

1 Timothy 1:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

Analysis

Desiring to be teachers of the law (θέλοντες εἶναι νομοδιδάσκαλοι, *thelontes einai nomodidaskaloi*)—'wanting to be teachers of the law.' Nomodidaskalos means law-teacher, used of Jewish scribes who taught Torah. These false teachers aspired to authoritative positions interpreting Scripture (likely OT law, genealogies, traditions).

Understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm (μὴ νοοῦντες μήτε ἃ λέγουσιν μήτε περὶ τίνων διαβεβαιοῦνται, *mē noountes mēte ha legousin mēte peri tinōn diabebaiountai*)—'not understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.' Noeō means to perceive, understand, comprehend. Diabebaioomai means to assert confidently, insist strongly.

The damning verdict: these teachers speak with great confidence about things they don't understand. They want the status of 'teacher' but lack comprehension of their subject. Their confident assertions are based on ignorance—dangerous combination. Pride masquerading as expertise.

Historical Context

Jewish teachers (rabbis, scribes) held honored positions in synagogues, interpreting Torah and tradition with great authority. Some apparently sought similar status in the church, teaching elaborate interpretations of OT without

understanding the gospel fulfillment. Paul exposes their pretense—they sound authoritative but are actually confused, misleading others with their own ignorance.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What drives people to teach confidently about things they don't truly understand?
2. How can churches discern between genuine biblical knowledge and impressive-sounding ignorance?
3. What safeguards protect against the ambition to teach without adequate understanding?

Interlinear Text

θέλοντες	εἶναι	νομοδιδάσκαλοι	μὴ	νοοῦντες	μήτε	ἃ
Desiring	to be	teachers of the law	G3361	understanding	neither	what
G2309	G1511	G3547		G3539	G3383	G3739
λέγουσιν	μήτε	περὶ	τίνων	διαβεβαιοῦνται		
they say	neither	whereof	G5101	they affirm		
G3004	G3383	G4012		G1226		

Additional Cross-References

Romans 1:22 (Parallel theme): Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

2 Peter 2:12 (Parallel theme): But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

1 Timothy 6:4 (Word): He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

Galatians 3:5 (Word): He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Galatians 3:2 (Word): This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

2 Timothy 3:7 (Parallel theme): Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Matthew 15:14 (Parallel theme): Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

Galatians 4:21 (Word): Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?