

2 Timothy 3:1-17 NLT

Paul is writing to Timothy as a spiritual father and with urgency. Paul tells of perilous times coming. God's Word doesn't just give us warnings but gives us solutions to them. God has written this loving letter to His children to bring about His purposes in our lives. It has instructions for life and also shows His love for us.

The Look of Deception.

There are 19 characteristics of difficult times that Paul describes...

- Lovers of themselves... We hear it so much today that we need to love ourselves; narcissistic; all is about me!
- Lovers of money... Materialistic; making money is really important.
- Boasters... Claiming to be something that we are not; looking successful with possessions and talking about it.
- Proud... Having an inflated view of self; self-promoting.
- Blasphemous... Talking bad of others and of God.
- Disobedience to parents... Kids don't listen to parents; it overflows to schools; disrespectful to others.
- Unthankful... No gratitude for anything; we don't realize what we have and are ungrateful.
- Unholy... No regard for things that are holy; the Bible is not upheld as we pick and choose what to believe; becoming tolerant.
- Unloving... No sacrifice for others; putting aside our desires doesn't happen.
- Unforgiving... Having a desire to be forgiven but not willing to forgive others; demanding to be treated differently than we treat others.
- Slanderous... making false accusations.
- Without self-control... No resistance; doing whatever we want.
- Brutal... Inhuman to one another; murdering; crimes are soaring and increased significantly these days.
- Despising of Good... We don't do good, and don't like those who do good.
- Treacherous... No loyalty; abandoning commitments.
- Headstrong... Forcing others to comply and forcing to make things happen; using force when authority says no.
- Haughty... Puffed up with pride.
- Lovers of pleasure... want our own desires more than God.
- Form of godliness but denying it's power... We look saved (church) but deny and reject the power.

Do we see this list and think the world is really bad? But realize he is speaking to the church, those looking godly but rejecting the power that comes from a life submitted to God. Paul tells us to avoid - not tolerate and not entertain.

2 Timothy 2:24-26 *A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people. Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will learn the truth. Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil's trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants.*

Paul is telling Timothy to be aware that people will come and oppose the truth of God. Avoid these people. Be aware that these will draw you away from what God wants for us. Don't withdraw but live under God's power.

The Method of Deception.

2 Timothy 3:6-7 *They are the kind 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. (Such women are forever following new teachings, but they are never able to understand the truth.)*

Know the context: men were working outside of homes, women were caring for the home with extra time. People (they) were being motivated by lusts in their lives - it was creeping in. Sometimes we compare ourselves with others instead of God's Word, then we tend to still make room for things to creep in. The method of the enemy is to creep into places - through the back door. We tolerate for awhile and then it gets bigger and becomes more active in our lives. What do we allow to creep in as we watch TV? It creeps in as it satisfies our lusts.

"Always learning" is a justification for allowing things in. We want knowledge but we miss the truth. If what we believe disagrees with God's Word then we are wrong - not His Word. His Word is absolute and our hope is based on this truth. We need to be able to discern truth - it's in His Word. We can trust it and it's where the truth can be found.

The End of Deception.

2 Timothy 3:8-9 *And these teachers fight truth just as Jannes and Jambres fought against Moses. They have dirty minds, warped and twisted, and have turned against the Christian faith. But they won't get away with all this forever. Someday their deceit will be well known to everyone, as was the sin of Jannes and Jambres.*

Paul warns Timothy of impossible things coming but encourages us to endure. Endurance will always produce victory in the end. **I Corinthians 10:13** *No temptation has overtaken you except something common to mankind; and God is faithful, so He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.*

We win but it cannot be done on our own. We need our Father. He waits for us. Nothing is impossible with Jesus. Jesus is greater than! Our help comes from the Lord. He will help us in all. The Holy Spirit comes to live and help and empower us to do what we can't do... Forgive, let go, put aside the pride of life, be more loving, stop worry... and stand in the power of the Holy Spirit!

What impossible situations are you in?

Where do you see yourself in those 19 characteristics of the end times?

Where and how do you let deception in?

How can you embrace God's power to overcome deception?