

## Paul's Epistles to Individuals

### Lesson 19 – 2 Timothy 3:1 – 3

#### I. Difficult Times (v. 1)

Throughout this epistle Paul centers on the importance of sound doctrine and warns against those who are purveyors of false teachings. These warnings are clearly important because of the damage that can be done by unsound doctrines.

##### A. *Last Days*

The “last days” here do not refer to some apocalyptic age as some would suggest but is the time of the gospel. Following the age of the patriarchs and the times under the Old Law, these last days are the times from **Acts 2** until Christ comes again. “Times” (gr. *Kairos*) means a period or a season possessing certain characteristics. In this case, the characteristic is Christ and His word being in authority. **1Tim. 4:1** says “*latter times*” and refers to some departing from the faith during this period. See also **Acts 2:17-21** wherein Peter refers to the OT (**Joel 2:28-32**) while delivering the gospel to those at Pentecost and defines the last days as having come. The Hebrew writer also distinguished the “*times past*” from these “*last days*” (**Heb 1:1-2** – “*God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world*”). Paul further indicates that the end will come when all “all enemies are put under His feet”, when the last enemy (death) is abolished (**1 Cor. 15:22-28**) so the “last days” here cannot refer to the end times as some suggest.

##### B. *Perilous Times*

It is in these “last days” that perilous or difficult times will come. The characteristics of these difficult times are further explained as times wherein people will exhibit all sorts of evil behaviors. The word here is from the Greek “*chalepos*”, meaning grievous or hard to bear. For the people of God, these last days will be hard to tolerate because of the evil seen in the world and the potential effect those influences might have on the people of God. The world has always been as it is with times on occasion being more or less difficult. Jesus clearly states that we are not “of the world”, though once we formally were dead in our sins and walked in the “course of this world” (**Eph. 2:1-10**) and are to be set apart from its influences, even though we must work within the world to accomplish the work of Christ (**John 17:13-23**).

#### II. Worldly Conducts Will Be Apparent (vs. 2-3) *Continues in Next Lesson*

Paul continues to warn Timothy that the influences of evil will be apparent in men during these times. Later in the chapter (**vs. 10, 14**) he contrasts the behaviors of Timothy with those selfish and evil conducts exhibited by those who walk according to the world.

##### A. *Lovers of Self*

The love here is the Greek “*philos*”, which indicates affection. Men will have first affection for themselves. Selfishness is a terrible perspective that causes many subsequent missteps. It is rooted in pride and a misplaced sense of entitlement. Jesus made it clear that self-denial is a requirement of service to Christ (**Matt. 16:24-26**). See also **Phili. 2:3-9, James 3:16, Rom. 2:5-10, Matt. 23:25, 1 Cor. 10:24**.

*B. Lovers of Money*

Covetousness is likewise a selfish behavior. The Greek, “philarguros” is a compound word meaning literally, “affection for silver”. This is a real threat because of its worldly inclination. Paul also warns of this in **1 Tim. 6:5-10**. Also see **Luke 12:16-21** and **Matt. 6:19-21**.

*C. Boastful and Arrogant*

Closely aligned, these two characteristics position one person above another. To boast (Gr. alazon) is to claim inflated qualities for one’s self. The word means “an empty pretender” and usually connotes an effort to claim a position of superiority (**Rom. 12:3**) and is at odds with the humility expected of God’s people (**1 Pet. 5:5-6**). Arrogance or pride is contrary to truth (**Rom. 12:16, Mark 7:22-23, 1 John 2:16**).

*D. Revilers*

Blasphemers are those who speak evil against God, His word or His people. Paul was once a blasphemer and a violent aggressor (**1 Tim. 1:13**). Christians are to be prepared for this onslaught (**1 Pet. 3:16**) and should take Jesus as their example (**1 Pet. 2:23**) because those who revile are unreasonable, reminding us of Cain, Balaam and Korah (**Jude 8-10**).

*E. Disobedient to Parents*

Always condemned (**Deut. 21:18-21**), this fundamental failure to obey authority is always dangerous and indicative of rebellion against lawful authority (**Eph. 6:1-4**). Parents should work hard to insure their children do not develop this habit because it is hard to break as an adult. Obedience is to be rendered to Godly direction as shown by the phrase “in the Lord” in **Eph. 6**.

*F. Unthankful and Unholy*

God’s people are to be thankful (**1 Thes. 5:18, Col. 3:17; 4:2**). Those who subscribe to the world tend not to be. “Unholy” means to be wicked (**2 Pet. 2:10**).

*G. Unloving and Irreconcilable*

“Without natural affection” and “trucebreakers” (KJV) describe externalized inclinations. They don’t love others and they can’t be trusted. These people aren’t bound by the desires to care for others or keep their word toward others which is sin (**1 Cor. 13, James 5:12**).

*F. Malicious Gossips*

Called “false accusers” in the KJV, these individuals model the behavior attributed to the devil. The Greek word is “diabolos”, the same word used in **John 8:44**. These people grumble and complain, making false accusations and thereby destroy unity, which is at odds with love (**Ex. 20:16; 23:1, Phili. 2:14, Eph. 4:2-3**).

*G. Without Self-Control, Brutal*

The ideas here are linked in that those who lack self-control might tend to be vicious toward others. The revilers described in Jude were these types of people. The Jewish mob from Antioch and Iconium who attacked Paul and left him for dead in **Acts 14:19**, those who attacked Jason in **Acts 17:5-8** or the Philippian merchants who seized Paul and Silas in **Acts 16:19** because of their loss of profit are examples.

*H. Haters of Good*

**Titus 1:15-16** describes those who have a defiled mind and conscious to whom nothing is good.