

### In the Last Days

Our last lesson, “We Can Be Different,” showed us the “invisible church” of true believers and the “visible church” of all who say they are Christian (2 Tim. 2:19-20). Paul then explained the need for individuals as well as the whole church body to be purified and to avoid those who do not want to walk in the Lord’s ways. Today we will see the detailed list of characteristics of those who resist the truth. Remember our job in this – if there is a way to get through to them we are to do so. But we are to turn away if they resist. READ: 2 Timothy 2:23-26. Then Paul went on to expound on what we are up against.

READ 3 Timothy 3:1-9

Verse 1 – *this know also*; so Paul will go on to give in great detail the dangerous characteristics of those doing such harm.

*Last days* – this time period is from the resurrection of Jesus Christ until His Second Coming.

*Perilous times* – fierce, dangerous. One reason for this is the many bad things being done by people who are influenced by Satan – some are even in the church.

Verse 2a – *lovers of their own selves* – the core problem. No one has all these characteristics, but these are the things to look out for.

Verses 2-4:

*Covetous* – love of money

*Boasters* – take honor that is not theirs

*Proud* – look down on others

*Blasphemous* – speak evil of God

*Disobedient to parents*

*Unthankful*

*Unholy* – because of lack of inner purity

*Without natural affection* – especially to their own family members including their children

*Truce-breakers* – refuse to get along with people or to make peace with them

*False accusers* - slanderers

*Incontinent* – without self-control

*Fierce* – cruel in their revenge

*Despisers of those that are good* – unkind to all that are good, especially followers of Christ

*Traitors* - betrayers

*Heady* – rash, headstrong

*Highminded* – proud, puffed up

*Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God*

Verse 5 – *having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof* – this is the “bottom line” core problem; it is the sum of the results of them all. They look and often act godly, but they deny the true power of the Lord. Paul was warning about people inside the church.

What is true godliness? We studied this last Fall in Lesson 6.

*And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:  
God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels,  
preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*  
1 Timothy 3:16

A *mystery* in the Bible is something that God explains to His people and is contained in the Word of God.

The *mystery of godliness* is basically the gospel. *Godliness* is the holiness and godly behavior of true Christians, and involves the gospel because we believe it.

SO the reason why these evil people do what they do is because they deny/reject one or more parts of the gospel, causing them to be without God’s power.

*From such turn away* – do not let them draw you away from the Lord and His will for you. Paul explained this in a little more detail in his first letter to Timothy:

*But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after  
righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.  
Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called,  
and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.*  
1 Timothy 6:11-12

Verse 6-7 – an example of what was happening in the church at that time; they would take captive spiritually those who were most vulnerable.

*Silly* – foolish, unwise, weak and helpless, weak minded; they did not go after those who knew the Word and could recognize the dangers. These women were also sinful in various ways, simply following their desires. (*Lust* is any strong desire.)

The result was that though they may have heard teachings, they never really understood and matured in the Lord and His truths. Why? Because they were misled by corrupt people.

Verse 8 – a strong example from the Old Testament. Jannes and Jambres were magicians who challenged Moses in Egypt. This seems like an extreme example, but it make the point of the evil that some can cause.

*Resist the truth* – those leading others astray do not want to hear God’s truths.

*Corrupt minds* – depraved, utterly corrupt, will perish

*Reprobate concerning the faith* – rejected, worthless

Verse 9 – they will be stopped when their folly is seen by all. (1 John 2:19)

*Folly* – stupidity, madness

This is a heavy list of what to avoid. Next week we will see Paul's heart on this, as well as the challenges and how God equips us to face them. In the meantime, let's hear Peter expound on a good list of God's blessed provisions, how we walk in them, and the wonderful results.

*3 According as his divine power hath given unto us  
all things that pertain unto life and godliness,  
through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:*

*4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises:  
that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature,  
having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

*5 And beside this, giving all diligence,  
add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;*

*6 And to knowledge temperance;  
and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;*

*7 And to godliness brotherly kindness;  
and to brotherly kindness charity.*

*8 For if these things be in you, and abound,  
they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful  
in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

2 Peter 1:3-8