feel inadequate and want to build themselves up as important. Diotrephes (3 Jn. 9) loved to have the preeminence. People crave places of importance, position, power. These are worldly perspectives.
  5. We are all valuable because we are created in God's image. We are valuable and important because we are God's people. We don't need to bolster our egos with the exaltation given by men for "whipping our opponents."
  6. When envy, jealousy, name-calling and the like are involved the disputes are not about the truth of God they are about the egos of the disputants. Such disputes do not further the administration of God. They further the administration of the disputants. They defend and exalt themselves, rather than the stewardship of God.

Conclusion:

1. Let us understand that we are the beloved of God.
2. Let us not be conceited, jealous and envious, given to quarrelling.
3. Let us remind ourselves of what we are supposed to be doing.
4. Let us get on with the work.
5. One of the great things about being able to work with this congregation is that we work together in unity and peace.