



Paul's 2nd Letter to Timothy

Passing on the Baton

Autumn 2017



2 Timothy 3: 1-9

(sermons: Oct 22)

Introduction

Since this is a short passage, it may be worth going through it first, making sure everyone is clear what it means – before trying to apply any of it to our lives today.

For this passage, most of the questions relate to all 9 verses and there is some overlap between them.

2 Tim 1:1-9 A Godless Society

- v.1 *in the last days – the period before Jesus' Return, but in some ways this is the period ever since his Ascension (see Acts 2:14-17; Hebrews 1:1-2); from verse 6 onwards Paul uses the present tense, as if he is describing his own time.*
 - v.2 *lovers of themselves, lovers of money – these descriptions sum up much of what follows; to round off the list of vices, there is a similar summary in v.4: 'lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God'.*
 - v.2 *disobedient to their parents – compare Ephesians 6:1-4 on the 5th Commandment. The breakdown of family relations may be reflected in some of the words that follow: 'ungrateful, unholy, without love..'*
 - v.6 *worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women – did these false teachers pretend to be offering spiritual guidance to those whose consciences troubled them, but were in fact taking advantage of their vulnerable condition for financial gain or sexual exploitation?*
 - v.8 *Jannes and Jambres – the names of Pharaoh's magicians in contemporary Jewish writings about the Exodus (7:11). This implies that Paul is like Moses as a teacher of God's truth.*
1. Would Paul's descriptions have reassured the small Christian community that things weren't out of control when they saw some of these problems around them? Do they reassure us?
How far is the description true of most periods in history?
Which parts of Paul's description of people '*in the last days*' sound like aspects of society today?
Do any parts of Paul's description surprise you?
 2. When could we be in danger of becoming '*lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God*' (verse 4) ?
How do we resist social pressure to conform? (Compare John 12:42-43)
 3. Could we be accused of '*having a form of godliness but denying its power*' (verse 5), or '*going through the motions*' (Wright)?
What did Jesus say about religion that was only on the outside? (eg Matthew 7:15-20; 23:23-26)
 4. What is Paul's main accusation against the men in *verses 6 to 9*? Where have they gone wrong?
How could we have wrong motives for our involvement in Christian ministry?
 5. Are there people today who are '*always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth*' (v.7) ?
What other groups could be vulnerable to spiritual teachers with other agendas?
 6. Can you find any good example to follow, or any word of encouragement, in this passage?
Or do we need to have a realistic awareness of the problems in our world in order to appreciate our need of God's grace?