

“LIVING IN THE LAST DAYS”

II TIMOTHY 3:1-9

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INTRODUCTION

Timothy, “flee youthful lusts” (22), refuse foolish speculations, don’t be quarrelsome, teach sound doctrine and correct error (23-26). But the task will not be easy!

DON'T BE DISCOURAGED. GOD IS IN CONTROL AND EVIL WILL FAIL.

- I. REALIZE THIS (1-5a).
 - A. Difficult times (1)
 - The focus is generally upon the times just prior to Jesus’ 2nd Coming—note “will come.”
 - You are living in “the last days.” Believers have always held His coming to be imminent.
 - “Difficult” only used elsewhere of the two demoniacs in Mt. 8:28.
 - B. Depraved Persons (2-5a) [Cf. the list of fallen humanity in Rom. 1:29-31]

It is important to note how each of these qualities builds upon the one before it.

 1. Lovers of Self
 - Beware of the “self-love” and “self-esteem” movement!
 - Once the fall of man is acknowledged along with sinful depravity, the center of attention must be removed from the self to God. As Bernard states, “Once the sense of sin is truly felt, self-respect becomes an inadequate basis for moral theory.”
 2. Lovers of money (cf. I Tim. 6:10). [cf. the end of the list with “love of pleasure”—v. 4]

When self-centeredness, materialism, and love of pleasure become the focus rather than the love of God, moral values are destroyed and the following list of vices is the fruit. The point of v. 4 is that these things **replace** the love of God—not merely supersede it. **See I Tim. 6:10 for the point that “love of money” is a significant root cause of all sorts of evil.**
 3. Boastful—outward manifestation; one who wanders about like a peddler, exaggerating his wares
 4. Arrogant—inward source; one who must “shine above” others
 5. Slanderers, abusive in speech [“blasphemy” here not toward God, but men]
 6. Disobedient toward parents—**in the list with serious moral problems!**
 7. Unthankful—ungrateful
 8. Unholy
 9. Unloving—“without natural affection”, as children toward parents, parents to children, etc.
 10. Unforgiving, irreconcilable—with whom no truce is accepted
 11. Malicious gossips—“devilish” (word from which “devil” is derived)
 12. Without self-control—unrestrained
 13. Brutal, fierce—literally like an untamed “brute”
 14. Haters of good—literally “unloving toward good”
 15. Treacherous, traitors—“literally giving over before”
 16. Reckless—literally “to fall before”; impulsive like a bolting horse
 17. Conceited—“filled with smoke, puffed up”
 18. Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God
 19. Holding to a form of godliness
 - a. Form is a pretension, attempting to imitate the real thing (cf. Phil. 2:6, 7—real form)
 - b. Denied its genuine power; no true gospel, a false message
 - c. This does not speak of a genuine but powerless form of religion, but a false religious pretension.
 - d. Denial is a strong repudiation.
 - e. These teachers have “no conception of the gospel as a generating force.”

- II. REJECT SUCH MEN (5b). [Same principle as 2:21, 23]
“Timothy is to avoid them with horror”
- III. REJOICE IN THE ULTIMATE FAILURE OF ERROR (6-9).
- A. The work of the Deceivers (6, 8)
1. They “creep into houses”—cf. Jude 4
 2. They captivate women—word is military, usually at spear point.
 - Notice that false teaching is **enslaving, not liberating!**
 3. They stand in opposition to the Truth (8).
 - Their predecessors are Jannes and Jambres who opposed Moses (Ex. 7-8).
 4. They are men of **depraved mind**—having been completely corrupted and ruined.
 5. They are men who have been tested and rejected as regards the faith—Christian doctrine.
- B. The captivation of the Deceived (6b, 7)
1. They are “weak” or “silly” women—literally **“little women.”**
 - In more recent times one may remember David Koresh and the Branch Davidian enclave at Waco, Texas, the fundamentalist LDS sect in northern AZ with Warren Jeffs, etc.
 - In fact, Bernard, quoting from Jerome, notes that this use of women to attain success in religious ventures **“is a feature of all heretical systems** and has its root deep down in human nature” (131).
 2. They are weighed down with sins (7).
 They looked for some easy relief, possibly with the promise of no eternal retribution. The women were “overwhelmed in their consciences” and were extremely “conscious of the squalor and futility of their lives”. As Bernard puts it, they seek peace in spiritual dissipation.
 3. They are led astray with varied lusts (7).
 Such “lusts” are “undisciplined movements of the spirit”, in addition to “desires of the flesh.” Often the “flesh” and the “spirit” become confused in spiritual endeavors.
 4. They are always learning, but never able to come to the genuine knowledge of the Truth.
 - These women learned through the instruction of others and listened to their advice, but had become “so fickle and warped that they had become incapable of obtaining the knowledge of the truth” (Rogers, 505). They were “avidly, and perhaps morbidly, curious about religion and prepared to fall for any novel theory put before them.”
 - They were more interested in the “sensational rather than serious information, and consequently they fall an easy prey to pseudo-Christian teachers” (G. 159). As Bernard notes, **“Their spiritual sense is dulled, through overmuch curiosity as to the solution of unpractical problems of speculative theology.”**
- C. The Eventual failure of Deception
1. They will not make further progress.
 - As seen in 2:16, their “progress” is **more ungodliness**, and 3:13 and **from bad to worse**—same verb.
 2. Their folly—**mindlessness**—will eventually be evident to all!
 - Just like what happened to Jannes and Jambres.

CONCLUSION

Face the facts: *things are going to get worse!*

But, in the meantime, stand solidly for truth and reject false teachers and teaching.

Rejoice in the ultimate failure of deceivers and their followers. Error will fail; truth will prevail.

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