

How to Deal with Perilous Times

2 Timothy 3:1-16

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2 Timothy was written around 65 A.D.

What are we to do in “perilous times”? After all we are living in them right now.

1) Turn away from the counterfeit (2 Timothy 3:1-9).

2 Timothy 3:5 is a very scary verse, mainly because of the verses that precede it.

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

2 Timothy 3:1-4

What we would all expect to follow this verse is describing such people as atheists, agnostics, or those totally against Christ.

But look at verse 5: “*having a form of godliness but denying its power.*”

“Having a form of godliness” (2 Tim. 3:5) suggests an outward appearance of religion, not true Christian faith, for they have never experienced the power of God in their lives. ~ **Warren Weirsbe**

This is called “lip service” Christianity.

“They were professing Christians, but nothing more”.

~ **Expositor’s Greek New Testament**

Here are the characteristics of such people:

Love themselves, love money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

As you read through this long list of evil characteristics, you probably think of the godless enemies of the faith that never darken the door of a church. But then you come to verse 5, where Paul says that they hold “to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power.” You realize, “Good grief, he’s talking about those *within* the church!” He’s describing professing Christians. Some are church leaders. They teach Bible studies. They’re not passive, sit-in-the-pew members, but those who are active in ministry. But their religion is just an empty shell. They lack the reality of a genuine walk with God, who looks on the heart. They talk a good line, they put on a good front, but in their motives, their thought lives, and their personal relationships, they are not godly people. ~ **Steven Cole, Bible.org**

Do you have a **form** of godliness or godliness itself? If it is a form, then we are no better than the Pharisees in the New Testament.

Empty religion is a definite truth for Unbelievers and can be a snare even for Believers.

For the Unbeliever it is lostness and for the Believer it is misplaced affections.

“Sin is what you do when your heart is not **satisfied** with God.” ~ **John Piper**

To be a “counterfeit” Christian is to play the part, but be void of God and the power of God. Have you known Jesus, not know about Him or had someone else tell you about Him, but do you know and experience Him?

Remember, we are talking about what we are to do in perilous times. We turn away from the counterfeit and those associated with it.

For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 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.

2 Timothy 3:6-9

Paul illustrates his point by referring to Jannes and Jambres, Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses. These men are not mentioned by name in the Bible, but rather in early Jewish writings and tradition.

They mimicked the miracles that Moses and Aaron performed before Pharaoh, not by the power of God, but either by sleight of hand or demonic power. But Paul says (3:8) that the false teachers “oppose the truth” and are “of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith.” Often the cults will offer results that are promised to believers in the Bible, but they offer them without bringing people to the cross and to faith in Christ. The Mormons, for example, offer harmonious family relationships, but they do not proclaim Jesus as Lord and preach submission to Him. ~ Bible.org

Empty religion will always have those who spread/breed it:

- Play on **felt** needs
- Entice with **sinful** desires
- Play on their desire for learning – **cults**
- Opposes truth with counterfeit beliefs

In perilous times we must run or turn away from the counterfeit, this includes the prosperity Gospel.

2) Follow what is **true**.

Follow **Jesus**.

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” **John 14:6**

Come follow me.

Matthew 4:19

Follow God’s **Word**.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Psalms 119:105

Look to other Godly **Believers**.

But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. **2 Timothy 3:10-11**

3) Continue in God’s **Word**.

Teach **kids** God’s Word.

Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.

Proverbs 22:6

But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 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. **2 Timothy 3:14-17**

God’s Word is:

- a) **Holy** vs. 15a
- b) Leads to **salvation** vs. 15b
- c) **True** and Dependable vs. 16a
- d) **Profitable** vs. 16b (doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction)
- e) Equip for Service vs. 17

Prayer Focus:

Am I a child of God or a counterfeit?

As a Believer, am I going through the motions or walking with Jesus?

Who or what am I following?