

2 Timothy 3

Read verses 1 – 5

1. In verse 1, Paul says if you think things are getting worse now, wait until the Last Days. Each generation thinks that things are worse than the previous one. Many people believe that, “Surely, things are so bad that this is the end.” Paul starts the chapter with “Mark my words, *There will be terrible times in the last days.*” Not bad times, but “*terrible times*”!
2. The Greek word translated as “*terrible*” is “*chalepós*”. It is also used in Matthew 8:28, after Jesus calmed the raging storm on the Sea of Galilee, He and the disciples came upon two demon possessed men. “*They were so “chalepos” or violent that no one could pass.*” There are times that I think that we must be getting close to the End Times that Paul was talking about in verse 1.

“The terribleness of the last days results from the continual decay of man's spiritual nature. As people neglect the spiritual dimension of life, they turn in upon themselves to find meaning and consolation in the face of life's absurdity.”
(Holman New Testament Commentary)

3. In verses 2 through 4, Paul gives the attributes of people living in the End Times. I have known lots of people with some of these attributes, but not to the extreme that Paul is talking about. Paul’s End Times list says:

lovers of themselves	ungrateful	brutal
lovers of money	unholy	not lovers of the good
boastful	without love	treacherous
proud	unforgiving	rash
abusive	slandorous	conceited
disobedient to their parents	without self-control	lovers of pleasure

4. Some of these fit together. If you are focused on yourself and money, there is very little love left for others and God. These are the two commandments that Jesus said were most important. You have no love if you do not love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind and soul and you don’t love others as

yourself. So if you love only yourself and money, then you are without love and will not be lovers of good and God.

5. This list is the opposite of the Fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23, *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."* A couple of verses before Paul lists the Fruits of the Spirit, Paul gives the acts of the flesh. *"19 The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God."* From this list and the list here in 2 Timothy 3, you should be able to conclude that people in End Times will not be influenced by the Holy Spirit but by their own flesh.
6. On January 20, 1961, President John F. Kennedy delivered a speech that included: "Ask not what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country." As I look at the next generation and the current political leaders, I can't help but believe that ideology is gone. People vote today based on the thought "What can I get out of it?" and not who is the right person to lead us into the future.
7. In verse 5, Paul says, *"having a form of godliness but denying its power"*. It is the idea that Church is something that we do on Sunday, just like going out to Sunday dinner. It fits with the prosperity gospel. They say, "I will do godliness if there is a chance that something good might happen in MY life." Guzik says, "In our self-obsessed world, people feel very free to have a "salad bar" religion — they pick and choose what they want. They feel free to be very "spiritual," but sense no obligation to be *Biblical*."
8. What does Paul say we should do with these people? *"Have nothing to do with such people."* He is not saying "Do not evangelize such people." He is saying do not make them your friends or do not socialize with them. In 1 Corinthians 15:33, Paul says, *"Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."* This is the same idea.

Read verses 6 – 9

9. Paul continues with the way people will behave during the end times. When I think about the world today, I believe the End times must be close at hand. Paul says that there will be people “*who work their way into people’s homes and win the confidence of vulnerable women who are burdened with the guilt of sin and controlled by various desires.*” I look at the SPAM calls that we get today. They worm their way into your home and into your finances in order to take advantage of people, not just vulnerable women. I have helped friends and family make sure that nothing was taken when they fall victim to these calls or emails.

10. Paul uses a term that gets translated as “gullible women”. I believe that part of it is that women of Paul’s day were less educated. They didn’t have careers and didn’t go to war. They were expected to take care of the household and children. Finding a husband was looking to be taken care of for the rest of your life. However, just like today they did live longer than men. There are times when I have trouble trying to distinguish what is a scam or what is real. What was a good price for the work that they did? There are so many opportunities to be scammed today. This may be what Paul is calling gullible.

“I do not believe Paul targeted women as inherently weak-willed or prone to deception. Instead, he recognized and pointed out a pattern he observed. Women offered easier access into homes, and those women whom the false teachers could most easily exploit were vulnerable: *loaded down with sins and ... swayed by all kinds of evil desires.*” (Holman New Testament Commentary)

11. At the Adult Education on Resurrection, I said, “Make sure that you know what you believe and make sure that it is correct theology.” There was an adage attributed to Malcolm X that says, “If you don’t stand for something, you’ll fall for anything”. Now and during the End Times, there will be numerous false prophets trying to lead you away from God. You should be spending time at home, in Sunday School, at Adult Education classes, learning what the true Gospel is. Satan is like a lion seeking a weak Christian to devour. Know what God’s Word says. Don’t leave it to a 30 minute sermon on Sunday to know God’s Word.

12. In verse 8, Paul says that these false teachers are like “*Jannes and Jambres who opposed Moses*”. Holman’s Commentary says that “Jannes and Jambres are not mentioned in the Old Testament but tradition says these are probably the sorcerers who opposed God's authority through Moses in Egypt.” Paul calls them and other false teachers are those “*that oppose the truth.*”
13. In verse 6, Paul said that Timothy (and us) should not be a “worm” like “*Jannes and Jambres*”. In continuing here in verse 9, he says that these types of men have “depraved minds” and it will be obvious to the believer that they are evil and will be rejected. It will be clear to the believer that their gospel is false and they will not get very far.

Read verses 10 – 12

14. In verses 10 and 11, Paul says that Timothy knows everything about Paul. As I said earlier, when traveling together then you get to know your companion. Timothy was like a son to Paul. As family, Timothy would have heard everything that Paul preached. Additionally Timothy would have seen and heard him when he wasn’t preaching. If Paul would have preached one way and behaved differently in private, Timothy would have known.
15. The NKJV translates what Paul said in verse 10 as, Timothy “*carefully followed my doctrine*”. Guzik says regarding “*carefully followed*” “*Carefully followed*” means that Paul did not merely *teach* Timothy these things in an academic sense; Timothy learned these things by carefully following Paul’s example. The best kind of Christianity is not only *taught*, it is also *caught* by seeing it lived out in other people.”
16. Timothy experienced Paul’s life with him. Through everything that they endured together, most important of all, Timothy saw how God/Jesus rescued him from the trials that he faced.
17. In verse 11, Paul tells Timothy that he witnessed the persecutions that Paul endured. In 2 Corinthians 11:24-25, Paul lists most of what he had endured in the name of the Gospel. Timothy would have been with Paul for at least part of these court trials.

18. In verse 12, Paul disputes Prosperity Gospel. He says what Jesus said in John 16:33, *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”* Jesus also said in Matthew 10:22, *“You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.”* Unfortunately, the world is changing. It seems fewer and fewer people are receptive of the Gospel message. More allowances have been made for Muslims than for Christians. I have seen prayer rooms at airports and heard that schools are allowing Muslim prayer in schools.
19. Paul tells us in verse 12 that, *“everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”* 1 Peter 5:8 says, *“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”* Satan doesn’t want us to live a godly life in Jesus. He attacks believers to distract our focus from Jesus and to keep us from reaching others for Jesus. Are you putting on the full armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18) to protect yourself from Satan daily?

Read verses 13 – 17

20. Verse 13 is a continuation of verse 12, but it pulls us back to the non-believers during the End Times. As he started this chapter, Paul says that people will go from bad to worse. Satan’s favorite tool is deception so you should expect lots of deception in the End Times. I think of politicians when I read this verse. Today, there is no oversight on what politicians say in their advertisements. They can promise the world or say lies about their opponent and no one checks the facts. They are not held accountable or made to follow through on their promises.
21. Verse 14 says that as Christians and believers of the truth, we are to grow and continue in Christian living. Focusing on what we have learned from the Word of God and church. In Timothy’s case, he was taught by Paul so he can have confidence in what he was taught. For us, we should make sure that we spend time in the Bible and as Pastor Brian says, *“Check what you are being taught for ourselves.”*

22. In verse 15, Paul speaks to Timothy's learning the Word of God from his mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois. Paul has confidence in Timothy's biblical foundation because he knows that it will be wise through his foundation and his faith in Jesus Christ.

"Two elements are necessary for faithful living. First, we must possess knowledge of the truth. Truth enlightens a person about what is right and wrong, what constitutes purpose and happiness. We cannot trust or love what we do not know. The second element is conviction or belief. We express our belief system in the daily decisions we make and the behaviors in which we engage. No one acts contrary to belief (though we may act contrary to our professions of belief)." (Holman New Testament Commentary)

23. Verse 16 is one of the most quoted verses when it comes to the truth of the Bible. "*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness*". The Bible was written by approximately 40 authors over a span of about 1,600 years. The authors were human but the inspiration was God. The Bible has one common theme and that is God's love for His people shone through His redemption and restoration through Jesus Christ.

24. The final verse in this chapter says that the Word of God is all you need for every good work. I have heard others say that it is just an old history book but I believe it speaks to us today. I can read the Scriptures and then come back and re-read the same verses and they help me in different ways. The first step of BSF is for each person to read the assigned Scriptures and answer questions about them all on their own. The second step is to discuss their answers with a small group. I am often surprised how God speaks to each of us differently. God gives us exactly what you need at the precise moment that we need it.

25. Do you notice that Paul ends this chapter with, all Timothy needs to step out on his own is his biblical foundation and the Word of God. When I said "on his own", it includes what Paul started this letter with, "Grace, mercy and

peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.” Paul assumed that the power of the Holy Spirit was a given.