Key Question

> *In 1 Timothy 4:3, the Apostle Paul talks about people* “forbidding others to marry.” *What exactly does this mean, and how does it apply to us today?*

Biblical Passage – 1 Timothy 4:1–3

> *“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,*
> *through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.”*
> (1 Timothy 4:1–3)

Paul, writing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, prophesies about *“later times”* (Greek: *kairos*, meaning a decisive season in history). He says that some believers will *“depart from the faith”*

by following false, demonically-inspired teachings. One of those teachings includes forbidding marriage—a foundational institution created by God (Genesis 2:24).

What Does “Forbidding to Marry” Really Mean?

The Greek word for *“forbid”* is *kōlyontōn*, meaning to hinder, prevent, or block someone from doing something lawful or good. This isn’t simply giving advice; it’s an intentional act of restricting access to something God has ordained.

Jesus uses a similar idea in:

> *“Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering.”*
> (Luke 11:52, ESV)

In this context, the religious leaders misrepresented God’s truth, thus blocking access to the Kingdom for others.

How This Happens Today – Practical Examples

Paul’s warning wasn’t only for his time—it’s very relevant now. Many modern forms of *“forbidding marriage”* still exist, though they may appear in subtle or culturally acceptable ways.

1. Same-Sex “Marriage” in Churches

Many denominations now bless same-sex marriages, claiming they are holy unions. Yet biblically, marriage is defined clearly as the union of one man and one woman:

> *“Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”* (Genesis 2:24)

By endorsing unbiblical unions, these churches mislead people into thinking they are married before God—when in truth, they’ve been spiritually blocked from entering a true covenant marriage.

2. Cohabitation Without Biblical Marriage

In many churches today, couples live together, have children, and are treated as if they are married—without ever entering a biblical marriage covenant. When leaders do not address this sin, they are passively withholding the truth, and thus preventing those couples from honoring God’s design.

> *“Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.”*
> (Hebrews 13:4)

Such silence from church leadership keeps people in sexual sin without correction, effectively *forbidding* them from marrying properly.

3. Remarriage Without Biblical Grounds

Some churches perform weddings for individuals who were

divorced without biblical justification, without even investigating their prior history. Jesus is clear:

> *“Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.”*
> (Luke 16:18)

When church leaders bless such unions, they may unknowingly lead someone into lifelong adultery, thinking they are legitimately married—when in God’s eyes, they are not.

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4. Polygamy (Multiple Wives)

Some churches, especially in certain cultures, permit men to marry multiple wives, using Old Testament examples like Solomon or David as justification. But the New Testament standard for marriage is monogamy:

> *“An overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one*

> *wife…”*
> (1 Timothy 3:2)

Even though polygamy existed in the Old Testament, it never reflected God’s ideal. Churches that permit it today mislead their members, preventing them from experiencing the true biblical form of marriage.

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5. Tolerating Fornication Without Correction

When churches ignore sexual immorality among unmarried couples—those living together, having sex outside of marriage, or dating while sleeping together—they are withholding truth.

If leaders do not warn or teach the biblical standard, people may never feel convicted, and never take the step of marriage—thus remaining in sin while falsely believing they’re right with God.

> *“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral… will inherit the kingdom of God.”*

> (1 Corinthians 6:9–10)

How to Guard Against This Deception

1. Love God Fully

> *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”*
> (Matthew 22:37)

When you love God completely, you’ll seek His truth. You’ll read Scripture, understand it, and reject teachings that twist or distort God’s Word.

2. Saturate Yourself in the Word

> *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”*
> (Psalm 119:105)

God’s Word protects against spiritual deception. If you don’t know the truth, you’re vulnerable to lies—like those promoting same-sex unions, polygamy, or cohabitation as marriage.

3. Pray Consistently

> *“Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.”*
> (Colossians 4:2)

Prayer sharpens your discernment and strengthens your walk with God. It helps you remain grounded in truth and resistant to cultural or doctrinal compromise.

Final Thoughts: Are You Ready?

The deceptive spirit that Paul warned about in 1 Timothy is active today, especially in areas like marriage. It operates quietly—through cultural trends, church traditions, and even silence from pulpits.

We must wake up and walk in the truth. If you’re not in a biblical marriage, or if your relationship doesn’t align with Scripture, seek God and repent. There is grace for anyone who turns to Christ.

> *“Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out…”*
> (Acts 3:19)

And if you haven’t yet accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, now is the time. The days are short. The Lord is coming soon.

Shalom.

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