

Blueprint for a Healthy Church
How To Guard Against Spiritual Drift (#5)

Sermon Notes

1 Timothy 4:1-16

February 1, 2026

Pastor Ed Turley

Big Idea: Spiritual drift happens **naturally**; growth happens **intentionally**.

To Guard Against Spiritual Drift:

1. Stay Anchored to the Truth of God's Word (vv. 1–5)

¹ Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the **last times** some will **turn away** from the true faith; they will **follow deceptive spirits** and teachings that come from demons.

² These people are **hypocrites and liars**, and their **consciences are dead**.

³ They will say it is **wrong to be married** and wrong to **eat certain foods**. But God created those foods to be eaten with thanks by faithful people who know the truth.

⁴ Since everything God created is good, we should not reject any of it but **receive it with thanks**. ⁵ For we know it is made acceptable by the word of God and prayer.

1 Timothy 4:1-5 (NLT2)

As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer. **1 Timothy 1:3 (NIV)**

The goal of this command is **love**, which comes from a **pure heart** and a **good conscience** and a **sincere faith**. **1 Timothy 1:5 (NIV)**

We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers--and for whatever else is **contrary to the sound doctrine** ¹¹ that **conforms** to the glorious **gospel of the blessed God**, which He entrusted to me. **1 Tim. 1:9-11**

- **Legalism** – trying to earn favor or salvation through rules
- **Abuse of Grace** – living a life contrary to sound doctrine

Notes: _____

2. Train Daily for Godliness (vv. 6–10)

⁶ If you explain these things to the brothers and sisters, Timothy, you will be a **worthy servant** of Christ Jesus, one who is **nourished** by the message of faith and the good teaching you have followed. ⁷ Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly. ⁸ "Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come."

⁹ This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it. ¹⁰ This is why we work hard and continue to struggle, for our hope is in the living God, who is the Savior of all people and particularly of all believers. **1 Timothy 4:6-10 (NLT2)**

No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way. ¹² So take a **new grip** with your **tired hands** and strengthen your **weak knees**. ¹³ Mark out a **straight path for your feet so that those who are weak and lame will not fall but become strong.** **Hebrews 12:11-13 (NLT2)**

Notes: _____

3. Live a Faith Worth Following (vv. 11–16)

¹¹ **Teach** these things and **insist** that everyone learn them. ¹² Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. **Be an example** to all believers in what you **say**, in the way you **live**, in your **love**, your **faith**, and your **purity**. **1 Timothy 4:11-12 (NLT2)**

- Speech –
- Conduct –
- Love –
- Faith –
- Purity –

¹³ Until I get there, focus on **reading the Scriptures** to the church, **encouraging the believers**, and **teaching them**. ¹⁴ Do not neglect the spiritual gift you received through the prophecy spoken over you when the elders of the church laid their hands on you.

¹⁵ Give your **complete attention** to these matters. **Throw yourself into your tasks** so that everyone will see your progress. ¹⁶ Keep a close watch on **how you live** and on your **teaching**. **Stay true to what is right** for the sake of **your own salvation** and **the salvation of those who hear you**. **1 Timothy 4:13-16 (NLT2)**

Notes: _____

- Is your walk matching your words?
- Who is being influenced by your example?

My Next Steps

[] Accept Jesus as my Lord and Savior

[] Recommit to daily time in God's Word

[] Reestablish one spiritual discipline this week (worship, prayer, fellowship, serving, sharing Christ)

[] Register for Anchored – Church Center – Events – Anchored



“How to Guard Against Spiritual Drift” (#5) 1 Timothy 4:1-16

Cornerstone Church of Poway

Pastor Ed Turley

February 1, 2026

Leader Focus:

- ✓ Review questions beforehand so you are prepared
- ✓ Honor your time commitment as a group.
- ✓ Keep discussion relational, not reactive
- ✓ Reinforce grace, humility, and unity

Big Idea: Spiritual drift happens **naturally**. Growth happens **intentionally**.

Welcome & Icebreaker (5–10 minutes)

Icebreaker Question (Choose one):

Have you ever drifted somewhere unintentionally—physically, relationally, or spiritually?

What’s an area of life where maintenance matters more than we realize (health, finances, relationships, etc.)?

Discussion & Reflection

1. Stay Anchored to the Truth (vv. 1–5)

Read 1 Timothy 4:1-5

Spiritual drift often begins with deceptive teaching. Why do you think false ideas can sound so convincing?

Pastor mentioned two dangerous philosophies:

- **Legalism** – trying to earn favor or salvation through rules
- **Abuse of Grace** – living a life contrary to sound doctrine

In what ways can good things (rules, opinions, preferences) slowly replace grace?

What voices most shape your beliefs right now—Scripture, culture, social media, past experiences?

How can we be truly anchored to God’s Word instead of just familiar with spiritual ideas?

2. Train Daily for Godliness (vv. 6–10)

Read 1 Timothy 4:6-10

Paul compares spiritual growth to athletic training. What stands out to you in that comparison?

What happens to our faith when spiritual disciplines slowly fade?

Which discipline has been hardest for you to maintain in this season—prayer, Scripture, worship, rest, or community?

What is one small discipline God may be calling you to reclaim—not perfectly, but intentionally?

3. Live a Faith Worth Following (vv. 11–16)

Read 1 Timothy 4:11-16

Paul lists five areas of example: speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. Which one do you sense God highlighting for you right now?

Why does Paul connect watching our life with watching our doctrine?

How does our daily obedience protect us from spiritual drift?

Who might be influenced—positively or negatively—by the way you live out your faith?

Personal Response & Next Steps (5 minutes)

Choose one response step this week:

Recommit to daily time in God's Word

Reestablish one spiritual discipline

Ask God to reveal any area of drift and respond in obedience

Closing Prayer (Leader or Group)

Suggested Prayer:

“Lord, we confess that drift can happen quietly in our hearts. Thank You for loving us enough to warn us and call us back. Anchor us in Your truth, train us in godliness, and help us live a faith worth following. Show us where drift may be happening and give us the grace to respond with obedience. In Jesus' name, Amen.”