

## II TIMOTHY 3

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to II Timothy chapter 3 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

Remember back in chapter 2 of II Timothy how Paul encouraged Timothy to be strong in the faith.

In that chapter he used three illustrations to make his point of what a strong disciple of Jesus should manifest in his life, what a teacher is all about.

In other words, a teacher must *TEACH* others the things of God; you need to be able to pass on the information, the Gospel to others so they can pass it on.

In Psalm 78:4-8 we are told, **“We will not hide them from their children, Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done. For He established a testimony in Jacob, And appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers, That they should make them known to their children; That the generation to come might know them, The children who would be born, That they may arise and declare them to their children, That they may set their hope in God, And not forget the works of God, But keep His commandments; And may not be like their fathers, A stubborn and rebellious generation, A generation that did not set its heart aright, And whose spirit was not faithful to God.”**

Thus, as disciples of Jesus, may we *TEACH*, pass on to others the things of God.

And it is out of that we see these three points that a teacher needs to remember as he is serving the Lord.

Paul, first of all, speaks of a soldier who needs to stay *FOCUSED* on the battle he is in. He is not to allow himself to be distracted by the things of this world but has counted the cost of war and is ready to endure the hardships that soldiers face, obeying his commander.

The same is true for us, we are in a battle, we will face hardships, and we need to stay focused, not allowing the things of this world to entangle us from completing the work that our Commander has called us to do.

It is as Paul tells us in II Timothy 3:12, **“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”**

Thus, as a disciple of Jesus we need to stay *FOCUSED*.

Next, Paul speaks of an athlete who must obey the rules of the games or he will be disqualified, he must be *OBEDIENT*.

For us as Christians we need to be obedient to what the Lord has called us to do, to listen to His voice so we are not disqualified from service.

Paul put it this way in I Corinthians 9:24-27, **“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”**

Thus, a disciple of Jesus must be *OBEDIENT*.

And lastly, Paul speaks of a farmer who works hard and must be *PATIENT* waiting for the fruitful harvest to come in.

The farmer must prepare the ground, plant the seeds, care for it, and then, after time the seeds will begin to grow and then there is the harvest!

The important thing for us as we are waiting patiently for God to soften people's hearts is that we would partake of the fruit of God's Word because we can't give what we don't have; we need to be in the Word of God!

Thus, a disciple of Jesus is *PATIENT*.

Why am I going over this material again?

Because Paul is now going to share with Timothy that perilous times and perilous men are coming, it is going to get worse.

Keep in mind that Caesar Nero burned Rome in 64 A. D. and then blamed the Christians for doing it.

In 66 A. D. Paul was re-arrested and placed in the Mamertine prison there in Rome for his faith in Christ.

Many other Christians were being arrested as well; some being put to death for their faith in Christ! Persecution against Christians was growing quickly!

Think about this, "As he lies in his cell, a prisoner of the Lord, Paul is still preoccupied with the future of the gospel. His mind dwells now on the evil of the times, now on the diffidence of Timothy. Timothy is so weak, and the opposition so strong." (John Stott)

Thus, Paul is admonishing Timothy to stand strong in the face of this persecution because it is only going to get worse and worse.

Folks, just as this was a warning to Timothy regarding the Roman persecution, I truly believe it is a warning to us as the Day of the Lord quickly approaches and that man of sin, the Antichrist is revealed! And yes, we will be gathered to the Lord prior to the start – the Rapture!

And what we are going to see here is this departure from the faith, this moving away from the truths of God found in the Word of God!

And we will see, after Paul speaks of this coming apostasy, as we move in to II Timothy chapter 4, that Paul tells Timothy, to “**Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.**” II Timothy 4:2.

Let me show you how we got to this place of apostasy, and it is really pretty simple. You begin to sow doubt with the Word of God, “*Has God indeed said?*” and then you teach seminary students, and they teach their congregations, and here we are today, departing from the faith that has been entrusted to us.

Listen to what we are told,

How have we reached this crisis point in the Church? It is rooted in the German School of Higher Criticism which invaded this country big-time in the 1920’s. According to the “scientific approach” of this school of skeptics, the Bible is not the revealed Word of God. Rather, it is Man’s search for God, and therefore it is filled with myth, legend and superstition.

Today this viewpoint dominates the seminaries of America. The Bible is studied not to be believed and obeyed but to be analyzed, dissected, and criticized. The result is that the Scriptures have lost their authority.

John Spong, Episcopal Bishop of New Jersey, has written books in which he denies the virgin birth, denies the miracles of Jesus, denies the resurrection, denies the Second Coming, and argues that Paul and Timothy were homosexual lovers. Bishop Spong has become so enamored with other religions that he has announced he will no longer witness to those caught up in the spiritual darkness of pagan faiths!

Similar apostate thoughts were mouthed by Norman Vincent Peale in 1984 on the Phil Donahue program. Peale announced, “It’s not necessary to be born-again. You have your way to God; I have mine. I found eternal peace in a Shinto shrine . . . I’ve been to Shinto shrines, and God is everywhere.”

Phil Donahue was so shocked that he actually came to the defense of Christianity. “But you’re a Christian minister,” he retorted, “and you’re suppose to tell me that Christ is the way and the truth and the life, aren’t you?”

Peale replied, “Christ is one of the ways. God is everywhere.”

Look again at Peale’s incredible statement: “It’s not necessary to be born-again.” What did Jesus say? “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born-again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Who are we to believe?

- <https://bit.ly/3aT1fuk>

Think about this,

- 51% of Americans say the Bible was written for each person to interpret as he or she chooses. (The State of AMERICAN Theology, Lifeway Research, 2016)
- More than half of all young people (ages 18-24) don’t believe the Bible is God’s inspired word. (The 2012 Millennial Values Survey, Public Religion Research Institute, Georgetown University)

That was 2016 and 2012 respectively, and I am sure those numbers are even higher now as pastors are leading their people away from the truths of God found in the Word of God.

Now I know, many don’t see this as a problem today. They think that I am blowing this out of proportion. But it is a problem in the church today!

And that is what Paul is going to be talking about in our study this evening, these last days or the days we are living in.

You see, as you move away from the truths of God, found in the Word of God, you open yourself up to any kind of false teaching. Thus, the church begins to bring in worldly philosophies, worldly teaching, worldly beliefs.

Jesus is not the only way. There was no virgin birth. Jesus is not God. The blood atonement is not true, God would never do something like that. We are basically good people. And the list goes on and Satan loves religion because he uses it to keep people away from God!

Let me show you what can happen and how many in the church accept it and those that don't, well, they are causing division and must leave!

We are told,

Unbelievable I thought to myself as I listened to members of a newly founded church describe its beginning. It started when several members of a church sensed the need for increased Bible knowledge and began attending a community Bible study, where they learned that their pastor's denials of Christ's virgin birth and resurrection were at variance with what the Bible actually taught.

They came to see that, though their church weekly said the Apostles' Creed, their pastors had personally redefined the terms so they could repeat the words without actually believing them.

Their leaders viewed the incarnation and resurrection of Christ as metaphors for God's presence and a life-giving source, not actual historical events.

When parishioners protested, they were told they were bringing dishonor to the Body of Christ by their divisiveness. The intimidation worked, and they quieted down. After all, they were only laypeople.

But the situation reheated when one of the pastors was discovered to be an active pedophile, and it was further learned that the local church authorities knew it and had been covering it up! This time their parishioners would not be put off. They demanded changes.

Again the response was that they were dividing Christ's Body and must no longer meet for Bible study or else.

So it was that Bible-believing, creed-confessing, Biblically-orthodox Christians (whose great offenses were believing in the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ and in his ethical teachings) were kicked out of their church.

Unbelievable! Sadly, "having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power" (v. 5) is nothing new.

- R. Kent Hughes and Bryan Chapell, 1-2 Timothy and Titus, To Guard The Deposit, p. 241

Make no mistake about it, we are living in the days where we see apostasy growing in the church and if it is confronted, you are told to be quiet or leave. And we see this happening more and more in the church today, I have even seen it in churches here in Manitowoc, I am sad to say!

With that as our background, let's begin reading in II Timothy chapter 3, starting in verse 1, and let's see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through the Word of God.

## II TIMOTHY 3

### VERSE 1

Notice how Paul opens up here. He says, “**But know this . . .**” And in the Greek, it is speaking of this, to “*constantly know, remember and understand so that you always will be on guard and respond properly*”

He is speaking of how to know what to do which is based on the knowledge or based upon the Word of God is the idea.

Think about it. How do we, as Christians know what to do if we don't know what we are to be on guard against? That is why Paul is giving Timothy and us this warning.

And the period of time he is focusing on is “**the last days.**”

Now the \$100,000 question is, “*When did the last days begin or have the last days even begun yet?*”

I believe they have. Let me show you why.

In Hebrews 1:1-2 we are told, “**God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.**”

So the last days started with the ministry of Jesus, the incarnation as God became flesh and dwelt among us and they continue on until His Second Coming.

Now let's think about this for a minute. If the last days began with the ministry of Jesus, that means Paul was living in the last days. So what is the point?



I think Paul is speaking about the last part of the last days or the time period prior to the Rapture of the Church and the start of the Tribulation Period and the coming forth of the Antichrist!

Now, as we will see as we read verses 2-5 of II Timothy chapter 3, there are 19 general characteristics of man, a time of social degeneration, the wickedness of man's heart manifested in his actions.

Paul calls them "**perilous times**" or times of stress because the evil of man is rampant!

One writer put it like this regarding this word, "The word was used in classical Greek both of dangerous wild animals and of the raging sea. Its only other New Testament occurrence is in the story of the two Gadarene demoniacs who were as savage and untamed as wild beasts and whom Matthew describes as 'so *fierce* that no one could pass that way' (Matthew 8:28)."

(Stott)

Now, keep in mind who Paul is speaking of here. Yes, we see these characteristics in the unsaved, but Paul is speaking of leaders in the church, so-called believers.

And folks, as I look at some leaders today, they are nothing more than wolves in sheep's clothing as they lead people away from God. Their heresy does not lead to holiness but as Paul told Timothy, "**But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.**" II Timothy 2:16-18.

These men that Paul speaks of, these characteristics that are manifested in their lives are nothing more than apostate leaders in apostate churches! And tragically, they are getting people to follow their immoral ways, their apostate teachings!

VERSES 2-5

Let's look at these characteristics that Paul warned Timothy of because they are blatant in our society and in our churches today!

And I want you to see what is at the top of this list, "**lovers of themselves**" or self-love! Make no mistake about it, self-love is the foundation for all these other depravities. Calvin put it like this, "But readers should note that *lovers of themselves*, which comes first, can be regarded as the source from which all the others that follow spring."

I agree! Look at this list.

- **LOVERS OF SELF** – Are people self-centered today? You bet and that idea of self-love is also being promoted by apostate pastors who believe that self is not the problem, that self should be exalted.  
I like how Barclay put it, "*It is no accident that the first of these qualities will be a life that is centered in self. The adjective used is philautos, which means self-loving. Love of self is the basic sin, from which all others flow. The moment a man makes his own will the center of life, divine and human relationships are destroyed, obedience to God and charity to men both become impossible. The essence of Christianity is not the enthronement but the obliteration of self.*"  
How true that is. The Bible tells us to crucify the flesh not feed it or build it up. (Matthew 16:24; Romans 6:6; Galatians 5:24)
- **LOVERS OF MONEY** – We talked about this back in I Timothy chapter 6 where people are greedy for money and they will sacrifice anything just to make it rich, to have a little bit more!  
If you are not content in what God has given you, then you will not be content in anything.  
Paul warned Timothy in I Timothy 6:9-10, "**But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.**"
- **BOASTERS, PROUD, BLASPHEMERS** – Think about it, if self is controlling your life, then you will manifest these characteristics in your life. You see, it all stems from the person believing "*I am the center of my universe!*"

- ***DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS*** – In our society today I see this as an epidemic where children are out of control, they are in charge and the parents have no rights in the matter. In the school that my youngest son attended, many years ago, in grade school, he was told that if we did something that he didn't like, if we punished him, he could report us to the authorities! And you know what, we are now reaping what we have sown with our children. If they don't respect those in authority, then they will respect no one and that is exactly what we are seeing!
  
- ***UNTHANKFUL, UNHOLY, UNLOVING, UNFORGIVING*** – Here we see man lacking any appreciation for what he has, he is unholy, or he doesn't hold anything sacred, just turn on the TV and see what these shows are saying. He is unloving or without natural affection. We have seen an increase in women who have been pregnant, not told anyone, and then had the child in secret, and placed that child in a dumpster or disposed of that child another way – that is not natural affection! They are unforgiving or they refuse to make peace, they refuse to reconcile their differences and I have seen this growing in the churches today, which saddens me greatly!
  
- ***SLANDERERS*** – The idea here is the spreading of false and malicious reports. Let me give you this perspective of this word. The word “**slanderers**” could also be translated “malicious gossips” and it is the Greek word diabolos from which we get the English word “diabolical” from. Now look at what we see here. Diabolos means “accuser” and is used thirty-four times in the New Testament as a title for Satan. Thus, the idea here is that if you do this then you are “Engulfed and blinded by self-love, [and] malicious gossips do the very work of Satan.” Not a pretty picture, nor is it intended to be!
  
- ***WITHOUT SELF-CONTROL*** – The idea here is that their passions are out of control, the need to satisfy self is outweighing what is right. Look at the problems people have today as they are without self-control: Sex, Drinking, Drugs, Lying, Eating, and-so-on. We now even have therapies for these so-called addictions, we don't like to call them sins, but they are!
  
- ***BRUTAL*** – Man will be like a wild animal, savage in his actions. Just turn on the news and you can see how brutal, how cruel man is! Several years back the wife of an inmate, who was being escorted from the courthouse, shot and killed the officer and escaped for a short time with her husband! That is brutal!

- **DESPISERS OF GOOD** – How true this is as many today are calling good evil and evil good. They can protest for having gay marriages, but we are arrested when we protest against gay marriages. They can protest for abortion rights, but we are arrested when we protest against abortion. People are opposed to good because it exposes their evil!
  
- **TRAITORS, HEADSTRONG, HAUGHTY, LOVERS OF PLEASURE RATHER THAN LOVERS OF GOD** – There is that desire to move towards betrayal, recklessness, being puffed up, loving pleasure rather than loving God. One writer put it like this, “It should be noted that pleasure, especially in this context, is not limited to the desire for comfort, fine food, sexual satisfaction, and other indulgences normally associated with hedonism. As already mentioned, a self-centered person also derives perverse pleasure from such things as malicious gossip, brutality, and treachery. His satisfaction comes, in part, from the pain and misery he sadistically inflicts on others, including parents and supposed friends. This depraved pleasure is not loved more than God, but rather than . . . God. In other words, the true God has no place at all in the thinking and living of a false teacher or of anyone who is self-centered. Jesus told Nicodemus, ‘And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil’” (John 3:19). (John MacArthur)
  
- **A FORM OF GODLINESS** – False teachers are phonies who “morph” into their “Christian form” when they’re with Christians and come across all holy and spiritual but in reality, it’s nothing more than a façade.

Here is the reality and here is what we are seeing today in the church. Their outward shape is religious but inwardly they are ravenous wolves! And the people catch this attitude as they have developed a “*salad bar*” religion, picking and choosing what they like, being religious but not Biblical!

Let me give you an example of what I mean and how this manifests itself in people’s lives. They lack the power to live because they lack the Spirit of God and they lack the Spirit of God because they are not saved!

A 63-year-old married woman writes to Dear Abby to justify her adultery.

She writes the following:

“He’s also married. We meet once a week at a motel for three hours of heaven. My husband knows nothing about this, and neither does my lover’s wife. Sex with my husband is even better now, and it’s not as though I am denying my husband anything. I teach a class at church every week, but for some reason, I feel no guilt.”

It is as Phillips said, “They will maintain a façade of ‘religion’ but their conduct will deny its validity.”

Now, what do these 18 characteristics stem from?

Remember what I said and remember where we started.

It all started out with, ***SELF-LOVE!***

That is why we are to deny self, crucify the flesh because if you don’t, you open yourself up to these other characteristics being manifested in your life.

Now, as you read through these things, are they an indication that we are living in the last days, that the Lord’s return is getting closer?

I believe they are!

Thus, Paul’s warning to Timothy is that true believers are to turn away from these people who put forth this false faith because to associate yourself with them not only condones their actions, but it is dangerous for your faith!

Heibert warns, “It is the fearful portrayal of an apostate Christendom, a new paganism masquerading under the name of Christianity.”

One more point here and that is what J. C. Ryle wrote over 100 years ago. He understood what was happening and now it is growing by leaps and bounds.

He wrote,

Look in another direction at those hundreds of people whose whole religion seems to consist in talk and high profession. They know the theory of the gospel intellectually and profess to delight in evangelical doctrine. They can say much about the “soundness” of their own views, and the “darkness” of all who disagree with them, but they never get any further!

When you examine their inner lives, you find that they know nothing of practical godliness. They are neither truthful, nor charitable, nor humble, nor honest, nor kind-tempered, nor gentle, nor unselfish, nor honorable.

What shall we say of these people? They are Christians, no doubt, in name and yet there is neither substance nor fruit in their Christianity. There is but one thing to be said – they are formal Christians. Their religion is an empty form.

- R. Kent Hughes and Bryan Chapell, 1-2 Timothy and Titus, To Guard The Deposit, p. 244

In other words, they have “**... a form of godliness but deny its power. . . .**” II Timothy 3:5.

#### VERSES 6-7

Paul says that these false teachers, with their false doctrine creep in, slither in you might say like a serpent, they worm they way into homes and lead people away from the true and living God!

And the focus here is women, because they were home most of the time and these men were hitting them with their false teaching. Men are also taken in by false teachers with their false doctrine!

And isn't it amazing that they are always learning and yet not able to come to the truth. Why is that? Because they are not interested in the truths of God found in the Word of God. They have their own ideas and they will run with these ideas until new ones come along and then they will run with that!

Also, the things of God are spiritually discerned and thus, if they are not saved, they can't come to the knowledge of the truth apart from God. And, yes, if they are seeking God, He will reveal Himself to them, but they are not seeking God, but their own lustful ideas and they are spreading them like a cancer!

Keep in mind that in the last days deception will play a big role and we are seeing deception growing like weeds in the church today!

And it is easy to get people to believe a lie because it will feed their ego, it will build up self and make them feel so good, and yet, they do not have the knowledge of the truth, so the deception is deadly.

Paul warned the church, the Ephesian church, back in Ephesians 4:14-16, **“that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head - Christ - from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”**

I am sorry, but there is no way we should be tossed to and fro by the winds of doctrine that will blow through the church, and they will blow through the church. The reason being is that we are being fed the Word of God, and thus, the truth should set us free from the lies that are coming in.

Then what is the problem? Why do people fall prey to these false teachings, these false doctrines, these doctrines of demons? It is simple, ***PRIDE!*** They think they know better and no one is going to show them in the Word that they are wrong. That is dangerous and it is sad to see.

And in the end, it is as Paul said, “**always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.**” II Timothy 3:7.

And for these false teachers that are promoting this garbage, they are religious, but they lack the power because they don’t have the relationship with the true and living God and ungodliness grows!

#### VERSES 8-9

Keep in mind that Paul is speaking of these false teachers and here we see that he compares them to Jannes and Jambres, ones that resisted Moses!

Who are these guys?

Jannes and Jambres seem to be the Egyptian men who opposed Moses before Pharaoh in Exodus, (Exodus 7:8-13, 19-23; 8:5-7, 16-19). Now these may be symbolic names given to them, not their real names for Jannes means “***he who seduces***” and Jambres means “***he who makes rebellion.***” Not a big deal, but I do believe that these are probably their names.

Now when God did a miracle through Moses, these men, by the power of darkness were able to copy it, but only up to a point.



Of this, listen to what one commentator had to say. He wrote,

These were able to work *real miracles* – not mere parlor tricks – but by the power of darkness and not the power of God. When Moses cast down his rod and it turned into a serpent, Jannes and Jambres could do the same. When he turned water into blood, they could do the same. When Moses brought forth a plague of frogs, Jannes and Jambres could do the same. Yet eventually they could not match God miracle-for-miracle, and their occult powers were shown to be inferior to God’s power.

- David Guzik

I find it interesting today that many are running to and fro seeking after miracles and not even realizing that what they are seeking, these miracles, may not be of God, but they may be demonic in nature!

In II Thessalonians 2:9-10 Paul warns us, **“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”**

Not real miracles, not that they did not happen, but they are not of God and thus, people will believe all kinds of lies because they don’t want to receive the truth, and like Jannes and Jambres, ***“their minds are rotten to the core.”***

Warren Wiersbe put it like this,

Satan is an imitator; what God does, Satan counterfeits. The religious leaders in the last days will have a counterfeit faith, and their purpose is to promote a lie and resist the truth of God's Word. They deny the authority of the Bible and substitute human wisdom and philosophy. In their attempt to be "modern," they deny the reality of sin and people's need for salvation.

- Warren Wiersbe

The thing I want you to notice is that Satan's power is limited, God is still in control. You see, no matter how dark things may seem, the light of Christ will dispel that darkness because the spirit of the last days is not stronger than the power of Jesus!

Amen to that!

Our hope is in Him, He will help us stand strong in the last days – don't fall asleep, don't become complacent!

Now I want to deal with this just for another few minutes, I think this is important for us to understand.

Notice that these false teachers have "**corrupt minds.**" And the idea here is that their mind is rotten through and through. Not a good thing and yet, people are listening to them and following them.

And please understand that these false teachers are "**disapproved concerning the faith.**"

What is the point?

The Greek word for "**disapproved**" speaks of being rejected. It was a word that was used of metals that did not pass the test of purity and thus, were discarded. Their teachings need to be discarded!

It was also used of counterfeits of various sorts. Not a good thing. They are not giving to you the truths of God found in the Word of God, their message is a counterfeit message!

Thus, Paul is speaking of people in the church who claimed to be Christians, but by their actions, by their words, they were not, they were counterfeits!

And that can be discouraging as we look at the church today and we see all the false teaching, all the false doctrine that has infiltrated it.

But listen again to what Paul said in II Timothy 3:9, **“but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.”**

Yes, they can cause great damage within the church, they came harm lots of people, but in the end, like Jannes and Jambres were exposed and their power was shown not to be from the true and living God, so too will they be exposed.

They will not be able to stand, these false teachers, on the day of God’s judgment!

#### VERSES 10-11

In contrast to these false teachers, these false believers, stood Timothy who witnessed all that Paul went through and **“followed”** his doctrine, his manner of life, his purpose and caught Paul’s passion and all that went with it.

Ancient Greek philosophers used that word **“followed”**, to describe the close relationship between a teacher and his disciple or student.

Barclay expounds on that and says:

It means to follow a person physically, to stick by him through thick and thin, to be by his side in fair weather and in foul. It means to follow a person mentally, to attend diligently to his teaching, and fully to understand the meaning and the significance of what he says. It means to follow a person spiritually, not only to understand what he says, but also to carry out his ideas, and to be the kind of person that he wishes us to be.

- William Barclay

Now keep in mind that Timothy did not just follow Paul, it was that Paul was following the Lord and thus, in following what Paul was saying, how he was living, Timothy was also following the Lord!

That was Timothy, he learned not only what Paul taught, but how he lived out his faith and because of what he heard and saw in Paul, he then followed his example, he saw that Paul's faith was real! He saw all the persecution that Paul went through!

In Antioch where Paul was kicked out of the city for preaching the Gospel – Acts 13:50.

In Iconium Paul was almost stoned by the people – Acts 14:5.

And then in Lystra Paul was stoned and left for dead – Acts 14:19.

Paul, in reminding Timothy of these things, was trying to encourage him by showing him that the Lord was in control and He is still in control.

Why did Paul speak of all the persecution he went through trying to encourage Timothy?

Look at verse 12 and you will see why.

VERSE 12

Keep in mind that this is in contrast to the false teachers who were men-pleasers and said just what the people wanted to hear.

And here was Paul and he wants Timothy to understand that if you are living for God, if you are standing up for what is good, what is right, you *WILL*, not might be persecuted!

Why is that?

Jesus said in John 3:19-20, “**And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.**”

Count the cost; if you are living for the Lord, persecution will come because godly living exposes their wickedness!

It is as Jesus said in John 15:18-21, “**If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.**”

Let me say this. The church today wants the world to love them and that is not what is going to happen unless the church compromises what they believe.

You see, the Gospel message is offensive to people. Not that we are to be offensive or obnoxious, but as we share the Gospel people are offended. Don't water down the Gospel message, don't change the Gospel message, speak it forth in love and let the Holy Spirit work.

Honor God in all that you do. Fear God and not man. If you have that right, you won't let the fear of man drive you, but the fear of God to guide you!

### VERSE 13

I think you can see this clearly, that in the days we are living in, the last days, there is an escalation of false teachers and false teachings.

And it will continue to increase as the Lord's return gets closer and closer.

Now as we look at this verse, we see that there are two groups of people spoken of here.

First of all, "**Evil men**" are those who are enemies of Christ and make themselves known for it.

Then we see the "**Imposters**" who are the wolves in sheep's clothing, they say they are Christians but their actions, their words say otherwise.

And like I have said, as the Lord's return draws closer, the deceptions will increase.

Just look at the groups like the Jesus Seminar who vote on what Jesus said and didn't say. They deny His virgin birth, His deity, His resurrection, they deny the Gospel message and they call themselves the Jesus Seminar!

Look at the Emergent Church and how they are adopting those same false teachings. And there will continue to be more and more groups who use the name "***Christian***" but deny the very things that Jesus is saying.

We need to be careful because the deceptions are growing, and it may be easy to tell the “**evil men**” but it is a lot harder to tell the “**imposters.**”

In fact, the only way is by holding up what they are saying to the light of God’s Word!

And I guess that is what we will look at next, “***How can we guard ourselves against these lies of the devil?***”

#### VERSES 14-15

Notice again, “**But you,**” and the idea here is that Timothy was different than those false teachers with their false doctrine.

He was not going down that path that they were leading people down. And Paul is exhorting Timothy to stand strong, to continue on in all that he has learned, to not let go or walk away from the Gospel message, from Jesus!

He is calling Timothy, and truly all of us, to swim against the current of this world that is leading to destruction and move towards Christ! Don’t listen to these false teachers with their false doctrines, listen to God through His Word opened up to us by His Spirit!

Make no mistake about it, we gain wisdom from God’s Word, applying it to our lives and it is God’s Word that leads us to salvation as the Spirit of God opens our hearts to Jesus.

For Timothy, as a child, he was taught the Scriptures by his mother and grandmother, and as he grew, that is what led him to saving faith.

How important it is for our children to be taught the Scriptures; they are never too young. That is why our Sunday School classes teach the kids the Word of God, the Bible and when they go home, they should also be taught the Scriptures by their parents, it is that important.

And here is the key to all that Timothy was taught, that it brought him to this, that it was **“able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”**

You see, *“One can be wise in many different things – wise for cars, wise for money, wise for health, wise for cooking, wise for computers – but are we also wise for salvation?”*

This is the most important wisdom one can ever have!

### VERSES 16-17

This is our battle today, the inspiration of the Scriptures, of the Bible. Many are rejecting it, saying that it contains the Word of God but not every passage is from God. That it is symbolic, and we have to determine what it means. And there is a bunch of garbage that people hold onto regarding the Bible, but what does the Bible have to say?

Paul tells us that **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God”** and that phrase **“given by inspiration of God”** in the Greek is THEOPNEUSTOS, (teh-op'-nyoo-stos) and it literally means “God-breathed.”

All Scripture comes from God. Now some would argue that point, but that is the reality.

Paul is not just speaking of the Old Testament here, but from Genesis and ultimately through the book of Revelation.

In I Timothy 5:18 Paul quotes out of the Gospel of Luke stating that it is Scripture.

In II Peter 3:16 Peter tells us that Paul’s writings are part of the Scriptures.

And thus, the entire Bible is God’s Word to us!

I believe, without a doubt, that every single word in the Bible is there because God wanted it there and there are no exceptions!



Now some would argue that this book was written a long time ago and passed on from generation to generation, and thus, there must be many errors in the Bible. It can't be accurate.

Well, let's look at the history.

The Bible was written over a 1500-year time span.

More than forty different authors from all walks of life – from kings to peasants, wrote it.

It was written on three different continents – Africa, Asia and Europe.

It was written in three different languages – Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

There are a variety of literary styles.

It addresses hundreds of controversial subjects and yet there is harmony.

And it is the unfolding story of God's love for sinful man.

Prophetically it is awesome because what God has said would take place, has or it will.

There are over 300 prophecies of Christ's first coming and all of them were fulfilled down to the tiniest detail.

But like I have said, some argue that the Bible, over the years has many errors as it was copied.

Look at the facts, the New Testament alone we see not more than one-one thousandth of the text is in question and not one significant doctrine is in question.

The Old Testament is no different.

Thus, God's Word is accurate, it is truth!

Let me show you what I mean.

First of all, the Old Testament. I want you to see how accurately the Old Testament Scriptures have been preserved. When we compare the scroll of Isaiah, found in a cave in the Qumran community back in 1947 that dates to 100 B. C., with a text of Isaiah from 916 A. D. And as we examine those 1292 verses, 37,044 words, the integrity of the text has held up over a 1,000-year time span. We see that 95% of the text is identical, and the 5% variation were mostly variations in spelling and did not change the context of the text one bit!

In regard to the New Testament and its accuracy.

We have over 24,000 manuscript copies of the New Testament in existence today.

We have 5,300 known Greek manuscripts.

There are over 10,000 Latin Vulgate manuscripts.

We have over 9,300 other early versions of manuscripts of the New Testament.

The New Testament has about 20,000 lines of text, of that only 40 lines (or 400 words) of the New Testament are in doubt. Of that, only about one-sixtieth can be called “substantial variations.” Think about that for a minute. That would give us a text that is approximately 98% perfect, pure!

And think about this for a minute. The New Testament is not based upon one Scripture, but the totality of the Scriptures.

Thus, if something is in question, we can check in other Scriptures to see if it is right or not! Again, only 40 lines or 400 words of the New Testament’s 20,000 lines of text are in doubt!

New Testament scholar F. F. Bruce put it this way. He said, “The variant readings about which any doubt remains . . . affect no material question of historical fact or of Christian faith and practice.”

Listen to these words, not from a Christian publication, nor from Christian writers, but from Time magazine, dated December 30, 1974. We read, “After more than two centuries of facing the heaviest scientific guns that could be brought to bear, the Bible has survived - and is perhaps better for the siege. Even on the critics’ own terms - historical fact - Scriptures seem more acceptable now than they did when the rationalists began the attack.”

Thus, what we have in our hands is the Word of God, we can trust it, it is truth.

And thus, because of that, Paul tells us that God’s Word is “**profitable**” or helpful for us and he lists four ways that it is helpful to us:

- **DOCTRINE** – God’s Word tells us what is right.
- **REPROOF** – God’s Word tells us what is wrong.
- **CORRECTION** – God’s Word tells us how to get right when we have gone astray.
- **INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS** – God’s Word tells us how to stay right.

Why is this even important to us? Because, as Paul said, “**that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**” II Timothy 3:17.

You see, God’s Word makes us complete, it equips us for service.

As you read God’s Word, as you apply it to your life, by the power of God’s Spirit, a believer will be able to meet the demands of righteousness, he will know what God desires of him and he will be able to stand strong, not for salvation but as evidence that a person is saved.

Thus, Satan leads pastors and people away from God’s Word because God’s Word is living, and it is powerful, and it will transform our lives if we allow it to.

Paul's warning to Timothy and to us is to be students of the Word of God if you want to stand strong against the perilous times and the perilous men that have come in and are coming in these last days! What a powerful lesson for us!

Let me close our study with this.

A critic once wrote a letter to a magazine saying, "Over the years, I suppose I've gone to church more than 1,000 times, and I can't remember the specific content of even one sermon over those many years. What good was it to go to church 1,000 times?"

The next week, someone wrote back: "Over the past many years, I have eaten more than 1,000 meals prepared by my wife. I cannot remember the specific menu of any of those meals. But they nourished me along the way, and without them, I would be a much different man!"

The Bible will do its spiritual work in us, if we will let it.

Remember, Paul began the chapter warning Timothy about dangerous times. Some Christians are swept away by these perilous times and some others go into hiding.

Neither option is right for us. We are to stand strong and stay in the Word of God. We have been warned, may we live accordingly!