

**II TIMOTHY 3:10-15**  
**CONFRONTING APOSTASY!**

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to II Timothy chapter 3 as we continue our in-depth study of Paul's last letter, written to his son in the faith, Timothy!

In our last study we looked at the – *COMING APOSTASY!*

And as we have seen, it is here!

Now I do realize that a large number of Christians don't seem to care about false teachers with their false doctrine.

They would never put it like that, but when you listen to what they listen to, what they are watching, and you try to tell them why there is a danger in that teacher or that show, or that book, they get mad at you.

And let's face it, false teachers with their false doctrine are very good at tugging at the hearts of viewers and thus, they take the bait, and they are hooked!

Some may feel that I am being too critical of these, sorry, but it is what the Bible tells us to do regarding these false teachers with their false doctrine. We are to expose them and warn you of them!

But maybe you still struggle as we go through these Scriptures that deal with this issue.

If you do, then let me ask you this.

Was Jesus critical of the false teaching that the Jewish religious leaders were bringing forth?

Of course He was because false teaching, done by false teachers make people comfortable in going to Hell!

How about Paul, was he critical of the false teachers with their false doctrine?

You bet he was, and we have seen it in our study of Paul's letters. Almost everyone of them deals with this subject and yet, Christians don't want to be bothered with it today. And the danger is, they will take the bait and they will be hooked!

Was Jude critical of the false teachers with their false doctrine?

You bet he was. In that short 25 verse letter that was the focus of that letter, and he warned them and us to earnestly contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us!

How about Peter, was he critical of the false teachers with their false doctrine?

Absolutely he was and he warned us about the judgment that is to come!

And the apostle John, in his letters, was he critical of the false teachers with their false doctrine?

Absolutely, as he was dealing with Gnosticism, that God did not become flesh but was some kind of spirit being, and John spoke clearly against that false teaching that had come into the church.

What is my point?

My point is this. If the church was flooded with false teachers with their false doctrine when the church got started, what do you think the last days church is going to be like? It is going to be filled with false teachers with their false doctrine and the people have taken the bait and they are hooked!

So as we are studying through the Word of God are we to ignore what the writer, really the Holy Spirit is saying or just go over it quickly and not warn people what is going on today?

I am sorry, I can't do that. I realize that does not win me many friends, but, like Jeremiah, there is a message to give in spite of the fact that people may not like it.

The truth of the matter is that when you look at the evidence, it is hard to deny these false teachers and their false doctrine and yet, many are doing that very thing. They are ignoring what is right before their eyes and ears!

Why don't they like it?

Because it goes against something that they are watching or listening to or reading and since it ministers to them, it must be of God.

Let me say this, just because it makes us feel good, does not mean it is of God. That is the danger today. We go by feelings and not by what the Word of God is saying.

It is interesting that people today will listen to all kinds of warnings that are out there, like a tornado warning or a warning about not eating this or not eating that or the warning about what car not to buy. But when God is warning us about the days we are living in, people don't seem to care.

They may even say that we are being too judgmental!

Again, if it is not truth then we are to judge it, sorry.

Let me share this from another pastor and listen to his warning. He wrote,

The church today faces times of unparalleled difficulty and danger. . . .

Heresy, apostasy, self-will, and their accompanying moral decadence are engulfing the evangelical church. Like cancer cells that rebel against the body, these evils are in rebellion against God by corrupting and weakening the church, the body of Christ.

Also like cancer cells, the evils multiply rapidly and choke out and destroy normal cells.

Much like white cells in the blood, which will not attack cancerous cells because they are identified with the body, many naive and careless church leaders take no action against corruption in the church simply because the corruption hides behind the guise of orthodoxy.

Simply put, much of the church is in rebellion against the Lord.

In the days ahead, the escalation of violence against the kingdom of God by the kingdom of darkness will intensify.

As in any warfare, there will be times of relative calm, but God's Word assures us of ever-increasing wickedness, which will culminate in the appearance of Antichrist, the ultimate deceiver and enemy of God except for Satan himself.

Like the wolves that would come into the flock at Ephesus from within and try to destroy it (Acts 20:29-30), Antichrist, along with other false christs, false apostles, and false prophets, will come from within Christendom. . . .

Even now, the attacks against God Himself and against His truth and His righteousness come from so many sides and in so many forms that it is hard for His people to know which front to defend.

Discerning Christians are hard put to know which falsehood to refute or moral compromise to oppose. No believer, no matter how gifted and willing, is able to fight on all fronts.

But we are not called to win God's battles single-handedly and are presumptuous and foolish to try. He does, however, expect us to yield to Him all that we are and have and to be willing to be used wherever and in whatever way He leads.

- John MacArthur, 2 Timothy 3

That is a pretty powerful warning, and the church needs to awaken out of its spiritual sleep and stand strong in these days we are living in. It is not about us. It is not about what we like. It is not about what makes us feel good. It is about God and His Word, and we are not to compromise, not just a little!

Remember when Moses went up on Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments and the people down below got tired of waiting, not knowing if Moses was ever going to come back down!

And they had Aaron make a golden calf to worship God by. Please understand that this was not to worship other gods by, it was to worship the true and living God by.

And did God smile down upon what they were doing?

Absolutely not. In fact, He told Moses that He was going to destroy them, wipe them out. And Moses interceded for them.

Did this golden calf make them feel good?

I am sure it did.

It feed into a positive experience and that positive experience lead to immoral behavior and God did judge it.

The warning to us, is what Peter wrote in I Peter 4:17, **“For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?”**

May we pay attention and not go by feelings but by what the Word of God is telling us!

And that is the focus of our study this morning – ***CONFRONTING APOSTASY!***

I have broken down the verses we will be looking at this morning into the following main points. They are,

***FAITHFULNESS TO GOD IN THE FACE OF OPPOSITION – II TIMOTHY 3:10-12***

***THE OPPOSITION – II TIMOTHY 3:13***

***STAND STRONG – II TIMOTHY 3:14-15***

As we looked at last time, Paul warned Timothy that in the last days, the days we are living in and probably the last of the last days we are in, that the focus of people’s lives is that they will be **“lovers of themselves.”**

Keep in mind that Paul is not just speaking of the unsaved world here. We understand what they do because they don’t know the Lord.

But Paul is speaking of those that claim to be Christians, these false teachers with their false doctrine and how they are damming people’s souls in Hell by what they are teaching. They are leading them into immoral, ungodly lifestyles!

And out of that Paul says that they are always learning but they can’t come to the truth because they are not interested in the truths of God found in the Word of God. They are not saved, they are apostates!

And we saw that Paul closed out our study last time by saying, **“Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.”** II Timothy 3:8-9.

That is where we will be up our study this morning, in II Timothy chapter 3, beginning in verse 10 and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word and look at this topic –

***CONFRONTING APOSTASY!***

## II TIMOTHY 3

### VERSES 10-12

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

The 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

Please understand that Paul did not just teach Timothy these things in an academic sense. He also learned these things as he watched how Paul lived out his faith! You see, Christianity is not only **TAUGHT**, but it is also **CAUGHT** as people see us live out our faith!

I remember that old saying when I was growing up, how parents would say, “***Do as I say, not as I do!***”

That is horribly wrong. If it is okay for you to do it, then why is it wrong for me to do it?

For Timothy, he watched Paul live out his faith and as we will see, it impacted his life, helped him to live out his faith as well! He was an example to Timothy of what a Christian was to be all about.

Now what did Timothy learn?

First of all, Timothy learned – ***DOCTRINE!***

In other words, Timothy was taught the truths of God found in the Word of God! You need to know truth and not just any kind of truth, but the truth of God's Word. How can we live out our faith if we don't know what God desires of us? We can't! Thus, doctrine, healthy doctrine, sound doctrine is so important for us to grow by!

Next, he learned Paul's – ***MANNER OF LIFE!***

What does that mean?

Paul lived out his Christian faith and Timothy watched him closely.

I think of Joshua and how he spent forty years with Moses and learned from him as Moses not only taught him, but he watched how Moses lived out his life, his love for God, his trust in God, and so on!

Next, we see that Timothy learned – ***PURPOSE!***

You can follow people who have no direction in life, and if you do you will be all over the place. Paul knew where he was going, what he was doing, and Timothy saw the purpose in all that Paul did!

Next is – ***FAITH!***

Paul's faith was in the Lord and Timothy saw that. And here's the thing, if you don't have true faith in the Lord, then the next point is going to be difficult.

What is that next point?



Paul taught Timothy to be – ***LONGSUFFERING!***

With all that Paul went through in his life, he did not let those things move him from the course that God had for him, and Timothy saw that in Paul! He knew where he was going and no matter what man could do to him, these sufferings are short lived. And he knew that to be absent from this body, to die, was to be present with the Lord!

Also, that faith that Paul had caused him to – ***LOVE!***

Now I am not speaking of brotherly love or sexual love here. This is ***AGAPE LOVE!***

That speaks of unconditional love. That you love someone not based on what they have done to you or said of you, you love them as God loves you – ***UNCONDITIONALLY!***

And why did Timothy need to learn all these things?

Because of the persecution, afflictions that would be coming his way and he was already facing!

But why do we, as Christians, face so much persecution?

Jesus told us 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.**”

And now the church wants the world to like them and how can they accomplish that?

By hiding their light, by not shining brightly, by just trying to fit in. And do you know what that is called?

It is called – ***COMPROMISE!***

Here's the thing. If we are not willing to have others think that we are strange; if we are not willing to be rejected by some for the sake of Jesus Christ; if we are not willing to be an outcast before some people, then we can never be true followers of Jesus Christ.

And when I mean strange, I am not talking about acting weird.

No, I am talking about doing those things that God has called us to do and the world looks at that and they see it as strange. To them it is but to us, it is a way of life in Christ!

Make no mistake about it, we are not to compromise what we believe, that is what Paul is admonishing Timothy here. In spite of these false teachers with their false doctrine, you stand strong Timothy. And we will deal more with that as we finish up here this morning.

Now you may not think this is such a big deal but let me show you that hiding the light of Christ is a big deal. It will affect people's lives!

We are told,

The evangelist Billy Sunday used to tell of a professing Christian who got a job in a lumber camp that had the reputation of being very ungodly.

A friend, hearing that the man had been hired, said to him, ***"If those lumberjacks ever find out you're a Christian, you're going to be in for a hard time!"***

The man responded, ***"I know, but I need the job!"***

The next morning he left for camp.

A year later, he came home for a visit. While in town, he met his friend who asked, ***"Well, how did it go? Did they give you a hard time because you're a Christian?"***

***"Oh no, not at all,"*** the man replied. ***"They didn't give me a bit of trouble - they never even found out!"***

We can laugh at that but maybe some of you are wincing just a little because you have been there and done that. It is a little to close to home you might say. We probably all have done that to some degree!

Here's the thing. When you are living in a world that is hostile to Christianity, it's easy just to blend in, to laugh at the dirty jokes, never to confront the gossip, and never to speak a word that would identify yourself as a Christian.

Besides, it might cost you your reputation or even your job!

Sometimes even among Christian friends it's hard to hold to your convictions for fear of what they will think.

It is something that we all need to look at in our lives, if our little compromise here and there is affecting our witness. And I will let you in on a little secret, it is!

We will deal with this more, as I have said, as we look at our last point this morning –

***STAND STRONG!***

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 also saw all the persecution that Paul went through!

What persecution?

Paul lists just a few examples for Timothy to remind him!

***In Antioch*** 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.

***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.

That is an important point for us to remember when things heat up in the world. The Lord is in control. I guess I should not say ***WHEN***, they ***ARE*** heating up and I think that hatred towards Christians is growing. They don't like what we stand up for, righteousness, good living, helping others, coming against sin, but they want to do what they want when they want, and they don't see it as evil or as a sin!

And please understand that the persecution we will face will not only come from the world, but from the apostate church as well.

And we are already seeing that as churches who have compromised are coming against us, we are standing up for what we believe and they don't like it!

Peter said in I Peter 4:4, **“In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.”**

Sorry, I am not going back to those things that I did before I was saved, no matter what people may say of me or do to me! And they may see me as strange, but I don't need their approval for what I do and what I say, I need the Lord's approval and I want to finish the race of faith strong! I am sure you do as well!

Let me ask you this.

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

Remember what II Timothy 3:12 says, **“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”**

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?

Remember what we read in John 3:19-20 where Jesus said, **“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.”**

As I have said, 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 will be there to guide you!

As one pastor put it,

*Every church, Christian college, Bible school, seminary, and other Christian organization should be led by and, in turn, reproduce leaders who not only are orthodox in doctrine and moral in lifestyle but also are courageous and committed defenders of the faith.*

*They should be willing to follow the Lord and lead His church in dangerous times and circumstances and at any cost steadfastly hold up the banner of God's divine revelation in Scripture.*

- John MacArthur, II Timothy 3

Opposition, persecution to our faith will come, not might, as I have said. In spite of that, and what Paul was admonishing Timothy, what needs to be seen in our lives – ***FAITHFULNESS TO GOD IN THE FACE OF OPPOSITION!***

As we read on, we are going to deal with – ***THE OPPOSITION!***

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. We can call this the world.

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. They are apostates.

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

Think about this for a minute. How do they hook us with false teaching, what kind of bait will they use you might say.

First of all,

***False teaching appeals to people's emotions!***

I have seen this over and over the past several years and it seems to be growing. I am sure this has been around for a while, but I noticed it with the book – ***The Shack!***

And this story tugs at the heart of people. A man's daughter has been murdered and all that this man goes through after that event. It tugs at your heart and yes, even Christians got hooked on this book. And yet, what is in the book is not Christian and what the writer believes is not Biblical.

What was interesting to me is the number of Christians that told me that they loved the book, it moved them! They were touched by it.

I bet it moved them because it played on their emotions. The problem was that it was moving them away from the Bible and towards what this man who wrote the story believes!

Let me just say this. If you are more moved by a movie, a book, a television show than you are about the Bible, then something is wrong!

None of them are inspired by God but the Bible is, and we will deal with this next week, and we may spend a few weeks looking at this topic, the Word of God. The reason being is that it is very important for us to know what is right and what is wrong and how to get right when we have gone astray and how to stay right!

The Bible is our guidebook for life!

Next, in regard to these false teachings and how we get hooked on them, is this.

***False teaching appeals to greed.***

When you look at the health, wealth and prosperity doctrines or really, they are nothing more than doctrines of demons, and they appeal to the flesh. Yes, even Christians want more money and if we can give to God and He multiplies money back to us, that is an awesome investment!

I do believe God blesses us as we give to Him, but not necessarily monetarily!

Again, and I have used this example before. But with Vacation Bible School, it costs us some money, but we are investing in the children! And we don't charge for Vacation Bible School because we want the kids to freely come and learn about Jesus. We don't want to burden parents with a charge, so it is free.



But what we get back from the children is more than money can buy! When you see the smiles on their faces. When you hear them answer questions. When you see them running around having so much fun and learning about Jesus. We have been blessed exceedingly abundantly more than we can ask or think!

May we be content in all that God has given us and not see Him as some kind of genie that you say the magic words and presto, you have what you ask for. He is Almighty God and what He is given to us is more than we deserve, because we don't deserve anything!

Next.

***False teaching positions God in the wrong light.***

Many times they will portray God as some evil tyrant or the Old Testament God is the God of vengeance.

Then they will tell you that the God of the New Testament is a God of love and thus, He will never come against us. He loves us no matter what and thus, there is no judgment from God no matter what sin you are involved in, no matter what you are doing, no matter what the Bible says!

What I mean by that is any sin you can imagine, God is not against because He is a God of love!

Again, God is a God of love and yet, you can't exclude the other attributes of God like righteousness, judgment. If God let sinners go free, then He would not be a righteous God, a good God.

But He is a good God, a righteous God and He will judge sin. In fact, He has judged sin on the cross of Calvary as Jesus paid in full the penalty for our sins!

What that means is if you repent of your sins and ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of your life, then you have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus.

If you reject Him, then you will stand in your own righteousness, which are like filthy rags, and you will be judged for your sin.

The choice is yours!

Next.

***False teaching preys on our intellect!***

What I mean by that is what we see with Gnosticism. They said that if you are smart enough you will understand what they are teaching. It is only for those who are really intelligent and can understand it. And I have heard this spoken of today with false teaching.

God has given to us what we need to discern right from wrong and if what they are bringing goes against the Word of God, they are wrong! It is as simple as that!

And think about it. I am not that smart of a guy. If I have to have some kind of degree to figure out the Scriptures, then they are not for me. But God has given His Word to all of us, you don't even have to know how to read, but as you listen to God's Word, He is speaking to you.

And I will tell you this. A person who does not have a high school diploma but believes in Jesus Christ as His Savior, is smarter than the greatest scientist who rejects God!

And there is more, but I think you get the idea.

These false teachers with their false doctrine play on the flesh, on the emotions, on the mind and they get us to believe them and come against God and they will try to justify what they are saying, but it just doesn't work!

Let me also say this. We are to respond against error. We are not to ignore it. We are to warn people of the error that is out there.

We see that in the New Testament that the apostles, the writers sought to fight against and expose false teaching and heresy!

And like I have said, nearly every letter in the New Testament deals with false teaching or heresy, they did not ignore it, and neither should we!

In I Corinthians Paul fought against those who denied the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ!

Then, in Galatians, he fought against those who said that we are saved by Jesus plus being circumcised and keeping the Law of Moses.

Then, in Colossians Paul fought against those who believed in some kind of strange Jewish mystical teaching combined with Jewish dietary laws and some kind of esoteric Greek philosophy!

John confronted those who denied that Jesus came in a human body, the incarnation or God became flesh and dwelt among us.

What we see is that over and over, the church's leaders fought against false teaching in their churches.

Now let me ask you this question.

What would we have today if they did not earnestly contend for the faith that was entrusted to them?

We would have nothing because who would know what to believe any longer!

If we don't fight or contend for the faith, what we will end up with?

We will end up with the church of Laodicea or the Lukewarm Church where Jesus is outside the door of the church knocking to get in.

That is how far from the truths of God found in the Word of God that the false church will be!

Let me share this with you. This is from back in 2015, a few years back now, but the point still stands. We are told,

One of the most-watched and most-popular shows on television in recent years has been **24**. This is a show concerned with terrorist infiltration into virtually every area of the U. S. Government.

The show's protagonist is Jack Bauer, an anti-terrorist agent, who is constantly thwarting the efforts of all in his path. One of the reasons this program has so gripped the psyche of the American people is because it is dealing with things that are all-together possible. The infiltration of terrorism is a great concern.

Personally, I have encountered an infiltration of a different kind. Recently, I had a sore on my forehead that would not heal. At the insistence of my wife, I went to the dermatologist and discovered that I had a basal cell carcinoma.

I was then sent to a surgeon to cut out the basal cell carcinoma. The doctor called it an infiltrative basal cell, which means that it had infiltrated my skin to a deeper level.

I was dealing with a terrorist in my body: cancer. I was dealing with something that had infiltrated my physical body.

Christianity, however, is dealing with a terrorism that is more serious than the one I have mentioned. The Bible talks about spiritual terrorism: the infiltration of false doctrine and false teachers into the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is referred to as apostasy. . . .

Apostasy is departure from the teachings of the Bible and an apostate is a person who believes and teaches the doctrine of apostasy.

We are dealing today with a world that is changing, a world that is introducing new problems to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Around us there is a culture which is filled with anarchy, but the problem is not so much the anarchy in the culture, rather it is that which occurs inside the church.

One of those problems is apathy. The Lord Jesus Christ said, ***“Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many will wax cold”*** (Matt 24:12).

I heard about two church members who were talking one day and one of them said to the other, ***“Have you heard that they say that the two big problems in the church today are ignorance and apathy?”***

And the other said ***“I did not know, and I do not care.”***

There are problems of apathy.

The other problem that the churches are dealing with internally is apostasy.

It is a Trojan Horse that makes its way into the body of Christ. The Spirit of God led Jude to write his letter as a survival manual for those who would be living in days of apostasy. I do not know of a book that is more applicable and relevant to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ in our day than the book of Jude. . . .

In the Old Testament, when the children of Israel came into Egypt, they were placed in the land of Goshen. When the plagues came in Egypt in the time of Moses there was prosperity in Goshen.

There was darkness in Egypt that could be felt, but in Goshen there was light.

There was death in Egypt, but in Goshen there was life.

Today Christians are living in an old Egypt culture, but it is possible to be Goshen Christians in the midst of an Egypt culture.

The solution to apostasy is not isolation. The solution to live in an apostate culture is not isolation.

The solution is insulation from culture for the purpose of infiltration in culture.

The apostates are not the only ones infiltrating. Believers are doing some infiltrating of our own. We are going over there into an Egypt culture to capture some people for the gospel and we are bringing them into the land of Goshen.

- <https://bit.ly/4ci2Xp9>

We need to have that kind of perspective and we also 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 or to put it another way –

***STAND STRONG!***

#### VERSES 14-15

Notice again, “**But as for 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!

This truly is a key point to what Paul has been admonishing Timothy about. He told him to “*continue in*” or “*abide*” in these things. Don’t depart from them because, as you do you will be moving away from the Lord and towards these men with their false doctrines, their false teachings!

John used the same Greek word when he wrote in I John 2:24-25, “**Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that He has promised us - eternal life.**”

How do we preserve during these threatening times when the false teachers, with their false doctrines, when the spirit of antichrist is growing?

By abiding in Christ, by abiding in the truths of God found in the Word of God.

Don’t let go of the truth of God!

Don’t succumb to the philosophies of man, the false teaching that is out there. But be a bondservant of Christ! You will not be led astray when you follow the truth of God found in the Word of God! Abide in His Word and don’t deviate from it!

Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

A missionary to the American Indians was in Los Angeles with an Indian friend who was a new Christian. As they walked down the street, they passed a man on the corner who was preaching with a Bible in his hand.

The missionary knew the man represented a cult, but the Indian saw only the Bible. He stopped to listen to the sermon.

“*I hope my friend doesn’t get confused,*” the missionary thought to himself, and he began to pray.

In a few minutes the Indian turned away from the meeting and joined his missionary friend.

*“What did you think of the preacher?”* the missionary asked.

*“All the time he was talking,”* exclaimed the Indian, *“something in my heart kept saying, “Liar! Liar!”*

That *“something”* in his heart was *“Someone”* - the Holy Spirit of God!

The Spirit guides us into the truth and helps us to recognize error.

This anointing of God is *“no lie,”* because *“the Spirit is truth”* (1 John 5:6).

- Warren Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – NT, p. 981

May we be listening to what God is saying to us through His Word and His Spirit!

And what we see Paul doing here is that 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!

In other words – ***STAND STRONG!***

Now let me share some verses with you that deal with faithfulness. Remember our focus in these verses is ***STAND STRONG!*** And, as you will see, that is what these verses are all about.

Paul wrote in I Corinthians 16:13-14, **“Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done with love.”**

In other words, be on guard of the danger that is out there and stand strong in the faith!



Paul, in Philippians 1:27 wrote, **“Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”**

What were they standing fast in?

The Gospel of Jesus Christ because there is salvation in no other name, no other person, no other thing, than Jesus Christ!

Paul wrote in Galatians 5:1, **“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.”**

We are free in Christ but don't let that freedom place you back in bondage. Don't think you can work your way into heaven, you are there by Jesus and thus, stand fast!

In I Timothy 6:12 Paul told Timothy to, **“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”**

It is a battle for the faith, a battle for the truth and thus, we are to fight for it, not ignore what has been entrusted to us!

Notice what Paul says in II Thessalonians 2:15, **“Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.”**

Now please understand that Paul is not speaking of traditions like we have in the church today, many of them go against what God has said in His Word. He is speaking of those things that were written, the truths of God found in the Word of God and not to let go of them, stand fast!

What does that mean to stand fast?

Standing fast is the idea of remaining strong. Know the truth and remain firm in your convictions.

Don't waver.

Stay on track.

Let's face it, most believers do not like conflict, but being a Christian puts us right in the middle of it!

I think we all understand that reality.

The apostle had reminded the Philippian believers that the adversaries would be seeking to "**terrify**" them. (Philippians 1:28)

The opposition will always be looming in the shadows if not aggressively opposing us as we live out our faith.

It is in the face of this hostility that we must keep our eyes on our Lord and be steadfast.

We are not to take lightly our enemy. We are warned in I Corinthians 10:12 that the one who thinks he stands should take heed lest he fall.

We must not underestimate the tactics and power of the enemy.

History gives us examples of believers who have fallen: David, Samson, Peter, Demas, and many of our contemporaries.

And then, let us not forget our own battles!

Our focus must remain upon the Lord. "***Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might***" (Ephesians 6:10)

Thus, we need a heart of wisdom, and we must be able discern right from wrong, and even what is almost right!

How can we accomplish this?

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!

And we will deal with this next time as we read on. Paul will go on to say in II Timothy 3:16-17, **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”**

The Amplified Bible puts these verses like this, **“Every Scripture is God-breathed (given by His inspiration) and profitable for instruction, for reproof and conviction of sin, for correction of error and discipline in obedience, [and] for training in righteousness (in holy living, in conformity to God's will in thought, purpose, and action), So that the man of God may be complete and proficient, well fitted and thoroughly equipped for every good work.”**

And lastly, from The Living Bible, we are told, **“The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right. It is God's way of making us well prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone.”**

The Bible is God’s Word to us. In it is all you need to obtain and maintain a right relationship with God. Then we must apply that to our lives and walk accordingly!

How do we confront apostasy?

By boldly speaking forth the Word of God which has been opened up to us by the Spirit of God to put down those false teachers and their false doctrine with the hope that they may come to saving faith and to keep people from falling prey to their false doctrine.