

Paul's Epistles to Individuals

Lesson 20 – 2 Timothy 3:4-9, 13

I. **Worldly Conducts Will Be Apparent (vs. 4-7) *Continued from Last Lesson***

Beginning in verse 2, Paul continues to warn Timothy that the influences of evil will be apparent in men during these times and lists their defining characteristics. Items A through H from verses 2-3 are described in the last lesson.

I. Treacherous (v. 4)

Here the Greek word “*prodotes*” is translated “traitor” in the KJV. Used only two other times in the NT, the word describes Judas in **Luke 6:16** and the Hebrews in regard to their treatment of the prophets in **Acts 7:52**. The idea is describing those who would disadvantage others for personal gain.

J. Reckless (v. 4)

“Heady” in the KJV, the word (Gr. “*propetes*”) indicates someone who would be headstrong in the pursuit of a bad end, driven by unreasonable emotion and hatred. To be rash. Again, Judas might be seen as an example (**Matt. 26:14-16**) or Pharaoh in Exodus who repeatedly reneged on his promises to let the Israelites go from Egypt.

K. Conceited (v. 4)

“High minded” in the KJV, is the Greek “*tuphoo*”. The literal meaning of the word is “to raise up a smoke”, hence it being translated as “puffed up” in the ASV. Used here metaphorically for pride, it is clear that prideful arrogance is sinful (**1 Tim. 3:6; 6:4; 1 Cor. 4:6, 18; 5:2; 8:1; 13:4**).

L. Lovers of Pleasure (v. 4)

To love earthly pleasures more than God is selfish and aligned with the previously discussed “conceit”. It doesn't matter if the pleasures are in themselves sinful. If we love anything more than God, even our closest family, we sin (**Matt. 10:37**). The pleasures of this life are identified as some of the thorns that can choke out the seed of the Word (Luke 8:14) and those pleasures can enslave us (**Titus 3:3**).

M. Holding to a Form of Godliness (v. 5)

These individuals will claim to be Godly but deny the true form of Godliness. They deny the power of the Word by only displaying some outward appearances without having the inward conviction to “hold fast” to the Word (**1 Cor. 15:2**) and thereby avoiding every form of evil (**1 Thes. 5:21-22**). This kind of half-hearted effort was condemned by Jesus (**Matt. 23:23-32**).

N. Those Who Enter Into Houses and Captivate Weak Women (vs. 6-7)

These individuals would take advantage of the weaker who would more easily fall for their deceptions. Here the example is of weak women but the principle would apply to anyone who would fall prey to their evil devices. The Bible teaches that women tend to be more easily deceived than men, with Eve being the first example (**1 Tim. 2:14-15**). This certainly is not a universal truth but especially in ancient times, a trusting or naïve nature common to women could easily be exploited to cause deceit. This would result in confusion and a failure to develop a sound knowledge of the truth as we see described here (**v. 7**).

II. So Avoid These Men (v. 5)

In **verse 5**, Paul warns that these individuals are to be avoided. This principle is found in many places throughout the Bible. We are to avoid those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to sound doctrine (**Rom. 16:17-18**). We are to avoid foolish and unlearned questions, and by implication those who would purvey them (**2 Tim. 2:23; Titus 3:9**). We are to follow positive examples and avoid negative ones (**Phili. 3:17-19**), avoiding immoral people who have turned away from the Truth (**1 Cor. 5:9-11; 2 Thes. 3:6**).

III. Because They are Depraved (v. 8)

Moving from a discussion of those who may be deceived, Paul now addresses those who would be deceivers. He compares them to Jannes and Jambres, who are identified by name in other ancient writings as some of the sorcerers and magicians who advised Pharaoh in **Exodus 7:11 and 9:11**. By inspiration, Paul here also identifies them by name. By virtue of these other traditional writings, it seems that their names were well known to the Jews of the day. False teachers in the 1st Century may have also practiced sorcery as we see in Ephesus (**Acts 19:19**). So as these opposed Moses, the false teachers opposed the Truth in Paul's time. They are "*rejected as regards the Faith*" (**v. 8**). The KJV uses the word "reprobate" here. The Greek word is "*adokimos*", meaning "rejected after being tested for the purpose of approving". The "faith" here is synonymous with the gospel (**Acts 6:7; Jude 3**). So these false teachers are rejected or condemned by the very gospel they propose to teach.

IV. But They Will Be Unsuccessful (v. 9)

The last part of this verse refers to Jannes and Jambres. Their folly was exposed completely by God's victory over Pharaoh and his ultimate destruction. Though they may have had some influence with Pharaoh, their teachings did not stand and were ultimately defeated. False teaching may take hold temporarily but they cannot stand in time. Ultimately, the Truth will win. Even the sorcerer himself eventually is convicted of his folly as was Simon (**Acts 8:9-13**). Timothy needed these words of encouragement, understanding that the Truth is to be taught and eventually it will have its intended effect on all men (**Phili. 2:10-11**), even if not until the end of time.

V. They Will Proceed From Bad to Worse (v. 13)

Skipping ahead to **verse 13**, Paul warns Timothy that a quick solution will not be found to these false teachers and their detrimental actions. The final solution is coming but in the meantime, these false efforts must be battled with the Truth. The natural tendency of sin in the heart of man is for it to grow worse. If left to its own influences, it will rot the person from the inside. In **1 Cor. 5**, sin is likened to leaven, which if left unchecked with influence the entire lump. This is true of the local church but also the heart of the individual. It can take such a hold over a person that they are led to believe a lie, no longer being honest enough to extricate himself from that lie, he succumbs to its influence (**2 Thes. 2:10-12**). This is the nature of deceit. One allows himself to be deceived, becomes selfish and self motivated, moving to deceive others (**2 Pet. 2:2-3**). Sometimes it is simply the "blind leading the blind" (**Matt. 15:14**), because pride leads an individual to abandon self-examination and charge ahead in error. By abandoning the honorable practice of searching the authoritative source for justification of our beliefs and actions (**Acts 17:10-11**) we find authority in flawed men and are deceived (**1 Tim. 4:1-2**). **Proverbs 23:23** tells us to "*buy the truth and sell it not*". Whatever the cost, it is worth it because the world is filled with deceivers who would lead the people of God astray.