

STUDIES IN THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

"THE TWELVE STEPS TO A FANTASTIC FINISH"

STEP #8: 2 Timothy 3:1-9

"Lord, Where You Lead Me I Will Follow"

Key verse 2:15 — *"Make every effort to present yourself to God, approved, as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, guiding the word of truth along a straight path."*

TEXT:

Key verse 3:5

v. 1 But be knowing this, that in the last days hard times will set in.

v. 2 For men will be fond of themselves (selfish), lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, slanderers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy.

v. 3 Without natural affection, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, not loving the good.

v. 4 Traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

v. 5 ***While having an outward form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and turn away from such men as these.***

v. 6 For of these are those who are worming their way into houses and captivating silly women having been overwhelmed by their sins, who are being led on by various desires.

v. 7 Always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

v. 8 Now in the same manner as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also are these opposing the truth, Men depraved in mind, disqualified concerning the faith.

v. 9 But they will not make further progress, for their folly shall become quite evident to all, as also that of those two came to be.

INTRODUCTION:

CHRISTIAN FOOTBALL

Quarterback Sneak—Church members quietly leaving during the invitation.

Draw Play—What many children do with the bulletin during worship.

Half-time—The period between Sunday School and worship when many choose to leave.

Benchwarmer—Those who do not sing, pray, work, or apparently do anything but sit.

Backfield-in-Motion—Make a trip to the back (restroom or water fountain) during the service.

Staying in the Pocket—What happens to a lot of money that should be given to the Lord's work.

Two-minute Warning—The point at which you realize the sermon is almost over and begin to gather up your children and belongings.

Instant Replay—The preacher loses his notes and falls back on last week's illustrations.

Sudden Death—What happens to the attention span of the congregation if the preacher goes "overtime."

Trap—You're called on to pray and are asleep.

End Run—Getting out of church quick, without speaking to any guest or fellow member.

Flex Defense—The ability to allow absolutely nothing said during the servant to affect your life.

Halfback Option—The decision of 50% of the congregation not to return for the evening service.

Blitz—The rush for the restaurants following the closing prayer.

(Received via e-mail from Phil & Marily Zimmerman, April 13, 2001)

DEFINITIONS TO LAUGH ABOUT

ADULT: A person who has stopped growing at both ends and is now growing in the middle.

BEAUTY PARLOR: A place where women curl up and dye.

CANNIBAL: Someone who is fed up with people.

CHICKENS: The only creatures you eat before they are born and after they are dead.

COMMITTEE: A body that keeps minutes and wastes hours.

DUST: Mud with the juice squeezed out.

EGOTIST: Someone who is usually me-deep in conversation.

GOSSIP: A person who will never tell a lie if the truth will do more damage.

HANDKERCHIEF: Cold Storage.

INFLATION: Cutting money in half without damaging the paper.

MOSQUITO: An insect that makes you like flies better.

RAISIN: Grape with a sunburn.

SECRET: Something you tell to one person at a time.

TOOTHACHE: The pain that drives you to extraction.

TOMORROW: One of the greatest labor saving devices of today.

YAWN: An honest opinion openly expressed.

WRINKLES: Something other people have. You have character lines.

(Received via e-mail from Nesom and Beth Burt, January 26, 2001)

I'M A SENIOR CITIZEN

I'm the life of the party . . . even when it lasts until 8 PM.,
 I'm very good at opening childproof caps with a hammer.
 I'm usually interested in going home before I get to where I am going.
 I'm good on a trip for at least an hour without my aspirin, beano,
 antacid . . .

I'm the first one to find the bathroom wherever I go.
 I'm awake many hours before my body allows me to get up.
 I'm smiling all the time because I can't hear a word you're saying.
 I'm very good at telling stories . . . over and over and over.

I'm aware that other people's grandchildren are not as bright as mine.
 I'm so cared for; long term care, eye care, private care, dental care . . .
 I'm not grouchy, I just don't like traffic, waiting, crowds, children,
 politicians . . .

I'm positive I did housework correctly before my mate retired.
 I'm sure everything I can't find is in a secure place.
 I'm wrinkled, saggy, lumpy, and that's just my left leg.
 I'm having trouble remembering simple words like . . .
 I'm now spending more time with my pillows than with my mate.
 I'm realizing that aging is not for sissies . . .
 I'm anti-everything now: anti-fat, anti-smoke, anti-noise, anti-
 inflammatory . . .

I'm walking more (to the bathroom) and enjoying it less.
 I'm going to reveal what goes on behind closed doors . . . absolutely
 nothing!

I'm sure they are making adults much younger these days.
 I'm in the initial stage of my golden years: SS, CD's, IRA's, AARP . . .
 I'm wondering, if you're only as old as you feel, how could I be alive
 at 150?

I'm supporting all movements now . . . by eating bran, prunes, and
 raisins.

I'm a walking storeroom of facts . . . I've just lost the storeroom.
 I'm a SENIOR CITIZEN and I think I am having the time of my life!!!!

Now if I could only remember who sent this to me, I would send it to
 many more! You didn't, did you?????

(Received via e-mail from Nesom and Beth Burt, January 24, 2001)

New words for an old song from *The Sound of Music*'s:

"A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS"

Maalox and nosedrops and needles for knittin',
Walkers and handrails and new dental fittin's,
Bundles of magazines tied up with string,
These are a few of my favorite things.

Cadillacs, cataracts, hearing aids, glasses,
Polident, Fixodent, false teeth in glasses,
Pacemakers, golf carts and porches with swings,
These are a few of my favorite things.

When the pipes leak,
When the bones creak,
When the knees go bad,
Then I remember my favorite things and then I don't feel so bad.

Hot tea and crumpets, and corn pads for bunions,
No spicy hot food and no food with onions,
Bathrobes and heat pads and hot meals they bring,
These are a few of my favorite things.

Back pains, confused brains, and no fear of sinnin',
Thin bones and fractures and hair that is thinnin'.
And we won't mention our short shrunken frames,
When we remember our favorite things.

When the joints ache, when the hips break,
When the eyes grow dim,
Then I remember the great life I've had,
And then I don't feel so bad.

THEN I REMEMBER THE GREAT LIFE I'VE HAD
AND THEN I DON'T FEEL SOOO BAAAD.

(Source unknown)

(Illustrations Unlimited by James S. Hewett, editor) Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House. Copyright – James S. Hewett, 1988.

A WISE RULE

If your mind should go blank, don't forget to turn off the sound.

p. 473

THE HARD TRUTH

We don't become more moral as we grow older, we just choose our sins more carefully.

p. 25

(God's Most Precious Jewels are Crystallized Tears: True Stories of Women Who Turned Their Misery Into Ministry by Barbara Johnson) Nashville, TN: Word. Copyright – Barbara Johnson, 2001.

We've reached the age where just haulin' our fat around counts as a workout.

p. 31

An elderly woman decided to have her portrait painted. She told the artist, "Paint me with diamond earrings, a diamond necklace, emerald bracelet, a ruby broach, and a gold Rolex watch."

"But you're not wearing any of those things," the artist argued.

"I know," she answered. "It's in case I should die before my husband. I'm sure he will remarry right away, and I want his new wife to go crazy looking for the jewelry."

p. 57

(The 776 Stupidest Things Ever Said by Ross & Kathryn Petras) New York, NY: Doubleday. Copyright – Ross & Kathryn Petras, 1993.

On Blame:

We have only one person to blame, and that's each other.

Barry Back, *New York Ranger*, on who started a brawl during the National Hockey League's Stanley Cup playoffs

p. 13

On Celebrity, Extraterrestrial:

[I introduce to you the Reverend Father McFadden] known all over the world, and other places besides.

introduction in Parliament, nineteenth century

p. 20

On Compliments:

Elderly woman (on a hot day in St. Petersburg, Florida):

Good afternoon, Mr. Berra. My, you look mighty cool today.

Yogi Berra:

Thank you, ma'am. You don't look so hot yourself.

p. 29

Well, it wouldn't be right if we didn't have a little Cowboy Poetry:

(Coyote Cowboy Poetry by Baxter Black) Brighton, CO: Coyote Cowboy Company. Copyright - Baxter Black, 1986.

**HELLO, I'M FROM THE GOVERNMENT . . .
I'M HERE TO HELP YOU**

Mr. President, I guess we know you mean well
 When you brag about the crops that we all raise
 We can hold our heads up high when you talk of apple pie
 And the prairies where our white face cattle graze.
 When our beef cows finally started making money
 You applied a price freeze for your next campaign
 Then you lent us extra cash to plant wheat and succotash
 Then slapped the old embargo on our grain.

There are programs to inspect each farmer's business
 Be he milking cows or growing pinto beans
 Our soil has been conserved and our wildlife is preserved
 There's a civil servants posting quarantines
 We're required to fill out forms beyond all reason
 From pesticides to predator control
 From fertilizer use to the children we produce
 The bureaucrats are always on patrol.

You tell us that we need your interference
 Without your help you say we'd be a mess
 We owe our lives to you, or, at least, you say we do
 Not counting OSHA and the I.R.S.
 But I think that we could feed us and our neighbors
 With less help from your Washington machines
 All we need is sun and rain, so I ask you, Don't complain
 When your mouth is full of good ol' pork and beans.

The government should have three sacred duties
 If Constitution guarantees prevail
 To help us all survive; stay the hell out of our lives,
 Protect our shores, deliver us the mail.
 I appreciate the help that you've been giving
 I'd even like to thank our Congressman
 But please leave me alone, I can make it on my own
 I've had all of your help that I can stand.

(Christ and the Cowboy by Kenneth Wyatt) Tulia, TX: Y-8 Publishing Co.
Copyright – Y-8 Publishing Co., 1998.

Home On Time
by Kenneth Wyatt

There's a miracle that I've known since I was a boy.
 Oh, it's not your regular kind of loaves and fishes,
 Or even modern ones of answers to wishes.
 But it's miraculous still,
 And, iffen' you will,
 Let's all think together on this here most wonderful joy.
 That miracle divine . . .
 How daddies always seem to get home on time.

It's on particular days that this miracle is bright,
 Say like Halloween—graduations—and weddin' the bride.
 To be where he should was a part of his pride.
 He found the right place,
 A grin on his face.
 Many hours he had traveled—all day and all night
 The miracle divine . . .
 How daddies always seem to get home on time.

It was his job that kept him gone to a far-away crew.
 And it wasn't as if that he didn't care,
 But you knew on Easter he wouldn't be there.
 Then, man among men,
 He did it again!
 Made it back, hid the eggs, got to church on the pew.
 That miracle divine . . .
 How daddies always seem to get home on time.

And it worked on birthdays, Thanksgivings and the 4th of July.
 No matter the miles that lay in the way,
 Or even the weather—how late in the day.
 Give him a reason,
 Any ol' season.
 Why, it was like noting—like done on the sly!
 That miracle divine . . .
 How daddies always seem to get home on time.

Yearly, it was Christmas that gave us a fright.
 That he gave the most presents rightly as true;
 Why, even when broke he managed a few.
 And what if it snowed?
 Mama, she knowed.
 So, she kept the light burning on that cold winter night.
 That miracle divine . . .
 How daddies always seem to get home on time.

EPILOGUE

Now we're all grown and have kids of our own.
 And it's us that goes those very long miles.
 To the ol' home place and Mama's quiet smiles.
 Was not really the same,
 But the miracle came
 To heal up our hearts now that Daddy's gone on
 To Heaven sublime . . .
 As for Daddy, he always gets Home on time.

pp. 38-39

(The Book of Cowboy Wisdom: Common Sense and Uncommon Genius From the World of Cowboys compiled and edited by Criswell Freeman) Nashville, TN: Walnut Grove Press. Copyright – Walnut Grove Press, 1997.

At least once in every
 person's life, they had
 a dream of becoming
 a cowboy.

Rachelle L. Reavis

p. 27

All honor to the Texas cowboy,
 living or dead, with all his faults,
 his virtues were many.

Edgar Rye

No coward could qualify as a true cowboy.

John J. Callison

p. 32

(The Book of Cowboy Wisdom: Common Sense and Uncommon Genius From the World of Cowboys compiled and edited by Criswell Freeman) Nashville, TN: Walnut Grove Press. Copyright – Walnut Grove Press, 1997.

Cowards never lasted long enough to become
real cowboys.

Charles Goodnight

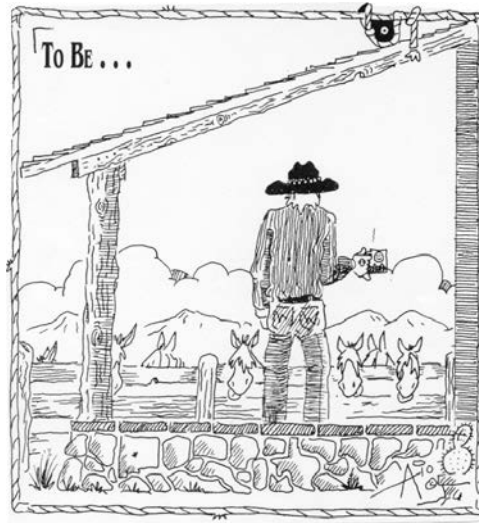
p. 33

(All Hat & No Cattle: A Guide for New Texans and All the West of Us by Anne Dingus) Houston, TX: Lone Star Books. Copyright – Gulf Publishing Co., 1999.

LAZY

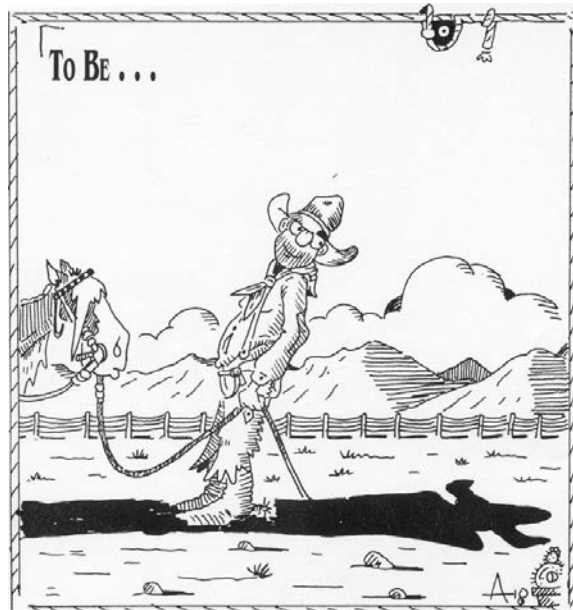
- He was born tired and never got rested up.
- He follows the shade around the house.
- She was born in the middle of the week looking both ways for Sunday.
- She won't lift a finger to pick her own nose.

(50 Good Reasons to be a Cowboy/50 Good Reasons Not to be a Cowboy by Texas Bix Bender) Salt Lake City, UT: Gibbs-Smith. Copyright – Texas Bix Bender, 1995.



Your commute to work is nothing more than a short stroll from the bunkhouse to the horse corral.

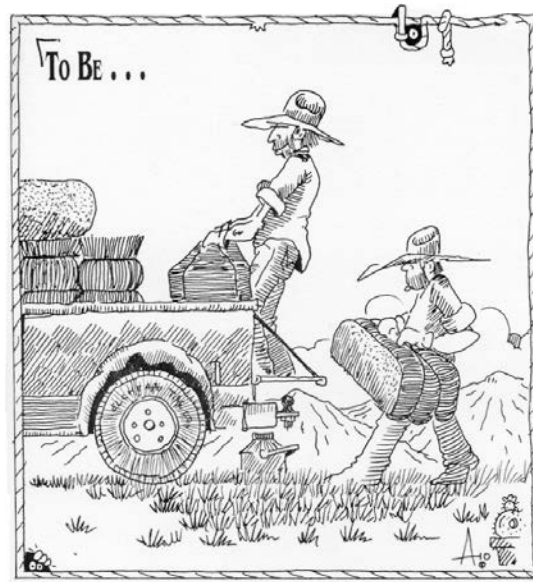
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A cowboy has no need for a watch.

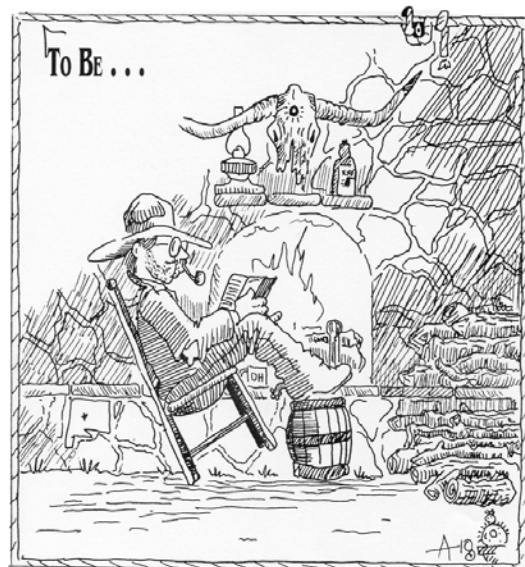
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(50 Good Reasons to be a Cowboy/50 Good Reasons Not to be a Cowboy by Texas Bix Bender) Salt Lake City, UT: Gibbs-Smith. Copyright – Texas Bix Bender, 1995.



The cowboy life is real and good.
It makes you real and good, too.

p. (unknown)



You have no phone, no fax, no television, no computers.

p. (unknown)

We are coming now in our study of 2 Timothy and the TWELVE STEPS TO A FANTASTIC FINISH to:

STEP #8 – Counter Culture: Lord, Where You Lead Me I Will Follow.

Let us take just a moment to get into our thinking, where Paul is and what is going on.

The Apostle is in a holding cell, actually, waiting for his impending execution. This is his last letter and he is writing it to his young understudy who is charged with the ministry in Ephesus.

In ascertaining these TWELVE STEPS TO A FANTASTIC FINISH, we notice:

Step #1: INTEGRITY: Getting It All Together

It is a life that is well integrated, **CHARACTERIZED BY:**

SOUNDNESS,

FIRM PRINCIPLES, and

GOOD CHARACTER.

Step #2: CONVICTION: Here I Stand, God Help Me

The thought in this second step is:

HAVING A FIRMLY HELD BELIEF or

FIRMNESS OF BELIEF.

Step #3: COURAGE: I Am Willing To Pay The Price

This is a manifestation of **COURAGE** to be **CONSISTENT WITH ONE'S CONVICTIONS**. It is:

BOLDNESS,

BEING FORTIFIED WITH FORTITUDE.

It is the courage of ones convictions in the conflict.

Step #4: LEGACY: What Am I Passing On?

Here we **FOCUSED** on:

What are you leaving behind?

What is the sequel going to be?

What is the benefit?

What are you passing on?

What story is your sequel going to tell?

What will be the **AFTERMATH**, the **AFTERGLOW**, the **AFTERTASTE**, the fallout from your three score and ten years upon the earth?"

Step #5: PERSEVERANCE: In Single-Minded Steadfastness, I Will Stay The Course

It is the **DETERMINED CONTINUATION** with something; steady and continued action or belief, usually over a long period and especially despite difficulties or set-backs.

It is:

SINGLE-MINDED STEADFASTNESS,

SINGLENES OF PURPOSE, and

PLODDING PERSEVERANCE.

Step #6: FOCUSED: This One Thing I Do

Here we are talking about **SINGLE-MINDED** and **DETERMINED**. It is:

ZEROING IN,

being **FINE-TUNED,**

AIMED at the one thing that we want to achieve.

It is a person who is **ORGANIZED TO ACHIEVE A PARTICULAR GOAL.**

Step #7: SATANIC SEDUCTION: I Am Keeping My Eyes on Jesus

Seducing someone is the act of **PERSUADING SOMEONE TO DO SOMETHING WRONG.**

It is **TEMPTING** and Satan is certainly a master artist at this trade.

That brings us now to:

Step #8: COUNTER CULTURE: Lord, Where You Lead Me I Will Follow

Counter Culture means **NONCONFORMITY**.

It is living in an **ALIEN ELEMENT**. It is an **ALTERNATIVE SOCIETY**.

(God's Little Daily Devotional: 365 Days of Inspiration To Lift Your Spirit & Bring Peace to Your Soul by Honor Books) Tulsa, OK: Honor Books. Copyright – Honor Books, Inc., 1997.

THE WORLD'S WAY OR GOD'S WAY

*Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said,
We ought to obey God rather than man. Acts 5:29*

Jenny Lind was known as “The Swedish Nightingale” during her very successful career as an operatic singer. She became one of the wealthiest artists of her time, yet she left the stage at her peak and never returned.

Countless people speculated as to the reason for her leaving, and most people wondered how she could give up so much applause, fame, and money. However, she was content to live in privacy in a home by the sea.

One day a friend found her on the beach, her Bible on her knees, looking out into the glorious glow of a sunset. As they talked, the friend asked, “Madame, how is it that you ever came to abandon the stage at the height of your success?”

She answered quietly, “When every day it made me think less of this (laying a finger on her Bible) and nothing at all of that (pointing to the sunset), what else could I do?”
(June 22)

WITHOUT A COUNTRY

**Ever learning, and never able to come to the
knowledge of the truth.**

2 Timothy 3:7

A man named Michael O'Brien boarded a ferryboat from Macao to Hong Kong without a passport. At his destination he was not permitted to get off. But when the ship returned to Macao, he was not allowed to disembark there either. Week after week he sailed back and forth between the two cities while his case was being considered by various embassies. Some claimed he was a Hungarian, others said he was an Irishman or an American. He found no port where he was welcome.

Many non-Christians are like that. They shuttle from one religious philosophy to another, looking for some assurance about their eternal destiny. But spiritually they never find a harbor where they can anchor their souls. With no citizenship in Heaven, no passport for Glory, they are caught in a maddening voyage that leaves them constantly at sea. Because they have never acknowledged the Lord Jesus as their personal Savior, they are trapped on the ferryboat of life, hopelessly searching for a resting place like people without a homeland.

Perhaps, someone reading this article today is saying, "That describes me. I'm drifting with no port in sight. Whatever I've tried has left me unfulfilled and unsatisfied, and I've always had to turn away and look somewhere else." Friend, you don't need to be without a country any longer. By faith accept God's gracious provision in Christ. Go to Him who alone can give you a passport to Heaven. Your weary soul, seeking refuge in human philosophies and manmade religions, will find a welcome in the Savior. "Come, anchor your soul in the Haven of Rest." —P.R.V.

O come to the Savior—He patiently waits
To save by His power divine;
Come, anchor your soul in the Haven of Rest,
And say, "My Beloved is mine." —Gilmour

**THOT: A man without a country is an exile in this world; a man
 without God is an orphan in eternity.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Sunday, April 2, year unknown)

THREE MONKEYS

Three monkeys once dining in a coconut tree were discussing some things they had heard to be true, “What do you think? Now listen you two, here, monkeys, is something that cannot be true, that humans descended from our pure race. Why, it’s simply shocking—a terrible disgrace.”

“Who ever heard of a monkey deserting his wife? Leave a baby starve and ruin its life? And have you ever known of a mother monk to leave her darling, with a stranger to bunk? Their babies are handed from one to another and scarce ever know the love of a mother.”

“And I’ve never known a monkey so selfish to be as to build a big fence around the coconut tree so other monkeys can’t get a wee taste, but would let all the coconuts here go to waste. Why, if I’d put a fence around this coconut tree, starvation would force you to steal from me.”

“And here is another thing a monkey won’t do, seek a bootlegger’s shanty and get in a stew, carouse and go on a whoopee, disgracing his life, then reel madly home and beat up his wife. They call this all a pleasure and make a big fuss, they’ve descended from something, but not from us.”

(From Parson’s Technology)

WALES GOEBEL MINISTRY
JULY 2001

Dear Prayer Partner,

I recently read a newspaper published in Athens, Georgia and saw an article that quickly got my attention. It stated that Rep. Mitch Kay of Marietta, Georgia, plans to introduce a bill authorizing teachers in that state to carry firearms to school for their protection.

This may sound ridiculous to some of you, but that is because most of our citizens do not know how violent our schools have become. Ever since God, the Ten Commandments, and the Bible were removed from schools this nation's educational institutions have gone down hill and this to the peril of millions of our children.

The violence is now so bad that more than 40% of the school districts across the United States have eliminated recess and others are now considering it. Free time for children below age 13 dropped from 40% of a child's day in 1981 to 25% of a child's day in 1997.

Where is all this anger coming from? When there is no trusted adult for children to turn to, the results are dead and wounded students, faculty, and staff at our schools.

Violence has now replaced communicable diseases as the primary cause of death for America's teens. Statistics confirm an epidemic of violence which has no parallel in any other industrialized nation of the world. What an awful indictment of this country. Nearly 80% of all teenage deaths are the result of violence from homicides, suicides, car crashes, and other unintentional injuries. For the very first time firearm death rates for both black and white male teenagers exceed the total from all natural causes. The extent of this escalating national problem is evident from the statistics passed on to us. Teenage homicide has risen 300% in the last 30 years. The suicide rate for 15- to 19-year-olds has tripled to 10 per 100,000 in the past 30 years. Firearm death rates for 15- to 19-year-olds rose 43% between 1984 and 1988.

If this trend continues, schools in America will become increasingly unsafe. More resources will have to be allocated to campus security and to crime prevention. Personal security may soon become a major factor where students, especially women, will choose to go to college.

This problem of violence takes away the time, money and energy that would be better used in providing quality education for students. In time schools will have to find a way to restrict access to the community from campus events. There is soon going to be a need for counseling centers with trained staff to deal with victims of these violent times.

A kid's world can be deadly serious today. Nothing is treated as innocent anymore.

Hebrews 10:31 warns us, "It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Luke Woodman is the 16-year-old who opened fire at a school in Pearl, MS. He indicated the depth of his rage when he said, "I am not insane. I am angry. I killed because people like me are mistreated every day. I did this to show society if they push, kids just like me from now on is going to push back."

Rep. Bill McCollum (R-FL) has called American teenagers, "The most troubled criminals on the face of the earth." You know those are pretty potent words from a man who is in our government and has access to more information on this subject than we do.

Another article I read referred to these children as "Killer kids." Each evening's newscast brings us stories of savage juveniles who appear to kill simply for sport and the thrill of knowing what it feels like to kill someone. They have no remorse and leave the older generation confused and terrified.

The Bible tells us, "They invent ways of doing evil. They disobey their parents. They are heartless and ruthless." (Romans 1:30)

II Timothy 3:2 refers to them as being "ungrateful and unholy children."

"Deaf ears produce killer kids."

Until the Trump,
Wales Goebel

(Gettin' There: How a Man Finds His Way on the Trail of Life by Steve Farrar) Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright – Steve Farrar, 2001.

It reminds me of stepping off the curb in England, taking a quick glance to the left for approaching traffic, and stepping out into the street—only to get clobbered on the right by a lorry coming down the "wrong" side of the street.

Why are these ancient boundaries that God set for the family being challenged? Let me lay it out as simply as I possibly can.

- The church is becoming like the world.
- The church is listening to the world.
- The church wants the approval of the world.

No wonder so many men are confused and "overwhelmed" these days! I appreciate the insight of **Douglas Wilson**:

Our culture is characterized by men who are embarrassed to be men. We have, in our folly, wandered from the Bible's teaching on masculinity, and its central importance for Christian homes. We have sought, with all the wisdom of foolish men, to replace the hardness of masculinity with the tenderness of women. The result in our marriages and families—and consequently for our culture—have been nothing short of disastrous.

Men are bewildered with the world around them and with the responsibilities that such a man of God should bear in such a world. Some meekly submit to our cultural rebellion against masculinity; others silently fume, not knowing what to do; others pay lip service to the concept of equality as a means of exercising ungodly power over women; still others settle for the scraps and remnants they are tossed. They do not think they have given up masculinity, all because they consume a considerable amount of time with sports, cars, and tractor pulls. But masculinity must be genuine, and it must be poured into the home.

The castration of Christian men, and the consequent feminization of the family, church, and culture, began in earnest in the last century when the power of an efficacious gospel of grace was abandoned, and the substitute of religious sentiment was set up instead. . . .

The years have passed in our culture, and we have discovered that the fruit is indeed bitter—adultery, disrespectful wives, harsh husbands, divorce, rebellious children, abortion, sodomy. Still, we have not yet come to understand that the bitter fruit comes from a tree that was planted.

We must recognize and acknowledge that our culture's current revolt against the Most High was one that began in the families of the church, among those who professed the Lord's name.¹

1. Douglas Wilson, *Reforming Marriage* (Moscow, Idaho: Canon Press, 1995), 141-2. pp. 108-9

(Seeing Through: Reflecting God's Light in a Dark World by David Roper)
Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright - David Roper, 1995.

That's what has happened today. Satan has moved the parameters so that even "principled people" have been brought into the service of evil. Their lack of fixed reference points has led them into profound moral confusion and a deep sense of insecurity.

I saw a cartoon once depicting two people talking. One said to the other, "I believe in evil. I just don't know what *qualifies*," People still believe in good and evil, it's just that hardly anyone knows where the parameters are—an agnosticism that makes for a very dangerous and uncertain world.

We are like children in these matters: we long for the safety of a moral framework. It's unnatural to exist without benchmarks and reference points, and unnerving, like the sensations of an orbiting, weightless astronaut. Give me an arrow that says, "This is up" or "This is down."

p. 60

When it comes to the issue of **DEFINING OUR CULTURE**, we would summarize the culture with:

Judges 21:25

In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.

YOU CANNOT DO AS YOU SEE FIT AND MAKE A FANTASTIC FINISH!

The **OVERRIDING PRINCIPLE** of this particular study is that:

COUNTER CULTURE IS THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE A FANTASTIC FINISH—That is, allowing the Lord to lead and to direct in our lives.

It is saying:

“LORD, WHERE YOU LEAD ME I WILL FOLLOW!”

The lifestyle necessary to make a fantastic finish is described for us in:

Romans 12:1, 2

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

It is Jesus saying in:

John 18:36

Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.”

Acts 5:29

But Peter and the apostles answered and said, “We must obey God rather than men.

Acts 4:19, 20

But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard.”

The dictionary definition of **COUNTER CULTURE** is:

culture in opposition to mainstream society: a culture that has ideas and ways of behaving that are consciously and deliberately very different from the cultural values of the larger society that it is part of . . .

Encarta® *World English Dictionary* © & (P) 1999 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Developed for Microsoft by Bloomsbury Publishing Pic.

It is:

an **ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLE**,

NON-CONFORMITY, and

an **ALIEN ELEMENT**.

Matthew 5:10-12

“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men revile you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

It is Daniel who says:

Daniel 1:8

But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.

Let us take some time now to launch into this passage and see what the Lord has to teach us in these nine verses in 2 Timothy 3.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary titles these verses then says:

Predictions of Faithlessness (3:1-9)

As in his previous letter, Paul warned Timothy about the collapse predicted for **the last days** (cf. 1 Tim. 4:1-3), a term which includes the entire period between the first century and Christ's return. During this interim, according to the prediction, the world will see **terrible times** of societal degeneration. Paul gave an extraordinary list (cf. Rom. 1:28-32) of 19 general characteristics believers should expect.
p. 756

Wilson says:

Paul predicts that the last days will be marked by unparalleled moral decadence when a form of godliness will be professed but its power denied. Those who already exhibit such characteristics must be avoided by Timothy, for their deception of weak-minded women and their opposition to the truth shows them to be men of counterfeit faith, whose folly will become evident to all [vv 1-9].
p. 150

Calvin says:

In this chapter Paul returns to exhorting Timothy so that he may persevere faithfully in carrying out his ministry. To make him more faithful, he predicts that dangerous times are in store for the good and godly and that destructive people will soon arise against them. But against all this Paul fortifies Timothy with the hope of a happy and successful outcome.
p. 147

Lock says of these verses:

Further appeal to Timothy for boldness and loyalty, based on the thought of the last days and of the Final Judgment.
p. 103

Wiersbe titles this chapter:

What to Do Before It Ends

p. 141

He then says:

Too many Christians are like the pilot who informed his passengers, "We are lost, but we are making very good time."
p. 141

Gaebelein titles chapter 3:

THE LAST DAYS AND THEIR PERILS.

p. 193

Griffiths says:

The vices listed here look like a description of pagan society, but these people are within the visible church.
p. 197

Hughes says:

Verses 1-5 are an explicit description of the teachers who were abusing the Ephesian church with their false teaching. But at the same time they realistically portend today's errant church leadership, reminding us that we too are in "the last days."
p. 222

Lea & Griffin say:

In 2:24-26 Paul had expressed hope for the spiritual recovery of some deceived individuals whom Satan had trapped. Paul wanted Timothy to realize that despite the positive hope expressed in 3:9, opposition to the truth would grow even more intense. Wicked men would arise among professing Christians.
p. 223

Lenski has this to say:

**Know What Is Coming and Remain in
What Thou Hast Learned**

p. 819

Demarest raises the question:

Why are Christians in America so comfortable? Why are we so accepted and well-received? One of two things must be true. Either we live in a Christian culture that naturally provides a climate of acceptance and support, or we have accommodated ourselves to the values established by our non-Christian culture. I don't find enough evidence to convince me that ours is a Christian culture. Our comfort and acceptance can only suggest to me that we have been tamed by the world around us and have acquiesced with the world's values much more than we realize or dare admit.

pp. 273-4

Towner says:

In the back of Paul's mind as he wrote was the understanding that the world, as an opposing force led by Satan, is waging a war against God and his people. Jesus spoke of this war plainly . . . and so did Paul . . . The war would take many shapes, and God's people were to be ready for the attack of a hostile, persecuting enemy. But surely one of its cruelest aspects was to be Satan's penetration into the church in the form of false teachers who would oppose the gospel with one of their own making and draw away the unsuspecting and unprepared . . .

p. 190

Fee titles these nine verses:***Final Indictment of the False Teachers (2 Tim. 3:1-9)***

p. 268

Baxter raises this question:

In this, are these two Timothy epistles latently prophetic? Coming, as they do, just at the end of the nine Christian Church Epistles, do they throw on the screen an advance picture of tragic break-away and break-down which are to characterize organised Christianity at the end of this present Church-age? We know, of course, that the end-times certainly were in Paul's mind as he wrote, even though he apparently had no knowledge that a long trail of twenty centuries would unwind before the Lord's return. In referring to the end-times which he thought were *then* drawing on, was not Paul so guided that his words, like prophetic arrows, find their Divinely intended distant target in our twentieth century, when at long last the final days really *are* upon us? In the first letter, chapter [1] i. 16, he speaks of himself and his ministry as a "pattern" or "delineation" (or "intimation to posterity" as Ferrar Fenton translates it). In chapter [4] iv. 1 he tells us what the Holy Spirit says "expressly" about the latter days; and again, in the second letter his pen returns to these "last days," speaking of them as "grievous times" (iii. 1).

p. 242

Larson says:

The days following Jesus' ascension into heaven are marked by progressive selfishness and moral degeneration. Christians must not be alarmed or discouraged by the breakdown of society. God still reigns. Even so, we must steel ourselves against the lure of sin and pessimism, proclaiming and living the nature and purposes of God.

p. 300

Knight says:

Here Paul broadens the perspective on what he has just written by placing it in its larger eschatological setting and, in the same way, sets the stage for his encouragement of Timothy to even greater fidelity to the apostolic teaching and to the ministry to which he is called . . .

p. 428

Knight then says:

The passage as a whole comprises two closely related sections. After v. 1 sets the theme of difficulty in the last times, vv. 2-5 list the evil characteristics of mankind that make these times so difficult. Vv. 6-9 apply that description to the particular case of false teachers in Timothy's situation. The passage concludes by saying that the error of these false teachers will become so evident that their progress will be checked (v. 9).

p. 428

Hendriksen says:

There are two things which Paul wants Timothy to do, according to the lengthy sentence which extends all the way from 1:1 to the end of verse 5. He tells his dearly-beloved representative that he:

- a. must constantly realize that in the last days grievous seasons will set in; and
- b. must constantly turn away from the kind of people who will make these seasons so grievous.

p. 281

Quinn & Wacker title the section and then translate these nine verses as follows:

THE ERRING (3:1-9)

*Realize this, however, that in the last days rough times will be at hand;
for then people will be—*

*intent on themselves,
intent on money,
pretentious,
arrogant,
blaspheming;
to those who bore them,
 undutiful,
 ungrateful,
 irreligious,
 unaffectionate,
 irreconcilable;
devils at gossip,
 uncontrolled,
 uncouth,
 uncaring about goodness;
renegade,
reckless,
conceited,
intent on pleasure
rather than intent on God.*

*These people hold onto the appearance of godliness but they have repudiated
its dynamic. Keep people like that at a distance too. For from their ranks
come those who are worming their way into homes to captivate the idle
women,*

*loaded with sins
and driven by diverse cravings,
ever learning
and never turning to full knowledge
of the truth.*

*Just as once Jannes and Jambres defied Moses, so too these numbskulled
counterfeiters of the faith are defying the truth, but they will not progress far.
Their own stupidity is going to become just as obvious to everyone as the
stupidity of those two.*

pp. 705-6

Hawthorne & Martin say:

A list of vices is used to warn Timothy of the behavior he will encounter in the last times (2 Tim 3:2-5), and a list of virtues is included to remind him of the way in which his mentor, Paul, conducted his life (2 Tim 3:10).
p. 962

J. Vernon McGee says:

In this chapter Paul warns of the apostasy that will come in the last days. He also gives us the antidote for that apostasy, which is the Word of God. That is why this chapter is so important and meaningful for us today.
p. 469

He then says:

They won't give out the Word of God but will fleece the congregations. Believe me, false teachers shear the sheep pretty close!
p. 469

In my book, Drawing Closer, Growing Stronger, I say:

Serious competitors, regardless of the event, examine their territory before the real action begins. Ice skaters glide on the ice, skiers race the downhill course, basketball players dribble the gym and shoot baskets. Besides the benefits of physical conditioning, on-site preparation sharpens mental alertness. Knowing the eccentricities of the playing field may mean the difference between the athlete's victory or defeat.

In a similar way, Christians benefit from examining the culture in which we live. Christians have always lived in societies which were generally antagonistic to biblical beliefs. However, in modern America the trend toward outright hostility is increasing.

Jim Black, in his book *When Nations Die*, makes ten observations about the United States today which portray social, cultural, and spiritual symptoms of danger ahead:

1. General increase in lawlessness throughout the culture
2. The loss of economic discipline and self-restraint
3. A decline in the quality and relevance of education
4. Rising bureaucracy, government regulation, and taxes
5. A weakening of the foundational principles that contributed to the greatness of the nation
6. A loss of respect for established religions
7. Increase in materialism
8. A rise in immorality
9. The lure of alien gods
10. A decline in the value of human life.

Some practical ways these trends are revealed can be noted in our daily newspapers. Stories about:

Militant radical feminists
 Gay-rights advocates who justify their sin
 People who are outraged that a mother drowns her two sons, but who support another woman's rights to kill her unborn child
 A justice system that too often rules in favor of the criminal and forgets the victims and their families
 Policemen who go to war when they leave for work
 High school graduates needing remedial reading classes
 TV channels filled with violence, murder, sex, drugs, profanity, nudity, and dysfunctional families

pp. 86-87

v. 1 But be knowing this, that in the last days hard times will set in.

We could translate the word “BUT” as “YET”:

“YET [in CONTRAST] TO PRESENT EVILS, THERE WILL BE GREATER ONES IN THE FUTURE.”

“BUT BE KNOWING THIS” could be translated:

“CONSTANTLY BE KEEPING THIS IN MIND.”

“IN THE LAST DAYS HARD TIMES WILL SET IN.”

They are days which are CRUEL. They are days which are HARD TO BEAR.

Paul, I believe, means by this that:

EVIL WILL BE HAVING THE UPPER HAND.

Moral foundations will be shaken and religious expression will be nothing more than an empty form and ritual.

THIS IS SATAN’S LAST ALL-OUT EFFORT, HIS BEST SHOT!

A TIME OF MORAL CRISIS

**But evil men and seducers shall become
Worse and worse.**

2 Timothy 3:13

The rapid decline in the moral tone of society makes me wonder if we are getting very close to the end of the age of grace. Evil seems to be increasing, and deceivers are leading many astray.

Well-known pollsters such as George Gallup confirm that this unhealthy trend has now become alarming. Summarizing his findings in a 105-page report entitled "Religion in America, 1979-80," he declares, "All signs point to the fact that the United States is suffering a moral crisis of the first dimension. Street crime has reached frightening proportions, with one in four Americans reporting they've been mugged, robbed, assaulted, or had their homes broken into in a 12-month period." Gallup notes too that alcohol abuse and drug dependence among young people are at an epidemic level. His interviews also indicate that "many parents and children alike are spiritual illiterates . . . They can give only vague answers when asked the central tenets of their faith." Gallup says that while 98 percent of American homes have a Bible, "few people could even name the four gospels or recite the Ten Commandments." He found that men and women are turning to Eastern cults, sensitivity sessions, astrology, and a variety of unorthodox approaches, hoping this will satisfy them and stem the tide of evil that is sweeping across our land.

America must take the Bible seriously and be guided by its spiritual and moral precepts. As a nation, we must repent of our sin and practice righteousness. Unless we do, this shocking moral crisis can only result in the collapse of our society.

—H.G.B.

God, help us now to realize

The peril of our race;

Revive our souls and save our land

By Thy delivering grace!

—Bosch

THOT: God is blessing America! Is America blessing God?

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Saturday, May 24, year unknown)

Matthew Henry says:

In the *last days* (v. 1), in gospel times, there would *come perilous times*, not so much on account of persecution from without as on account of corruptions within. Two traitors within the garrison may do more hurt to it than two thousand besiegers without. Perilous times shall come, for men shall be wicked. Sin makes the time perilous.
p. 1896

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

perilous—lit., “*difficult* times,” in which it is difficult to know what is to be done: “grievous times.”
p. 1379

Wiersbe says:

“These last days” began the ministry of Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1-2) and will continue until He returns. They are called the “last days” because in them God is completing His purposes for His people.
p. 141

Calvin says:

It follows from this that this is not a time for idle repose.
p. 148

Wilson says:

Since such opposition to the truth is characteristic of this present evil age, Timothy must neither be surprised nor dismayed by it, but is to recognize that the church will face terrible times ‘in the last days’ before Christ’s return . . .
p. 150

Wiersbe says:

Perilous in verse 1 means “difficult,” “hard to deal with,” or “dangerous.” It is the same Greek word used to describe the demoniac in Matthew 8:28 and translated “exceedingly fierce.” How do we live for Christ in such terrible times?
p. 803

John MacArthur says:

We are still living in the messianic time between Christ’s first and second comings, all of which may properly be called **the last days**.
p. 107

Stott says:

We too should ‘understand this’, and be quite clear about the perils and troubles which will beset us if we stand firm in the truth of the gospel.
p. 82

He says further:

This gives us an idea of the kind of seasons which the church must expect in the last days. They will be both painful and perilous, hard to endure and hard to cope with.
p. 83

Barclay says:

In the last days there would come threatening times which would menace the very existence of the Christian Church and of goodness itself; there would come a kind of last tremendous assault of evil before its final defeat.
p. 209

Milne says:

Timothy should not be totally surprised by certain people rejecting the gospel and falling under the devil's spell (2:26). This is in line with what will take place in 'the last days', the period of time that coincides with the Christian era from Christ's first coming to his second. This is the period in which human beings will either find salvation through the word of the gospel or play out their ultimate rejection of God by disbelieving the gospel.
p. 159

Quinn & Wacker says:

The "rough times," *enstēsontai*, "will be present" or "will enter," . . .
p. 707

They say further:

In the last days bad times will be present. The stress of the term . . . "will be present" or "will enter," is on that which is here and now present, with perhaps (according . . .) a nuance of threatening or menacing harm still to come . . .
p. 715

Knight says:

Paul indicates with δε a contrast with what he has just written. There the emphasis was on possible recovery of those in opposition; here, in contrast, is a fuller statement of the difficulties of the age. In speaking of that hoped for recovery, Paul does not want Timothy to be naive about the difficulty that "the spirit of the age" presents to his ministry. Thus he commands Timothy to "know," i.e., "understand" . . . present active imperative) "this" . . .
p. 428

Knight then says:

That period of time is . . . “hard,” “difficult,” says Paul, because of the evil characteristics of mankind in those “times.”
p. 429

Lenski says:

The present imperative bids Timothy ever to realize what Paul states here.
p. 820

He then says:

“The last days” refer to the whole time from the completion of Christ’s redemptive work until his Parousia; that a part of these days was already past when Paul wrote is, of course, self-evident.
p. 820

Lea & Griffin say:

The term “last days” sounds as if it applies “especially to the last days of this age, before the Second Coming.” However, in the New Testament the phrase refers to that entire time from the completion of Christ’s redemptive work until his return. Christ’s life, death, resurrection, and ascension have inaugurated the last days.
p. 223

J. Vernon McGee says:

Instead, notice what will be coming in the last days. We have nineteen different descriptions given in the next few verses. It is an ugly brood, but we want to look at them because they present the best scriptural picture of what is happening today. We are, I believe, moving into the last days of the church. My reason for saying this is that the things mentioned in these verses have appeared today.
p. 469

Acts 20:29, 30

I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

Amos 8:11

“The days are coming,” declares the Sovereign Lord, “when I will send a famine through the land—not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord.

Revelation 3:11

“I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown.

Revelation 3:14-22

“And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: ‘I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me. He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’”

(Gettin' There: How a Man Finds His Way on the Trail of Life by Steve Farrar) Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright – Steve Farrar, 2001.

**Don't Mess with
the Trail Markers**

*Do not move the ancient boundary
Which your fathers have set.*
SOLOMON, KING OF ISRAEL
PROVERBS 22:28

HE WAS DOING EVERYTHING he could do to get home to his family. He wasn't stuck in traffic; he was just trying to breathe.

At 16,000 feet in the Himalayas, the air was so thin and breathing so difficult that he and his companions had given up trying to speak. It was just too painful. They limited their communication to hand signals.

In 1949, when Mao Tse-Tung swept through China with his communist army, CIA operative Douglas Mackiernan fled for his life. His only hope to see home again was to cross the border into Tibet. It would take him seven months to cover the treacherous 1200 miles to the border.

The journey took him through two kinds of terrain—first the desert and then the highest mountains in the world. The desert almost killed him. At one point, he and his companions went three days without water before they stumbled upon the small seep that saved their lives.

They got through the desert only to face the Himalayas. Somehow, they had to find a way through those ominous, sharp-toothed mountains in the dead of winter.

The wind was so strong and the drifts so deep that at times Mackiernan became confused. Although the trail through that mountain pass was thousands of years old, towering mounds of windswept snow obscured the path. The agent was snow-blind in one eye, and his hands and feet were numb, verging on frostbite. His horse had died, and his shoes had been reduced to strips of leather.

But he kept pressing on because he wanted to get home.

In every remote, isolated village he was told that small pyramids of built-up stones clearly marked the trail. Everywhere along the trail he saw those mounds of rock. Flanking the trail on the left and right, the cairns formed its border. Mackiernan knew that if he ever lost sight of the mounds, he was off the trail and needed to claw his way back.

What were these pyramids of rocks? They were the graves of those who had died trying to make their way to Tibet on the trail. The ground was frozen solid, so when men died from hypothermia, local residents (who had seen it all many times before) heaped piles of rocks over their bodies. The ancient trail makers of Tibet were the bodies of those who had died attempting the journey.

That's what you call a tough trail.

pp. 103-4

On Thursday, May 27, 1999, **Darrell Scott, the father of Rachel Scott**, a victim of the Columbine High School shootings in Littleton, Colorado, was invited to address the House Judiciary Committee's sub-committee. What he said to our national leaders during this special session of Congress was painfully truthful. It needs to be heard by every parent, every teacher, every politician, every sociologist, every psychologist, and every so-called expert! These courageous words spoken by Darrell Scott are powerful, penetrating, and deeply personal. There is no doubt that God sent this man as a voice crying in the wilderness.

The following is a portion of the transcript:

"Since the dawn of creation there has been both good and evil in the heart of men and women. We all contain the seeds of kindness and the seeds of violence. The death of my wonderful daughter, Rachel Joy Scott, and the deaths of that heroic teacher, and the other eleven children who died must not be in vain. Their blood cries for answers.

"The first recorded act of violence was when Cain slew his brother Abel out in the field. The villain was not the club he used. Neither was it the NCA, the National Club Association. The true killer was Cain, and the reason for the murder could only be found in Cain's heart.

"In the days that followed the Columbine tragedy, I was amazed at how quickly fingers began to be pointed at groups such as the NRA. I am not a member of the NRA. I am not a hunter. I do not even own a gun. I am not here to represent or defend the NRA—because I don't believe that they are responsible for my daughter's death. Therefore I do not believe that they need to be defended. If I believed they had anything to do with Rachel's murder I would be their strongest opponent.

"I am here today to declare that Columbine was not just a tragedy—it was a spiritual event that should be forcing us to look at where the real blame lies! Much of the blame lies in this room. Much of the blame lies behind the pointing fingers of the accusers themselves. I wrote a poem just four nights ago that expresses my feelings best. This was written way before I knew I would be speaking here today.

Your laws ignore our deepest needs,
Your words are empty air,
You've stripped away our heritage,
You've outlawed simple prayer.
Now gunshots fill our classrooms,
And precious children die,
You seek for answers everywhere,

And ask the question “Why?”
 You regulate restrictive laws,
 Through legislative creed,
 And yet you fail to understand,
 That God is what we need!

“Men and women are three-part beings. We all consist of body, soul, and spirit. When we refuse to acknowledge a third part of our make-up, we create a void that allows evil, prejudice, and hatred to rush in and wreck havoc. Spiritual influences were present within our educational system for most of our nation’s history. Many of our major colleges began as theological seminaries. This is a historical fact. What has happened to us as a nation?

“We have refused to honor God, and in doing so, we open the doors to hatred and violence. And when something as terrible as Columbine’s tragedy occurs—politicians immediately look for a scapegoat such as the NRA. They immediately seek to pass more restrictive laws that contribute to erode away our personal and private liberties. We do not need more restrictive laws. Eric and Dylan would not have been stopped by metal detectors. No amount of gun laws can stop someone who spends months planning this type of massacre. The real villain lies within our own hearts. Political posturing and restrictive legislation are not the answers. The young people of our nation hold the key.

“There is a spiritual awakening taking place that will not be squelched! We do not need more religion. We do not need more gaudy television evangelists spewing out verbal religious garbage. We do not need more million dollar church buildings built while people with basic needs are being ignored.

“We do need a change of heart and an humble acknowledgment that this nation was founded on the principle of simple trust in God! As my son Craig lay under that table in the school library and saw his two friends murdered before his very eyes—He did not hesitate to pray in school. I defy any law or politician to deny him that right! I challenge every young person in America, and around the world, to realize that on April 20, 1999, at Columbine High School—prayer was brought back to our schools. Do not let the many prayers offered by those students be in vain. Dare to move into the new millennium with a sacred disregard for legislation that violates your God-given right to communicate with Him. To those of you who would point your finger at the NRA—I give to you a sincere challenge. Dare to examine your own heart before casting the first stone! My daughter’s death will not be in vain. The young people of this country will not allow that to happen!”

(Received via E-mail from Billy Kyser, January 18, 2000)

(Quote Unquote compiled by Lloyd Cory) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books / SP Publications, Inc. Copyright – SP Publications, Inc., 1977.

If God had wanted us to have a permissive society, He would have given us the 10 Suggestions instead of the 10 Commandments.

(RABBI M. M. HERSHMAN)

p. 134

(More Holy Hilarity by Cal & Rose Samra) Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press. Copyright – Fellowship of Merry Christians, Inc., 1999.

SIGNS OF THE LAST DAYS

You know your days as pastor are numbered when . . .

- You're asked to be a donkey in the annual Christmas play.
- Without asking, your secretary photocopies and sends out your resume to 200 out-of-state churches.
- You find the visiting preacher's name on your mailbox.
- Shut-ins do not answer the doorbell when you come to visit.
- Your mother and spouse move their membership letters to another church.
- Church members refer to you in the past tense.
- The pulpit committee who hired you starts wearing sackcloth.
- You come to church on Monday morning and find the locks have been changed.
- Your church splits, and the only thing the two groups can agree on is that neither group wants you as a pastor.

—VIA REV. KARL KRAFT, MANTUA, NEW JERSEY

pp. 81-82

(Lighten Up! by Ken Davis) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright – Ken Davis, 2000.

In my own eyes I feel that I'm in control, but it's all an illusion. I know how I appear to others—as stressed-out as a mother hen taking her brood on a field trip to a weasel farm.

p. 162

(Quote Unquote compiled by Lloyd Cory) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books / SP Publications, Inc. Copyright – SP Publications, Inc., 1977.

Our world is fast becoming a madhouse and the inmates are trying to run the asylum. It is a strange time when the patients are writing the prescriptions, the students are threatening to run the schools, the children to manage the homes, and church members—not the Holy Spirit—to direct the churches. Such lawlessness always brings a dictator and the last of the line will be Antichrist, now in the offing awaiting his cue.

(VANCE HAVNER)

p. 175

v. 2 For men will be fond of themselves (selfish), lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, slanderers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy.

“Why is it, Paul, that there is going to be difficult times that will set in?”

The word “FOR” begins verse 2 and Paul now expresses the REASON for why “the last days” will be “hard times.”

There are NINETEEN REASONS spelled out in verses 2-5.

THIS IS WHAT LIFE IN SATAN’S TRAPS LOOKS LIKE!

There are EIGHT REASONS of the nineteen spelled out here in verse 2.

CHARACTERISTIC #1:

“MEN WILL BE FOND OF THEMSELVES (SELFISH).”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

[This means they will be] “self-centered [or] narcissistic” . . .
p. 756

2 Corinthians 5:15

and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

Lea & Griffin say:

The key to understanding the list is the initial term, “lovers of themselves” (“utterly self-centered,” Phillips). When the center of gravity in an individual shifts from God to self, a plethora of sins can spring up. Self-love leads to materialism (“greedy for money,” Phillips). The accumulation of things becomes a means of gratifying self. Self-centeredness also produces people who are “boastful” (“full of big words,” Phillips) and “proud” (“conceited,” GNB). The two terms “emphasize boastfulness in words and thought, respectively.”

p. 224

Lenski says:

“Self-lovers” properly heads the list and is balanced at the end by “pleasure-lovers rather than God-lovers.”

p. 821

In my book, Drawing Closer, Growing Stronger, I make the following statement:

Another tragedy of America is that many have replaced God-given initiative with selfish entitlement. “In God We Trust” may still be inscribed on our coins but “Me First” is engraved upon our hearts. We crave our rights, and selfishness consumes us like a cancer.

p. 87

SELF is in the place where **GOD** belongs!

Knight says:

[The little word] γαο indicates that the list that follows supplies the reason for the “last days” being regarded as “difficult times”: The evil characteristics of people living in these days make them difficult.

p. 429

Knight says further:

Like the list in Romans 1:29-31, this list reflects the evils of a pagan society. “At the same time Paul is indicting the false teachers, both by characterizing their existence as in keeping with these evils and by implying that they themselves fit many of the items in the list . . .” (Fee).
p. 429

Knight continues:

The list begins and ends with words expressing a misdirection of “love.” This suggests that what is fundamentally wrong with these people is that their life is misdirected and that the other vices flow from this misdirection.
p. 430

He then says:

. . . “lovers of self,” is put first, for when self rather than God (and others) is made the central focus of one’s life all else goes astray.
p. 430

Quinn & Wacker say:

. . . “but the mind considering itself equal to God loves itself and is without God” . . .
p. 707

They say further:

. . . all the other vices in this list unfold what is implicit in [loving of self] . . . which is more than just narcissistic egotism. It is an atheistic and drastic humanism that knows no measure or value beyond the individual man . . .
p. 707

Barclay says:

HERE is one of the most terrible pictures in the New Testament of what a godless world would be like. Here are the terrible qualities of godlessness set out in a ghastly series.

p. 211

He says further:

Love of self is the basic sin, from which all other sins flow. The moment a man makes his own will and his own desires the centre of life, divine and human relationships are destroyed. Once a man erects himself as his god, obedience to God and charity to men both become impossible. If self is the centre of life, then Christ is banished from life. The essence of Christianity is not the enthronement, but the obliteration of self. All sin begins in selfishness.

p. 211

Stott says it well:

And all this unsocial, anti-social behaviour—this disobedient, ungrateful, disrespectful, inhuman attitude to parents, together with this absence of restraint, loyalty, prudence and humility—is the inevitable consequence of a godless self-centredness.

p. 86

MacArthur says:

The first characteristic is that these **men will be lovers of self**. The pride of self-love is the pervasive deadly sin that grips the human soul and is the foundation sin of all the others. It might be called the sewer out of which the rest of these ugly sins are discharged.

p. 108

MacArthur says further:

It is for that reason that the most frightening development within the contemporary church is the wide acceptance and enthusiastic proclamation of self-love, not only as being allowed but as being the basic virtue. Turning God's truth completely on its head, the source of all evil is touted as the source of all good. And on the other hand, the lack of self-love and its many derivatives—such as self-esteem, self-worth, self-fulfillment, and positive self-image—have been imported almost unchanged into the church from antibiblical secular psychology.
pp. 108-9

He continues:

What a contrast self-seeking love is to the self-giving love that God requires. "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit," Paul adjures, "but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others" (Phil. 2:3-4). Just as the second great commandment assumes self-love, so Paul's admonition assumes that people naturally "look out for [their] own interests." As always, the Lord Himself is our perfect example. "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus," the apostle continues "who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (vv. 5-8). If the heavenly Lord had that attitude in His incarnation, how much more ought we to humble ourselves, empty ourselves, and become unselfishly submissive to God to the point of death.
p. 111

Hendriksen says:

These people, then, are, first of all *self-loving*. Cf. Titus 1:7: “self-pleasing.”
p. 284

Larson says:

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. Paul penned a list of characteristics of false teachers and all those who turn from truth.
pp. 300-301

Wilson says:

‘Lovers of self, lovers of money’ provides the key to this list of vices, for moral corruption is the inevitable consequence of the misdirected love which seeks self-gratification through the things that money can buy [*1 Tim 6.10*], and thus makes men ‘lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God’. This self-centredness naturally leads to the self-assertiveness that is ‘boastful, proud, abusive’ (NIV). The megalomania which enthrones self is also devoid of any sense of natural decency, for it is unfilial, unthankful, unholy, unloving, and unforgiving!
p. 151

Calvin says:

There is no need to go through this list, item by item, as it does not need a detailed explanation. But readers should note that **lovers of themselves**, which heads the list, can be regarded as the source from which spring all the others. For the person who loves himself claims superiority in everything, despises all other people, is cruel, indulges in covetousness, treachery, anger, disobedience against parents, neglect of good, and all such things.
p. 149

Wiersbe says:

In this universe there is God, and there are “people” and “things.” We should worship God, love people, and use things. But if we start worshiping ourselves, we will ignore God and start loving things and using people. This is the formula for a miserable life; yet it characterizes many people today. The worldwide craving for *things* is just one evidence that people’s hearts have turned away from God.
pp. 142-3

Matthew Henry says:

Paul tells Timothy what shall be the marks and signs whereby these times may be known, v. 2 &c. Self-love will make the times perilous. Instead of Christian charity, which takes care for the good of others, they will mind themselves only.
p. 1896

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

. . . the catalogue, Romans 1:29, etc., where much the same sins are attributed to heathen men; it shall be a relapse into virtual heathendom, with all its beastlike propensities, whence the symbol of it is “a beast” . . .
p. 1379

Fee has this comment:

It begins appropriately enough with **lovers of themselves** (cf. Titus 1:7 where “not self-willed” tops that list) since from such misdirected love all other vices flow. “Love of self” is paired with **lovers of money**, which was one of the basic vices of the false teachers (see 1 Tim. 6:5-10; Titus 1:11).
pp. 269-70

Towner challenges us by saying:

With that thought in mind, we might do well to view this as a Christian's checklist of possible areas needing attention.
p. 191

Demarest says:

The basic source of trouble in the world is people—people who direct their love to themselves, to money, and to pleasure rather than to God.
p. 274

He then says further:

A “me first” strategy for fulfillment, a high priority on financial success and security, and a consuming preoccupation with pleasure inevitably produce the fifteen behaviors listed in verses 2 and 3. What a list! But it's all too true of the realities we all experience day by day. Commenting on each of these problem areas would be too tedious for our purposes. But we must view them as symptoms of misdirected love—the inevitable results of idolatry.
p. 277

Hughes calls this first characteristic:

Their inverse love. Paul's brutal description springs from the inversion that had taken place in the false teachers' hearts, where love of God had been replaced by love of self. You can see this by reading the opening and closing characteristics together: “People will be lovers of themselves . . . rather than lovers of God” (vv. 2a, 4b). Christ's Great Commandment to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” and to “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37, 39) had been turned upside-down in the hearts of the false teachers in Ephesus. Self-love reigned.
p. 222

Hughes says further:

The false teachers were a narcissistic lot. Having switched their souls' gravity from God to themselves, they in effect wrapped their arms around themselves in loving embrace. Their passion for self was matched with a love for money, which Paul had already described as "a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Timothy 6:10). Love of money is a spiritual corollary to self-love. Both serve self.
p. 223

Gaebelein says:

Three times they are shown to be lovers. "Lovers of themselves"—they live for themselves and know nothing of self-denial, they live and walk in the flesh. "Lovers of money"—this is what the word covetous means. Greed controls their activities so that they can enjoy themselves and live luxuriantly and in pleasure. And therefore "they are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." The same class is mentioned in Phil. [3] iii, they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, minding earthly things. Their end is destruction.
p. 193

Lock says:

The true centre of life is changed. Self has taken the place of God, so all sense of the duty to others, whether man or God, disappears.
p. 105

Lange says this "lovers of self" is the:

Original cause of all wickedness, so that they make their own I the centre of their thinking, feeling, willing, and doing.
p. 103

Barnes says:

It shall be one of the characteristics of those times that men shall be eminently selfish—evidently under the garb of religion, ver. 5. The word here used . . . does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means a lover of one's self, *selfish*. Such a love of *self* as to lead us to secure our salvation, is proper. But this interferes with the rights and happiness of no other persons. The selfishness which is condemned, is that regard to our own interests which interferes with the rights and comforts of others; which makes *self* the central and leading object of living; and which tramples on all that would interfere with that. As such, it is a base, and hateful, and narrow passion; but it has been so common in the world that no one can doubt the correctness of the prophecy of the apostle that it would exist . . .
p. 232

Guthrie says:

The first two, *lovers of their own selves* . . . and *covetous* . . . supply the key to the rest of the list. The assonance of the Greek words is more closely retained in RV, 'lovers of self, lovers of money'. Moral corruption follows from love falsely directed. Self-centredness, and material advantages, when they become the chief objects of affection, destroy all moral values, and the subsequent list of vices in their natural fruit.
pp. 156-7

Kelly says:

In order to describe the moral breakdown of **the last days** Paul introduces (2-5) a catalogue of vices of the kind that occurs frequently in his acknowledged letters: see on I Tim. [1] i. 9. This particular list bears a remarkable resemblance, in content as well as rhetorical construction and use of assonance, to the one in Rom. [1] i. 29-31, but there are also differences which make the hypothesis of direct borrowing implausible.
p. 193

King says:

Their Behaviour is all wrong. What a catalogue of infamy it is.
p. 88

"I LOVE ME, I LOVE MYSELF. I SET MY PICTURE ON THE SHELF!"

SELF is in the place where **GOD** belongs.

ALL SIN BEGINS IN SELFISHNESS.

John the Baptist says it well in:

John 3:30 (DAV)

He [that is, Jesus Christ] must continually be increasing, and I must continually be decreasing.

CHARACTERISTIC #2:

"LOVERS OF MONEY."

1 Timothy 6:9, 10 (version unknown)

But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the root of all the evils is the love of money which certain ones in reaching for it have been led astray from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.

How often do we hear the phrase:

ME AND MY MONEY?

JUDAS is a good illustration of a person who **PREFERRED MONEY TO THE MASTER**. He had every opportunity to be close to Christ and to hear the same message that the other disciples heard but his fondness for money kept him from becoming all the Lord wanted him to become. It ultimately led to his destruction.

Matthew 6:24

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Luke 12:19, 20

And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.” But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’

Quinn & Wacker make this statement about “LOVERS OF MONEY”:

In 1 Tim 6:10 [this very statement] was “the root of all evils.”
p. 717

MacArthur says:

Such false teachers “must be silenced,” Paul declares, “because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach, for the sake of sordid gain” (Titus 1:11). They are consumed with self, which inevitably leads to greed, “and in their greed they will exploit you with false words” (2 Peter 2:3). It is a cycle of sin. Greed leads to false teaching, and false teaching leads to further greed. The false gospels of self-love and prosperity go hand in hand; they promote each other and feed on each other.
p. 112

CHARACTERISTIC #3:**“BOASTERS.”****The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:**

boastful—the outward manifestation of the fact that inwardly they are [all these other things that are described here in this passage].
p. 756

This word refers to a man who makes a claim to good things or qualities which he does not really possess. Either that, or to qualities which he possesses in a lesser degree than he gives the impression.

The **FOCUS** being on **SELF** and the **BOTTOM LINE**, naturally causes a person to say to the world:

“LOOK WHAT I HAVE DONE!”

The man who has to crow about his achievements often is doing this simply because he has not really achieved very much or else it would be already known.

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

boasters—empty boasters [ALFORD]; boasting of having what they have not.
p. 1379

Larson says:

Selfish people are typically **boastful** and **proud**. In stubbornly holding to the view that they are the center of the universe, such people have an exaggerated view of themselves. They actually believe in their own superiority. With this delusion, bragging falls naturally from their lips and pride wraps them in a haughty demeanor. These are the props which support their fantasy.

p. 301

Barclay says of this word:

. . . the *alazōn* as “the man who pretends to creditable qualities that he does not possess, or possess in a lesser degree than he makes out.”

p. 213

Hughes says:

They were “*boastful, proud*” (v. 2, italics added)—that is, given to boastful *words* and proud *thoughts*. The psalmsist’s cry, “My soul will boast in the LORD” (Psalm 34:2) was as far from their hearts and lips as the moon is from the earth.

p. 223

CHARACTERISTIC #4:**“ARROGANT.”**

This is a word that is always used as the **OPPOSITE** of the word **HUMBLE**.

This is the person that God resists. This is the sin of Satan.

Barclay says:

Closely allied with the *braggart*, but—as we shall see—even worse is the man who is *arrogant*. The word is . . . derived from two Greek words which mean *to show oneself above*. The man who is [this way] said Theophrastus, has a kind of contempt for everyone except himself. He is the man who is guilty of the “sin of the high heart.” He is the man whom God resists, for it is repeatedly said in scripture, that God receives the humble, but he resists the man who is proud . . . Theophylact called this kind of pride . . . the citadel of evils, the peak of evils.

The difference between the braggart and the man who is arrogant is this. The braggart is a swaggering creature, who shouts his claims to the four winds of heaven, and tries to boast and bluster his way into power and eminence. No one can possibly mistake him or fail to see him.
p. 214

Barclay says still further:

. . . the sin of the man who is *arrogant*, in this sense, is in his heart. He might even seem to be humble; he might even seem to be quiet and inoffensive; but in his secret heart there is this contempt for everyone else. He nourishes an all-consuming, all-prevading pride. In his heart there is a little altar where he bows down before himself, and in his eyes there is something which looks at all men with a silent contempt.
p. 214

Thus far in verse 2 we have learned about **FOUR THINGS**. They are:

1. **“FOND OF THEMSELVES (SELFISH),”**
2. **“LOVERS OF MONEY,”**
3. **“BOASTERS,”** and
4. **“ARROGANT.”**

This brings us now to the next characteristic.

CHARACTERISTIC #5:

“SLANDERERS.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary calls them:

abusive . . . [and says this abusiveness is] toward others . . .
p. 756

Our contemporary culture is flooded with abuse:

PHYSICAL,

VERBAL, and

SEXUAL.

This word used by Paul here refers to:

EVIL SPEAKINGS AGAINST ONES FELLOW MAN.

Because a man is **“ARROGANT”** and a boaster, he will naturally become abusive in his relationship to his fellows by insulting criticism.

This **ABUSE** usually

STARTS WITH WORDS and

ENDS WITH ACTS.

You see this in:

WIFE ABUSE and

CHILD ABUSE.

CHARACTERISTIC #6:**“DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS.”**

A study of the Scriptures makes it quite clear that the **PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY** for children is that of **OBEDIENCE**.

The Scripture says:

OBEDIENCE IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE.

It is a horrible thing to see children disrespectful of adults that have given them life and all the privileges they have to that point.

Hughes says:

They were also “*abusive, disobedient to their parents*” (v. 2, italics added). Beavis and Butthead, the cartoon caricatures of insolence, would have found their soul mates in these false teachers.
p. 223

Ephesians 6:1-3

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.

CHARACTERISTIC #7:**“UNGRATEFUL.”**

It could be translated **UNTHANKFUL**.

A person who is “unthankful” is a person who is **PROUD**.

When man refuses to recognize that he has a **DEBT BOTH TO GOD AND TO MAN**, he then becomes **THANKLESS**.

Barclay says:

Men will be *thankless* . . . They will refuse to recognize the debt they owe both to God and to men. The strange characteristic of ingratitude is that it is the most hurting of all sins, because it is the blindest of all sins. Lear’s words remain true:

“How sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is
To have a thankless child!”

p. 215

Matthew Henry says:

Unthankfulness and unholiness make the times perilous. What is the reason that men are unholy and without the fear of God, but that they are unthankful for the mercies of God?

p. 1896

King says:

“Unthankful”, ungrateful. Oblivious of any goodness of GOD or man; taking everything for granted. Having no use for GOD while things go well; using Him only as Someone to blame if things go ill.

p. 89

Guthrie says:

The last three vices in verse 2 are all specific denials of definite Christian virtues (in the Greek all have the adversative prefix), bringing out forcefully the idea of militant moral perversion.

p. 157

He is speaking of:

“DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS, UNGRATEFUL AND UNHOLY.”

Hawthorne & Martin say:

The giving of thanks to God should have been the response of all men and women on the basis of their knowledge of him as Creator . . . But they failed to recognize his lordship and glorify him: they were “ungrateful” (cf. 2 Tim 3:2).

p. 70

They say further:

Prayer, especially thanksgiving, is a logical, natural and necessary consequence of the apostle’s understanding of reality. About those who do not acknowledge God’s existence nor their accountability to a holy creator, he says “they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools” . . .

p. 730

CHARACTERISTIC #8:**“UNHOLY.”**

This sort of a person is:

A PERSON CONTROLLED BY HIS LOWER PASSIONS.

MacArthur says:

The unholy person is driven by self-love to gratify his lusts and passions of whatever sort, as fully as possible with no thought to propriety, decency, or personal reputation.

p. 114

Barclay says this is:

The man who has exhausted the normal pleasures of life, and who is still unsated, will seek his thrill in the pleasures which are abnormal and which are shame even to name.

p. 216

It is the description of a person who has forgotten what it is to be decent.

Romans 13:13, 14

Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

Shirley MacLaine, the award-winning actress granted an interview to the Washington Post back in 1977. In that interview she tipped her hand:

The most pleasurable journey you take is through yourself—the only sustaining love is with yourself. When you look back on your life and try to figure out where you’ve been and where you’re going, when you look at your work, your love affairs, your marriages, your children, your pain, your happiness—when you examine all that closely, what you really find out is that the only person you really go to bed with is yourself. The only thing you have is working to the consummation of your own identity. And that’s what I’ve been trying to do all my life.

It’s really sad that Shirley has never discovered the truth of what Jesus said, “Whosoever wishes to save his life shall lose it.”

(From *Parson’s Technology*)

David Livingstone wrote in his journal on one occasion concerning his “selfless” life:

People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Can that be called a sacrifice which is simply paying back a small part of the great debt owing to our God, which we can never repay? Is that a sacrifice which brings its own blest reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind and a bright hope of glorious destiny hereafter? Away with the word in such a view and with such a thought! It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege.

—*Giving and Living*, by Samuel Young, Baker Book House, p. 71

(From *Parson’s Technology*)

It's my pride that makes me independent of God. It's appealing to feel I am the master of my fate; I run my own life, I call my own shots; I go it alone. But that feeling is my basic dishonesty. I can't go it alone. I have to get help from other people, and I can't ultimately rely on myself. I am dependent on God for my very next breath. It is dishonest of me to pretend that I am anything but a man, small, weak and limited. So, living independent of God is self-delusion. It's not just a matter of pride being an unfortunate little trait and humility being an attractive little virtue, it's my inner psychological integrity that's at stake. When I am conceited, I am lying to myself about what I am. I am pretending to be God, and not man. My pride is the idolatrous worship of myself, and that is the national religion of hell.

(From *Parson's Technology*)

Corrie Ten Boom used to tell the story about a proud woodpecker who was tapping away at a dead tree when the sky unexpectedly turned black and the thunder began to roll. Undaunted, he went right on working. Suddenly a bolt of lightning struck the old tree, splintering it into hundreds of pieces. Startled but unhurt, the haughty bird flew off, screeching to his feathered friends, "Hey, everyone, look what I did! Look what I did!"

This old woodpecker reminds me of people who think more highly of themselves than they should. Usually they are so busy bragging about their achievements and their greatness that they fail to recognize God as the source of all their abilities. They are suffering from spiritual delusions of grandeur. Without the Lord no one amounts to anything, and in our own strength we cannot please Him.

(From *Parson's Technology*)

THANKFUL FOR SMALL FAVORS

On a rare occasion **Spurgeon** went to preach to a small gathering of believers. He had been promised reimbursement of his expenses, but someone had warned him they were a miserly crowd, and if his sermon struck too hard at their pet sins, they would withhold their gifts to show their displeasure. After delivering a powerful, soul-convicting message, he had to take the offering himself. Seeing no collection box, he took his hat from a nearby chair and passed it to the few disturbed-looking individuals. When it was returned, nothing had been contributed, but Spurgeon was equal to the occasion. Bowing his head, he said, “I thank Thee, Lord, that these skinflints have at least given me back my old hat!”

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

A prominent individual recently said that his little daughter often supplements her usual evening prayer with many requests for special favors from the Lord. However, one night—as a sweet afterthought—she closed with the words, “And now, God, what can I do for You?”

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

“I-TROUBLE”

A neighbor of **Abraham Lincoln** heard crying outside and went to his front door to investigate. He saw Lincoln passing by with his two sons both screaming loudly. “What’s the matter, Abe?” asked the man. “Just what is the matter with the whole world!” answered Lincoln. “I have three walnuts, and each boy wants two!”

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

POSSESSED BY POSSESSIONS

According to an old fable, a fly discovered a tantalizing strip of flypaper. It looked so appetizing to him that he decided to claim it for himself. So, after chasing away all the other insects that threatened to share his find, he landed on its very edge and happily announced, "My flypaper." Then he proceeded to partake of the tasty feast. In his desire to satisfy his appetite, he tried to walk around to get all he could, and before he knew it he was firmly attached to the sticky surface. Realizing he couldn't move his legs, he began flapping his wings, but they too became hopelessly mired in the goo. Finally he gave up, completely exhausted. It was then that the flypaper proudly exclaimed, "My fly!"

This fable portrays what happens in real life to those who get caught in the trap of materialism.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

THE REAL ENEMY

Have you ever seen a bird attacking its own reflection in a window. Typically it's a male bird which by instinct tries to protect his territory from other male birds of the same species. He will repeatedly attack that mirrored image as long as he can still see that reflection, or until he becomes disoriented or even kills himself.

In our sinful self-centeredness, we are often just like that bird. We beat our heads against the glass when all the time the real enemy is within. By making self the center, we create problems in all our relationships with others.

[Pulpit Helps, Feb 1994. Page 14.]

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

LIFE IS TOO SHORT

Christie Craig writes: “Approaching 40, my frugal husband yearned for a boat. Frugality won out until the day he came across the obituary of an old high-school classmate, Ted. Certain that this was a sign that life was too short, my husband purchased a boat what weekend.

“Days later, a former classmate called. ‘Sure was a sad thing, wasn’t it?’ he said. ‘You know, Ted’s boating accident and all.’”

[Reader’s Digest, Feb 1996. Page 102.]

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

THE BARE ESSENTIALS

Steve Lawson tells the story of a group of mountain climbers in the Alps preparing to ascend to the summit of Mount Blanc. The night before, their guide made on thing very clear. They were not to carry along equipment or personal items that were not absolutely necessary to the climb. In order to reach the top, they would have to leave all unnecessary accessories behind.

One young man from England didn’t like the guide’s instructions. He proceeded to pack an extra blanket, a cap, and a heavy notebook.

As they made their way up to the summit the next day, the guide noticed that certain items were being left behind in the snow. First, the blanket, then the notebook, and finally the cap—all jettisoned by the Englishman.

This is the way it is in our spiritual lives as well. If we want to reach the peak, we have to let go of all those unnecessary things in our lives, no matter how good they might be in themselves. Every hindrance must be left behind.

[Men Who Win by Steven Lawson, 1992. Page 102.]

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

LONELY AS HELL

Just a few weeks before his death, **Elvis Presley** was asked a penetrating question by a reporter: “When you first got started in your musical career, you said you wanted three things in life—to be rich, to be famous, and to be happy. Are you happy, Elvis?”

The singer replied, “No, I’m as lonely as hell.”

“Well put, says Luis Palau. “Hell IS a lonely place.” Elvis was certainly wealthy and well-known. He was called the king of rock and roll. Women screamed for him. He had a beautiful wife, a child, and more money than he could ever spend. But for Elvis, happiness was a fleeting dream.

[Pursuit, Vol 4, No 1, 1997. Page 16.]

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

The passion of acquiring riches in order to support a vain expense corrupts the purest souls. —Fenelon

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Youth

The young always have the same problem—how to rebel and conform at the same time. They have now solved this by defying their parents and copying one another.

Quentin Crisp (1908-), British writer.
The Naked Civil Servant (1968).

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Pride

I know of no case where a man added to his dignity by standing on it.

Attributed to: **Winston Churchill** (1874-1965), English statesman and writer.

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Materialism

Man must choose whether to be rich in things or in the freedom to use them.

Ivan Illich (1926-), Austrian-born U.S. sociologist.
Deschooling Society (1971).

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materialism

ma•te•ri•al•ism . . . *noun*

1. **PHILOSOPHY theory of the physical:** the theory that physical matter is the only reality and that psychological states such as emotions, reason, thought, and desire will eventually be explained as physical functions.
2. **focus on possessions:** devotion to material wealth and possessions at the expense of spiritual intellectual values.

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Business

When you are skinning your customers, you should leave some skin on to grow so that you can skin them again.

Nikita Khrushchev (1894-1971), Soviet statesman.

Addressed to British businessmen.

The Observer (London) "Sayings of the Week" (May 28, 1961).

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selfish

selfish . . . *adjective*

1. **looking after own desires:** concerned with your own interests, needs, and wishes while ignoring those of others
2. **demonstrating selfishness:** showing that personal needs and wishes are thought to be more important than those of other people

—**selfishly** . . . *adverb*

—**selfishness** . . . *noun*

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selfishness (noun)

selfishness, self-consideration, self-love, self-admiration, narcissism,
 self-worship, self-approbation, self-praise, vanity
 self-pity, self-indulgence, ego trip, intemperance
 self-absorption, egocentricity
 egoism, egotism, individualism, particularism
 self-preservation, everyone for themselves
 ax to grind, personal considerations, personal motives, private ends, personal
 advantage, selfish benefit
 self-seeking, self-serving, self-aggrandizement, self-interest, concern for
 number one, looking out for number one
 the Me Decade
 no thought for others
 charity that begins at home, cupboard love
 illiberality, no magnanimity, mean-mindedness, pettiness, paltriness
 meanness, miserliness, niggardliness, parsimony
 greed, acquisitiveness, avarice
 possessiveness, jealousy
 worldliness, worldly wisdom
 heads I win tails you lose, injustice
 careerism, career-mindedness, selfish ambition, naked ambition, ruthless
 ambition
 power politics

Other Forms

exclusion: possessiveness, selfishness
 interiority: self-absorption, egotism, egocentrism, selfishness
 inattention: want of thought, carelessness, inconsiderateness, misjudgment,
 selfishness
 overestimation: egotism, selfishness
 will: one's own sweet will, selfishness
 motive: personal reasons, ulterior motive, hidden agenda, selfishness
 preservation: self-preservation, selfishness
 gain: selfish advantage, personal benefit, selfishness
 parsimony: illiberality, ungenerosity, uncharitableness, shoestring, grudging
 hand, closed wallet, closed purse, moths in one's wallet, selfishness
 caution: instinct of self-preservation, selfishness
 vanity: self-sufficiency, self-centeredness, egotism, me-ism, selfishness

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(Shepherding the Church into the 21st Century by Joseph M. Stowell)

Wheaton, IL: Victor Books. Copyright - Victor Books/SP Publications, Inc., 1994.

Christianity at best has become undervalued. We have been forced into a subculture that runs counter to the prevailing paganism of our day. As we have noted, during the last forty years we have finally made up our mind in America that we really don't want God telling us what to do, what not to do, what is right, or what is wrong. In fact, as we have decided to do the things we want to do, those of us who have tried to put the brakes on have been viewed as impediments to social progress. What Francis Schaeffer predicted has come true. There is now a backlash against Christians and Christianity because we are perceived to be against those things that are "good for us," that make us a more progressive, enlightened community of people. As a result, Christians are ridiculed in sitcoms and the movies and are discounted in terms of what we say, what we believe, and what is important to us.
pp. 27-28

(Final Roar by Bob Briner) Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman. Copyright – Martha Ann Briner, 2000.

American Christians have become increasingly self-indulgent and self-absorbed, and thus we have increasingly failed in our Christian duty to America.
p. 12

(The Most Brilliant Thoughts of All Time: In Two Lines or Less edited by John M. Shanahan) New York, NY: HarperCollins. Copyright – John M. Shanahan, 1999.

The keenest sorrow is to recognize ourselves as the sole cause of all our adversities.

Sophocles, c. 496-406 B.C.

p. 9

When science discovers the center of the universe, a lot of people will be disappointed to find they are not it.

Bernard Baily, 1816-1902

p. 174

(Far From Home: The Soul's Search for Intimacy with God by Joseph M. Stowell) Chicago, IL: Moody Press. Copyright – Joseph M. Stowell, 1998.

But not all of us are committed materialists. Some of us know that piles of stuff soon lose their capacity to thrill and fulfill. We may agree with Muhammad Ali, who used to “dance like a butterfly, sting like a bee.” Now crippled by Parkinson’s disease, he reflected, “I had the world, and it wasn’t nuthin”¹

1. “Ali, Muhammad,” Microsoft® Encarta® 96 Encyclopedia. © 1993-1995 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. © Funk & Wagnalls Corporation. All rights reserved.

p. 50

(Approaching God: How to Pray by Steve Brown) Nashville, TN: Moorings / Random House. Copyright - Steve Brown, 1996.

Someone tells about a man who went to a country store and Jimmy, the clerk who usually waited on him, was not there. After getting his goods, the man asked the manager about Jimmy. The manager told the man that Jimmy had been fired. “Who took his place?” the customer asked.

The manager replied, “Jimmy didn’t leave no place.”

When we die, we aren’t going to leave a place either. Some of us are so self-absorbed that we simply can’t imagine a world where we are not present. If prayer does nothing else, it increases the realization that we aren’t that important.

pp. 81-82

(Ruthless Trust: The Ragamuffin’s Path to God by Brennan Manning) San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco. Copyright – Brennan Manning, 2000.

As Brother David Steindl-Rast notes, “The root of joy is gratefulness. . . . It is not joy that makes us grateful; it is gratitude that makes us joyful.”⁴

4. David Steindl-Rast, *Gratefulness: The Heart of Prayer* (New York: Paulist Press/Ramsey, 1984), 204.

p. 33

(Ruthless Trust: The Ragamuffin's Path to God by Brennan Manning)
 San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco. Copyright – Brennan
 Manning, 2000.

The great weakness in the North American church at large, and certainly in my life, is our refusal to accept our brokenness. We hide it, evade it, gloss over it. We grab for the cosmetic kit and put on our virtuous face to make ourselves admirable to the public. Thus, we present to others a self that is spiritually together, superficially happy, and lacquered with a sense of self-deprecating humor that passes for humility. The irony is that while I do not want anyone to know that I am judgmental, lazy, vulnerable, screwed up, and afraid, for fear of losing face, the face that I fear losing is the mask of the impostor, not my own!

p. 122

(1001 Great Stories & "Quotes" by R. Kent Hughes) Wheaton, IL: Tyndale
 House Publishers, Inc. Copyright – R. Kent Hughes, 1998. 442 pp.

The Culture of Victimhood

In a comic by cartoonist Bill Watterson featuring **Calvin and Hobbes**, the two are walking and Calvin remarks: "Nothing I do is my fault. My family is dysfunctional, and my parents don't empower me! Consequently, I'm not self-actualized! My behavior is addictive, functioning in a diseased process of toxic codependency! I need holistic healing and wellness before I'll accept any responsibility for my actions! I love the culture of victimhood."

Hobbes's observation: "One of us needs to stick his head in a bucket of ice water."

p. 195

(The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart: And 1,501 Other Stories by Charles R. Swindoll) Nashville, TN: Word Publishing. Copyright - Word Publishing, Inc., 1998.

A MAN CALLED AT THE CHURCH and asked if he could speak to the Head Hog at the Trough. The secretary said, "Who?"

The man replied, "I want to speak to the Head Hog at the Trough!"

Sure now that she had heard correctly, the secretary said, "Sir, if you mean our pastor, you will have to treat him with more respect—and ask for 'The Reverend' or 'The Pastor.' But certainly you cannot refer to him as the Head Hog at the Trough!"

At this, the man came back, "Oh, I see. Well, I have ten thousand dollars I was thinking of donating to the Building Fund."

Secretary: "Hold the line—I think the Big Pig just walked in the door."

—James Hewett, *Illustrations Unlimited*

pp. 534-5

(Something to Smile About by Zig Ziglar) Nashville TN; Thomas Nelson Publishers; Zig Ziglar Corporation – 1997.

I don't mind that my son is earning more than I did on my first job. What disturbs me is he's just six, and it's his allowance!

p. 94

(God's Little Devotional Book for Dads by Honor Books, Inc.) Tulsa, OK: Honor Books, Inc.. Copyright - Honor Books, Inc., 1995.

At a church meeting a very wealthy man rose to give a testimony. "I'm a millionaire," he said, not at all humbly. "I attribute it all to the rich blessings of God in my life. I came from a wonderful family. He gave me abundant intelligence and good business sense. I worked hard. On the night after I received my first paycheck, I went to a church meeting. The speaker was a missionary who told about his work. I gave everything I had to God. I believe that God blessed that decision, and that is why I am a rich man today."

After smiling broadly at the congregation, he sat down. After a few seconds of silence in the church, a tiny elderly woman sitting in the pew behind him leaned forward and said, "I dare you to do it again."

p. 197

(The Prayer Factor by Sammy Tippit) Chicago, IL: Moody Press. Copyright – Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1988. 142 pp.

A. W. Tozer calls us to search our hearts and our motives: “It is only when we introduce our own will into our relation to God that we get into trouble. When we weave into the pattern of our lives threads of our own selfish desires we instantly become subject to hindrances from the outside. If I mingle some pet religious enterprise of mine with the will of God and come to think of them as one, I can be hindered in my religious life.”²

2. A. W. Tozer, *The Root of Righteousness* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, 1955), p. 130
p. 52

(The Perfect Christian: How Sinners Like Us Can Be More Like Jesus by Tony Evans) Nashville, TN: Word. Copyright – Tony Evans, 1998.

I recently came across a good story that illustrates what can happen when we lose God’s perspective on material things and let possessions possess us.

A man was driving his new BMW down the highway when he came to a sharp turn and lost control of the car. As it careened toward a steep embankment, the man realized he was going to go over the cliff so he unhooked his seat belt and threw himself out of the car. But as he did, he got his arm caught and the force of his fall and the moving car tore his arm off.

The man lay dazed on the side of the road, blood pouring from his shoulder. A truck driver who stopped to help ran up to the injured man and heard him sobbing, “Oh, no, my BMW! My BMW!”

The trucker said, “Mister, you’ll bleed to death if I don’t get you to a hospital. You’ve lost your arm!”

The man looked down, saw that he had no arm, and began crying, “Oh, no, my Rolex! My Rolex!”
pp. 192-3

(Quotes & Idea Starters for Preaching & Teaching from Leadership Journal edited by Edward K. Rowell) Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. Copyright – Christianity Today, Inc., 1996.

Arrogant, pompous, obnoxious, vain, cruel, verbose, and showoff. I have been called all of these. Of course, I am.

—Howard Cosell

p. 50

Wealth takes away the sharp edges of our moral sensitivities and allows a comfortable confusion about sin and virtue.

—Henri Nouwen

p. 175

(Sin: Radical Evil in Soul and Society by Ted Peters) Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans. Copyright – Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994.

Although it may manifest itself in women differently than in men, in both genders the key is this: pride blocks sympathetic understanding. It prevents participation in the struggles and pain of other creatures and persons. It produces insensitivity, a capacity to ignore the suffering of others without feeling any remorse. Pride is the source of the we/they mentality, the belief that the world is made up of winners and losers and that we must always be winners.

pp. 12-13

Tillich prefers the Greek term *hubris* to the English term *pride*, he is clear in asserting that this “is sin in its total form,” because it amounts to our turning away from the divine center to which we belong. He calls it “spiritual sin,” saying that its main symptom is that we do not accept our own limits. It is the self-elevation of oneself into the sphere of the divine.²

2. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951-1963), 2:50-51.

p. 87

v. 3 Without natural affection, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, not loving the good.

Whereas, we had EIGHT of these NINETEEN CHARACTERISTICS in verse 2, we now have **SIX MORE** in verse 3.

CHARACTERISTIC #9:

“WITHOUT NATURAL AFFECTION.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary translates the word:

without love . . . [or] “heartless” . . . Rom. 1:31, [is] the only other place it is used in the NT . . .
p. 756

Lea & Griffin say:

The first term suggests that the evildoers have become almost beastlike in the breakdown of love for their kin, especially parents. There is a certain natural affection between parents and children. This term pictures those who lack even the normal compassion linking family members together. The second term pictures someone who adamantly refuses to come to terms with the conciliatory approaches of an opponent.
p. 225

J. Vernon McGee says:

“Without natural affection” means having abnormal relationships. We are living in a day when homosexuality is being accepted as normal conduct. Yet in Romans 1:24 Paul clearly states, “Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves.” Humanity sinks to its lowest level when it accepts homosexuality.
p. 470

In this ninth characteristic **“WITHOUT NATURAL AFFECTION,”** Paul is referring here to a love which is natural in a family relationship—the love of a child for a parent or parent for the child.

When this type of love is absent, of course, we have a **BREAKDOWN IN THE FAMILY RELATIONSHIP**. A man loving himself will naturally find that his love and affection for others will in like measure be decreasing.

When you have a unit where everyone is looking out for number one, you are going to have chaos. **IT IS RELATIONSHIP WITHOUT RESPONSIBILITY.**

CHARACTERISTIC #10:**“IRRECONCILABLE.”**

This word has the picture of one who is so filled with **BITTERNESS** that he is unwilling to get along with others.

Actually, they can't get along with anybody!

THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO CAN'T FORGIVE.**Barclay says of this word:**

. . . the word describes a certain harshness and hardness of mind which separates a man from his fellow men in unrelenting bitterness.
p. 216

When we are tempted to be like this, we should hear again the voice of our blessed Lord saying, even on the cross:

“Father forgive them!”**The Bible Knowledge Commentary translates this characteristic :**

unforgiving . . .
p. 756

Liefeld says:

The meaning of the word “unforgiving” (v. 3) is helped by reference to its etymology. It conveys the attitude of a person who does not respond to a proposal for a truce; such a person refuses to be reconciled or placated. The Greek word for “slandorous” is translated by the NIV as “malicious talkers” in 1 Timothy 3:11. “Without self-control,” when used in a vice list like this, refers not to relatively harmless matters such as diet, but to matters of moral failure. “Brutal” is a good translation for the next word, which means also “untamed” or “savage.” “Not lovers of the good” (occurring only here in Greek literature) can, in a vice list, be interpreted more forcibly as “haters of good” . . .

p. 270

J. Vernon McGee says:

“Trucebreakers” are people who are impossible to get along with. They are irreconcilable—they won’t let you get along with them. I recall seeing a little sign in a restaurant out in West Texas which read, “We can’t please everybody, but we try.” Well, you can’t please everybody; there are folk who are impossible to please.

p. 470

Ephesians 4:32

And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

We come now in our study the next characteristic of these FALSE TEACHERS.

CHARACTERISTIC #11:

“MALICIOUS GOSSIPS.”

The word that is used here is the word for **SLANDERERS**.

This Greek word is the same Greek word that is used for **DEVIL**. He of course, is the greatest slanderer of all.

Taking away a man's character and reputation by slanderous words and evil reports is one of the greatest of sins.

Ironside in his commentary says:

Satan is the accuser of the brethren, so lets leave the dirty work to him.
(source unknown)

This same word also occurs in:

1 Timothy 3:6, 7

and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

2 Timothy 2:26

and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary just translate the words:

slanderaus . . .

p. 756

Lock says of this word:

[It may include two thoughts] . . . “slanderers” and “setters at variance,” promoting quarrels in the hope that they may gain from them.

p. 106

You have the **CONCLUDING ASPECTS** of the **SIX THINGS THE LORD HATES** in:

Proverbs 6:19

a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.

The **SOWERS OF DISCORD** accomplish a selfish agenda.

Stott says:

The first is ‘slanderers’ (*diaboloi*, literally ‘devils’), translated ‘backbiters’ by E. K. Simpson and ‘scandal-mongers’ in NEB. They are guilty of the sin of speaking evil against others, especially behind their back.

p. 85

Knight says:

In the midst of these α-privatives is διαβολοι, which in the pl. refers to humans who are “slanderers” . . . This use of the word after the reference in 2:26 to those who are trapped by ο διαβολος may imply that such captives become like their captor.

p. 432

Barclay says:

IN these terrible days men will be *slanderers*. The Greek word for *slanderer* is *diabolos* which is precisely the English word *devil*. The devil is the patron saint of all slanderers, and of all slanderers he is chief. There is a sense in which slander is the most cruel of all sins. If a man's goods are stolen, he can set to and build up his fortunes again; but if a man's good name is taken away, irreparable damage has been done to him. It is one thing to start an evil and untrue report on its malicious way; it is entirely another thing to stop it.
p. 217

MacArthur says:

Malicious gossips translates *diabolos*, which, even to the person unacquainted with Greek, suggests the severity of this evil, with our English derivative "diabolical." *Diabolos* means "accuser" and is used thirty-four times in the New Testament as a title for Satan. Engulfed and blinded by self-love, **malicious gossips** do the very work of Satan.
p. 115

CHARACTERISTIC #12:**“WITHOUT SELF-CONTROL.”****Barclay says:**

A man can reach a stage when, so far from controlling it, he can become a slave to some habit or desire. That way is the inevitable way to ruin, for no man can master anything unless he first masters himself.
pp. 217-18

There are all kinds of **ADDICTIVE BEHAVIORS** that are manifest among us in these days:

DRUGS,**ALCOHOL,****SMOKING,****SEX,****PORNOGRAPHY, and****THE LIST GOES ON!****Quinn & Wacker translate these final three words in this verse:**

. . . “Uncontrolled (*akrateis*), uncouth (*anēmeroi*), and uncaring about goodness . . .
p. 709

Hendriksen says:

They have never learned to control themselves; hence, are *unrestrained*, “uninhibited,” thoroughly lacking in self-control, devoid of power to check their own drives and impulses. Having never “settled down,” they are *untamed, savage, fierce*.
p. 285

MacArthur says:

Without self-control describes the person who has jettisoned inhibitions and shame, who does not care about what people think or about what happens to them because of what he does. Like a driverless car, he careens haphazardly and crashes into whatever gets in his way. The lover of self eventually loses control of his own life and becomes a slave to his passions and ambitions.
p. 115

Paul refers to this quality of **“SELF-CONTROL”** as a fruitage of the Spirit in our lives.

In this situation, **BAD HABITS** have taken control and the man is yielding to these rather than having the mastery over them.

1 Corinthians 9:27

but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

CHARACTERISTIC #13:**“BRUTAL.”**

This is **THIRTEEN** in this series of nineteen.

I have translated by the word **“BRUTAL.”**

There are some who would translate the word **SAVAGE**.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary translates it:

brutal . . . lit., “untamed,” the opposite of civilized) . . .
p. 756

Barclay says:

Men will be *savage*. The word is *anēmeros*, and it is a word which would be more fittingly applied to a wild beast than to a human being. It denotes a savagery which has neither sensitiveness nor sympathy. Men can be savage in rebuke; men can be savage in pitiless action.
p. 218

Barnes translates the word:

Fierce. The Greek word used here . . . does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It means *ungentle, harsh, severe*, and is the opposite of gentleness and mildness. Religion produces gentleness; the want of it makes men rough, harsh, cruel . . .
p. 232

Quinn & Wacker say:

. . . Epictetus on men who have forgotten their divine origin and so have become “wild, savage, untamed (*anēmeroi*) lions.” The romantic penchant for the undomesticated and undomesticable was not popular in the ancient world. It certainly did not appeal to the author of the PE [Pastoral Epistles], who could find no worse condemnation of the Cretans than the infamous verse of Epimenides (Titus 1:12) calling them wild beasts.
p. 720

Towner says:

As the list continues, two more *un-* terms identify ungodliness as both ruthless and cold. *Brutal* (or “untamed,” “savage”) served equally well to describe fierce lions and people who act like them. *Not lovers of the good* is another opposite to a quality required in church leaders (Tit 1:8). It suggests a proclivity for evil and a complete lack of moral sensitivity.
p. 192

Matthew Henry says:

When men have no government of themselves and their own appetites: they are *incontinent*, they are *fierce*. When that which is good and ought to be honoured is generally despised.
p. 1897

When you see all the

VIOLENCE,

MURDERS,

ABORTIONS,

ABUSES,

ROAD RAGE, and

A MYRIAD OF OTHER ACTS, you realize we are living in dangerous and brutal times.

CHARACTERISTIC #14:**“NOT LOVING THE GOOD.”****John 3:19, 20** (version unknown)

And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world and men love darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reproved.

Because of all these other characteristics, he is a person who has no association with that which is:

GOOD,**EDIFYING,** and**PROPER.**

His appetites have been fixed upon that which is sensuous and self-gratifying.

Titus 1:8

but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled,

Psalms 15:4

who despises a vile man
but honors those who fear the Lord, . . .

Psalm 19:8

The precepts of the Lord are right,
giving joy to the heart.
The commands of the Lord are radiant,
giving light to the eyes.

KEEP YOUR COOL

Uncontrolled anger can kill just as surely as an automobile accident. One day two motorists headed for the same parking place at the same time. Both stopped in front of it and refused to let the other in. Then they jumped out of their cars and started arguing. Tempers flared. Suddenly, the older man (he was 70) collapsed to the ground from a heart attack. He was pronounced dead on arrival at a nearby hospital. A passerby who had stopped to cool down the two men walked away from the scene in disgust, saying, "It made me sick! All that tragic sorrow over a parking space!"

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

IT'S NOT WORTH IT

A farmer and his wife went to town together. The man had an appointment with the doctor for a checkup, and his wife wanted to be there. After examining the farmer thoroughly, the doctor called the wife into his office. He gave her a piece of paper, saying, "Here are the things you need to do for your husband, or he will certainly die."

Fear tripped her heart as she silently read the list:

1. Fix your husband a hot breakfast every morning before he goes out to milk the cows at 5:00.
2. Surprise him with a homemade pie or cake every day at lunchtime.
3. After lunch, insist that he lie down in the hammock and take a nap. Bring him the newspaper and a glass of fresh-squeezed lemonade.
4. Always let him hold the remote and watch a ballgame whenever he wants to. Bring him a bowl of ice cream and homemade cookies while he watches.

As they drove home, the farmer looked over at his wife and asked, "Well, what did the doctor say? How am I doing?"

She replied, "He said you're gonna die."

[Devotional Companion by Jeffrey Rasche. Abingdon Press, 1996. Pages 51-52.]

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

An evil man sows strife; gossip separates the best of friends.

—Proverbs 16:28

Don't tell your secrets to a gossip unless you want them broadcast to the world.

—Proverbs 20:19

Fire goes out for lack of fuel, and tensions disappear when gossip stops.

—Proverbs 26:21

Gossip is a dainty morsel eaten with great relish.

—Proverbs 26:22

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

I am more deadly than the screaming shell from the howitzer. I win without killing. I tear down homes, break hearts, and wreck lives. I travel on the wings of the wind. No innocence is strong enough to intimidate me, no purity pure enough to daunt me. I have no regard for truth, no respect for justice, no mercy for the defenseless. My victims are as numerous as the sands of the sea, and often as innocent. I never forget and seldom forgive. My name is Gossip.

—Morgan Blake

Pleasure is the greatest incentive to vice.

—Greek proverb

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Think

I once formed a mutual encouragement fellowship at a time of stress in one of my pastorates. The members subscribed to a simple formula applied before speaking of any person or subject that was perhaps controversial.

- T—Is it true?
- H—Is it helpful?
- I—Is it inspiring?
- N—Is it necessary?
- K—Is it kind?

If what I am about to say does not pass those tests, I will keep my mouth shut! And it worked!

Alan Redpath, from *A Passion for Preaching*

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

A gossip is one who talks to you about others; a bore is one who talks to you about himself; and a brilliant conversationalist is one who talks to you about yourself.

—LISA KIRK

A gossip usually makes a mountain out of a molehill by adding some dirt.

—UNKNOWN

A tongue can be a dangerous weapon.

—JEWISH PROVERB

A wound caused by words is more painful than a wound caused by an arrow.

—ARABIAN PROVERB

First thing in the morning she brushes her teeth and sharpens her tongue.

—UNKNOWN

Gossip can estrange the closest friends.

—JEWISH PROVERB

Gossip is what no one claims to like but what everybody enjoys.

—JOSEPH CONRAD (1857-1924)

Gossip leads to criticism, and criticism kills love.

—CORRIE TEN BOOM (1892-1983)

Gossip: social sewage.

—GEORGE MEREDITH (1828-1909)

I would rather play with the forked lightning, or take in my hands living wires with their fiery current, than speak a reckless word against any servant of Christ, or idly repeat the slanderous darts which thousands of Christians are hurling on others, to the hurt of their own souls and bodies.

—ALBERT BENJAMIN SIMPSON (1843-1919)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

Lord, remind us often that a gossip's mouth is the devil's mailbag.

—WELSH PROVERB

Only a baby is admired for opening his mouth and putting his foot into it.

—UNKNOWN

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

GOSSIP

No one gossips about other people's secret virtues.

Bertrand Russell (1872-1970), British philosopher and mathematician.
On Education (1926).

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FRIENDS

It takes your enemy and your friend, working together, to hurt you to the heart; the one to slander you and the other to get the news to you.

Mark Twain (1835-1910), U.S. writer and humorist.
Following the Equator (1897).

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REBELLION

A little rebellion now and then is a good thing.

Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), U.S. president.
Letter to James Madison (January 30, 1787).

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WORK

I wish to preach, not the doctrine of ignorable ease, but the doctrine of the strenuous life.

Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919), U.S. president.
Speech before the Hamilton Club, Chicago (April 10, 1899).

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(The Art of Forgiving: When You Need to Forgive and Don't Know How by Lewis B. Smedes) Nashville, TN: Moorings / Ballantine. Copyright – Lewis B. Smedes, 1996.

Why do people surrender their tomorrows to the unfair pain of their yesterdays? The total answer lies buried somewhere in our primitive need to protect our pride, in our trembling fear of feeling weak, and in our moral instincts for justice, all mingled together as a raw passion to see he who wounded us wounded in equal measure. But I believe that the answer is also tangled in a web of misunderstandings about forgiveness itself.
p. xii

Forgiving and reunion are not the same thing; linking them turns forgiving into a needless risk for the forgiving person. The ideal script is not necessarily the best script.

There are three reasons why the popular notion that forgiving and reunion always go together is a major misconception.

Forgiving happens inside the person who does it.

Forgiving is not about reunion.

Forgiving does not obligate us to go back.
pp. 24-25

(The Art of Forgiving: When You Need to Forgive and Don't Know How by Lewis B. Smedes) Nashville, TN: Moorings / Ballantine. Copyright – Lewis B. Smedes, 1996.

We can see the differences between forgiving and reunion clearly if we look at them both from several sides.

It takes one person to forgive.
It takes two to be reunited.

Forgiving happens inside the wounded person.
Reunion happens in a relationship between people.

We can forgive a person who never says he is sorry.
We cannot be truly reunited unless he is honestly sorry.

We can forgive even if we do not trust the person who wronged us once not to wrong us again.
Reunion can happen only if we can trust the person who wronged us once not to wrong us again.

Forgiving has no strings attached.
Reunion has several strings attached.

p. 27

(Make Me An Instrument of Your Peace by Kent Nerburn) San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco. Copyright – Kent Nerburn, 1999.

Life is too short to freeze our feelings around a moment of wrong, whether it is one that was done to us or one that we have done to others.
p. 119

SIN

Sin has always been an ugly word, but it has been made so in a new sense over the last half-century. It has been made not only ugly but passé. People are no longer sinful, they are only immature or underprivileged or frightened or, more particularly, sick.

Ellis McGinley (1905-78), U.S. poet, author. *The Province of the Heart*, "In Defense of Sin" (1959).

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(Collected Verse of Edgar A. Guest by Edgar A. Guest) Chicago, IL:
 Contemporary Books, Inc. Copyright - Contemporary Books, Inc., 1934.

The Deeds of Anger

I used to lose my temper an' git mad an' tear around
 An' raise my voice so wimmin folks would tremble at the sound;
 I'd do things I was ashamed of when the fit of rage had passed,
 An' wish I hadn't done 'em, an' regret 'em to the last;
 But I've learned from sad experience how useless is regret,
 For the mean things done in anger are the things you can't forget.

'Tain't no use to kiss the youngster once your hand has made him cry;
 You'll recall the time you struck him till the very day you die;
 He'll forget it an' forgive you an' to-morrow seem the same,
 But you'll keep the hateful picture of your sorrow an' your shame,
 An' it's bound to rise to taunt you, though you long have squared the
 debt,
 For the things you've done in meanness are the things you can't forget.

Lord, I sometimes sit an' shudder when some scene comes back to me,
 Which shows me big an' brutal in some act o' tyranny,
 When some triflin' thing upset me an' I let my temper fly,
 An' was sorry for it after—but it's vain to sit an' sigh.
 So I'd be a whole sight happier now my sun begins to set,
 If it wasn't for the meanness which I've done an' can't forget.

Now I think I've learned my lesson an' I'm treadin' gentler ways,
 An' I try to build my mornings into happy yesterdays;
 I don't let my temper spoil 'em in the way I used to do
 An' let some splash of anger smear the record when it's through;
 I want my memories pleasant, free from shame or vain regret,
 Without any deeds of anger which I never can forget.

p. 393-4

v. 4 Traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

There are **FOUR MORE CHARACTERISTICS** of the **FALSE TEACHERS** here in verse 4.

CHARACTERISTIC #15:

“TRAITORS.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary translates this word:

treacherous [or] “disposed toward betrayal” . . .
p. 756

LOYALTY and **DEVOTION** are absent from their vocabulary.

JUDAS was a traitor to Jesus when he made the choice to take the thirty pieces of silver.

In 2 Timothy 4:10 **DEMAS** was seen as a traitor because he deserted the apostle Paul for love of the present world.

Paul speaks in:

2 Timothy 1: 15

. . . all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.

Quinn & Wacker say:

. . . “The man bent on advancing his own interests is a born traitor.”
p. 709

Lenski says:

Without love for anything beneficially good; we see also the extreme of this, namely “traitors,” betrayers, who repeat the act of Judas.
p. 822

Michael Griffiths says:

Treacherous (verse 4) means stopping at nothing to gain their ends . . .
p. 198

CHARACTERISTIC #16:**“RECKLESS.”****The Bible Knowledge Commentary translates this word:**

rash [and then follows up with this phrase] “disposed toward recklessness”).
p. 756

King translates the word:

“Heady”, reckless. Headstrong; having taken the bit in his teeth, becoming entirely heedless of right, or of others, or of consequences. What a distressing picture the Mirror gives back! But there is more yet.
p. 89

MacArthur says:

The **reckless** person is careless, negligent, and rash. This characteristic is not as serious as most of the others and often is manifested unconsciously. The self-centered person is so preoccupied with his own interests that he simply does not notice people and things around him that are not related to those egotistic concerns.
p. 116

Barclay says:

It describes the man who is swept on by passion and impulse and desire to such an extent that he is totally unable to think wisely and sensibly. Far more harm is done from want of thought than almost anything else. Many and many a time we would be saved from hurting we would be saved from hurting ourselves and from wounding other people, if we would only stop to think.
p. 219

CHARACTERISTIC #17:**“CONCEITED.”****The Bible Knowledge Commentary** says this word could be translated:

. . . “puffed up” . . . 1 Tim. 3:6; 6:4 . . .
p. 756

This word could be better expressed in the phrase:

“HE SURE GOT THE BIG HEAD!”**Philippians 2:3, 4**

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown translate the word:

high-minded—lit., “puffed up” with pride, as with smoke blinding them.
p. 1379

CHARACTERISTIC #18:**“LOVERS OF PLEASURE RATHER THAN LOVERS OF GOD.”**

This characteristic is seen in the **FINAL PHRASE** of verse 4. They are:

LOVERS OF PLEASURE RATHER THAN LOVERS OF GOD.”

“PLEASURE” has taken the place that belongs only to God.

Joy Davidman in her book Smoke on the Mountain says:

Sunday is still a holiday to all of us, but for many it has long since ceased to be a holy day. Violation of the Sabbath is one of the great sorrows of the modern churchmen. Half the churches are empty while all the popular places of entertainment are crowded. True, men seldom work on the Sabbath if they can help it. But how passionately, how unscrupulously they play on it. The unbelievers must go on with their games, but what of the believers. It is so easy for them to be tempted into joining the games, first now and then, then later as a habit, and finally the uneasy sense of something forgotten on Sunday morning gradually fades away entirely and faith in God perishes not by conviction but by disuse.

(source unknown)

A. T. Robertson says:

Lovers of pleasure . . . Literary *Koine* word . . . only here in N.T.
Lovers of God . . . [is an] Old word . . . only here in N.T.
 p. 623

Lenski says:

“Rather” means that in place of a love and liking for God, a love and liking for pleasure, their own pleasure as they want it, wholly control them. Beyond all question that is the mark of the world of men today. How it invades the membership of the church we see on every hand.
pp. 822-3

Quinn & Wacker translate it:

. . . literally “pleasure-lovers rather than God-lovers,” . . .
p. 721

They say further:

The love of pleasure rather than of God is the love of one’s own will rather than God’s revealed will.
p. 721

King says:

What a wild, mad, feverish rush after pleasure has this modern age seen, with multitudes of its people supremely bored if any one night be without its “flicks”, or its dance, or its “do” of some sort. Even some Christians are so swept up by the thing that their love of pleasure is beginning to sap their love of GOD. A certain relaxation of mind and spirit is, in this busy world, not only permissible, but necessary—provided only that it be of the right kind, and in the right proportion, and at the right time; but to set our love upon it is quite a different proposition. It is a dangerous and damaging thing to love unworthy things.
p. 91

MacArthur says:

Along with all his other sins, the false teacher is a self-loving, pleasure-mad hedonist.
p. 116

Matthew Henry says:

When men are generally *lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God*. That is a carnal mind, and is full of enmity against him, which prefers anything before him, especially such a sordid thing as carnal pleasure is.
p. 1897

I.D. PROBLEM

She: He pays so little attention to me that if I died I don't think he'd be able to identify the body.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

MALPRACTICE

The pretty young girl had just broken off her engagement with the young doctor.

"Do you mean to tell me," exclaimed her girl friend, "that he actually asked you to return all his presents?"

"Not only that," she replied, "but he also sent me a bill for forty-four house calls."

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

POSTLUDE

To guests he is the gracious host,
 To children three he is “the most,”
 To living wife the perfect mate,
 To fellow workers he’s “just great!”
 How SAD then that a humble friend
 Upon his promise can’t depend,
 From east to west, from north to south,
 His name? You guessed it! BLABBERMOUTH!!

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

The last time I saw him he was walking down Lover’s Lane holding his own hand,

—Fred Allen

He that falls in love with himself will have no rivals.

—Benjamin Franklin

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

hedonism

he•don•ism . . . *noun*

1. **seeking of pleasure:** a devotion, especially a self-indulgent one, to pleasure and happiness as a way of life
2. **PHILOSOPHY philosophy of pleasure:** a philosophical doctrine that holds that pleasure is the highest good or the source of moral values

[Mid-19th century. From Greek *hēdonē* “pleasure.”]

—he•don•ist, *noun*

—he•don•is•tic . . . *adjective*

—he•don•is•ti•cal•ly, *adjective*

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If we are not nourished by the Bread from heaven, we will satiate ourselves with crumbs from the world.

—Erwin W. Lutzer (1941-)

The world is a net; the more we stir in it, the more we are entangled.

—Proverb

The world is a sure teacher, but it requires a fat fee.

—Finnish Proverb

Worldliness is excluding God from our lives and, therefore, consciously or unconsciously accepting the values of a man-centered society.

—Erwin W. Lutzer (1941-)

Worldliness is not only doing what is forbidden but also wishing it were possible to do it. One of its distinctives is mental slavery to illegitimate pleasure. Worldliness twists values by rearranging their price tags.

—Erwin W. Lutzer (1941-)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

(Power, Money, & Sex: How Success Almost Ruined My Life by Deion Sanders with Jim Nelson Black) Nashville, TN: Word Publishing. Copyright - Word Publishing, 1998.

Power, money, sex. They're such powerful urges in most people. Some people spend their whole lives thinking that if they could just get more power, money, and sex, they would be happy. But as somebody who has had more than my share of all three, I can tell you this: In themselves, those things will not make you happy. It's okay to have them, but if they're not put into proper perspective, and if they're not used with appropriate balance and restraint, they can kill you.

What do those words say to you? Power, money, sex. That's a pretty good description of the world we live in today. Just look at the magazine racks in the airport, or the bookstore shelves, or listen to the things people are talking about on the job or at the club. Power, money, sex. It seems like that's all anybody wants to think about or talk about anymore.

Take a look at what's happened to daytime TV! Shows like Springer, Oprah, Montel, Howard Stern, the soaps, and even the six o'clock news are knee-deep in stuff you don't even want your kids to know about. Or look at what's been going on in Washington the last five years. You talk about power, money, and sex. What else is it?!

p. 119

(Inspiring Quotations compiled by Albert M. Wells, Jr.) Nashville, TN:
Thomas Nelson. Copyright - Albert M. Wells, Jr., 1988.

The current desire for scanty attire
Leaves actors like me in a daze,
To be poised and composed with
 one's bottom exposed
Ain't required in classical plays.

There are movies and plays being
 offered these days
Which look, smell and sound
 much the same
As a basketball team snapping
 towels in the steam
In the locker room after a game.

The language is crude, the
 characters nude,
Their actions I can't bear to
 mention.
The emotions are raw as the ones
 that we saw
At the last Democratic
 convention.

Don't bother gaining professional
 training
And don't even bother
 rehearsing,
Be a star overnight and the critic's
 delight:
Just take off your pants and start
 cursing.

—Victor Buono

(Columbine Courage: Rock-Solid Faith by Ron Luce) Nashville, TN:
J. Countryman. Copyright – Ron Luce, 2000.

This is an excerpt from a letter that Rachel Scott wrote to a friend exactly one year before she died for her faith.

April 20, 1998

Dear _____,

It's like I have a heavy heart and this burden upon my back, but I don't know what it is. There is something in me that makes me want to cry . . . and I don't even know what it is. Things have definitely changed. Last week was so hard. Besides missing Breakthru, I lost all of my friends at school.

Now that I have begun to walk my talk, they make fun of me. I don't even know what I have done. I don't really have to say anything and they turn me away. . . . I know what they're thinking every time I make a decision to resist temptation and follow God. They talk behind my back and call me "the preacher's church-going girl." In the last 6 months my friends have changed. _____ thinks I am such a loser, and that God is just a phase for me. I have no more personal friends at school. But you know what . . . it's all worth it to me. I am not going to apologize for speaking the Name of Jesus, . . . and I am not going to hide the light that God has put into me.

If I have to sacrifice everything . . . I will. I will take it. If my friends have to become my enemies for me to be with my best friend, Jesus, then that's fine with me. You know, I always knew that part of being a Christian was having enemies . . . but I never thought that my "friends" were going to be those enemies. . . .

Always in Christ,

Rachel Joy

pp. 33-34

(Quotes & Idea Starters for Preaching & Teaching from Leadership Journal edited by Edward K. Rowell) Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. Copyright – Christianity Today, Inc., 1996.

We live in a strange society where we make documentaries of serial killers, movie idols out of organized crime members, authors out of political crooks, and role models out of criminals who beat the system . . . I don't know when crime went from being news to entertainment, but somehow it's made the transition.

—Erma Bombeck

p. 39

Cynicism has gone too far. We are becoming what the history books tell us late Rome was like: mired in decadent self-absorption and lacking virtue.

—Oliver Stone, movie director

p. 39

(Diamonds in the Dust: 366 Sparkling Devotions by Joni Eareckson Tada) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright – Joni Eareckson Tada, 1993.

My friend Elisabeth Elliot has suggested that we redefine happiness as duty and honor, sacrifice and faithfulness, commitment and service. Happiness is fleeting and elusive, but joy is an overflow of the perseverance and hope that comes from demonstrating faithful sacrifice and committed service.
(February 22)

(The Most Brilliant Thoughts of All Time: In Two Lines or Less edited by John M. Shanahan) New York, NY: HarperCollins. Copyright – John M. Shanahan, 1999.

He was a self-made man who owed his lack of success to nobody.

Joseph Heller, 1923-

p. 69

Philippians 3:18, 19

For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

Colossians 3:2

Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

v. 5 While having an outward form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and turn away from such men as these.

This is our **KEY VERSE** for Step #8 for a Fantastic Finish:

Counter Culture: Lord, Where You Lead Me I Will Follow.

We also find in this fifth verse the **NINETEENTH** and **FINAL CHARACTERISTIC** of these **FALSE TEACHERS**.

CHARACTERISTIC #19:

“WHILE HAVING AN OUTWARD FORM OF GODLINESS, ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE DENIED ITS POWER.”

They are the ones that go through all the motions of:

RITUAL AND RELIGION WITHOUT RELATIONSHIP.

They are strangers to the power that changes lives.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

having a form [or] “outward shape,” used only here and in Rom. 2:20 . . . [and] Titus 1:16).

p. 756

Lenski say:

But where is “the power thereof,” the divine, spiritual, regenerating, renewing, saving power of Christ and the true gospel? Totally absent. And this emptiness of power threatens the true churches and their members on all sides. Note the perfect tense: “having denied” and still continuing their denial.
p. 823

A. T. Robertson, speaking about the word “OUTWARD FORM,” says:

The outward shape without the reality.
p. 623

Paul commands Timothy to:

“TURN AWAY FROM SUCH MEN AS THESE.”

A. T. Robertson says this is a:

Present middle (direct) imperative . . . “turn thyself away from.”
Old verb, only here in N.T.
p. 624

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

form—outward semblance. **godliness**—piety. **denying**—rather as *Greek*, “*having denied*,” i.e., renounced. **the power**—the living, regenerating, sanctifying influence of it.
p. 1379

Knight says:

Paul concludes the list with words that specify that these evil characteristics affect even those who claim to be religious and Christian, as it has so evidently the false teachers and their followers.

The present participle . . . “having,” “holding,” indicates that such people possess this characteristic along with the characteristics he has just named.

p. 432

He says further:

He says, in fact, that they have *denied* its power. . . . 1 Tim. 5:8) is used in the sense of “denying, refusing, saying no to” the reality that they profess . . .

p. 432

Stott says:

They sang the hymns, said the ‘amen’ to the prayers and put their money in the offering-plate. They looked and sounded egregiously pious. But it was *form* without *power*, outward show without inward reality, religion without morals, faith without works.

p. 88

J. Vernon McGee says:

Let me ask you a question: If you are in a dead, cold, liberal church, and you are a true believer, what are you doing there when the Word of God says to avoid those things? All across this country there are wonderful pastors who are faithfully preaching the Word of God. Why aren’t you supporting and standing with these fine men?

p. 471

Larson says:

The essence of ungodliness comes from within, and then it comes out in behavior. Those who profess God, who claims spiritual or religious knowledge, do not necessarily possess a relationship with God or his righteousness. True spirituality issues from right thinking in concert with God's power within the spirit of a person which transforms outward behavior. True Christianity cannot be hidden, nor is it a private religion without public effect.
p. 302

Wiersbe says:

It is important to note that these people operate *under the guise of religion*: "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (3:5). They are "religious" but rebellious!
p. 142

Milne says:

These people are so far from the truth that Timothy should **have nothing to do with them**. The fact that Paul can advise Timothy not to deal with such people proves that the times that he is describing were not totally confined to the future, but were already appearing in his own day. The final outbreak of evil before Christ returns will be the final stage of the evolutionary spiral of evil that has been working itself out in human history from the beginning (John 8:44; 2 Thess. 2:7).
p. 160

Spurgeon says:

Let us now remember *what they did not have*. They had "the form of godliness; but they denied "the power." *What is that power?* God Himself is the power of godliness. The Holy Spirit is the life and force of it. Godliness is the power which brings a man to God, and binds him to Him. Godliness is that which creates repentance towards God, and faith in Him. Godliness is the result of a great change of heart in reference to God and His character.
p. 877

Spurgeon says further:

What is the general history of those who have not this power? Well, dear friends, their course usually runs thus: they do not begin with denying the power, but they begin by trying to do without it. They would like to become members of the church, and as they fear that they are not fit for it, they look about for something which looks like conversion and the new birth. They try to persuade themselves that they have been changed: they accept emotion as regeneration, and a belief of doctrine for belief in Christ. It is rather hard at first to reckon brass as gold, but it grows easier as it is persisted in. Patching up a conversion, and manufacturing a regeneration, they venture forward.
p. 877

He says finally:

The next step is easy: *they deceive themselves*, and come to believe that they are surely saved. All is now right for eternity, so they fancy; and they fold their arms in calm security. Meeting with godly people, they put on a bold front, and speak up as bravely as if they were the true soldiers of King Jesus. Good people are charmed to meet with fresh brethren, and at once take them into their confidence. Thus they deceive others, and help to strengthen themselves in their false hope. They use the choice phrases of earnest Christians. Mixing with them, they pick up their particular expressions.
pp. 877-8

WHAT MEANS MOST TO US?

How influential is music on the young people in our society? They buy millions of recordings annually. And screaming fans jam-pack concerts by well-known artists. So, whether we like it or not, rock, rap, and heavy metal are making a significant impact on today's culture.

Neil Gallagher, leader of the group *Oasis*, made the claim, "We're more popular than Jesus Christ now." He added, "Some of the pop stars I like are more important to me than God."

Such an opinion reveals an appalling shallowness of his understanding of the One who made him and will one day judge him. The New Testament letter of Jude says that Jesus will return one day "to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them . . . of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (v. 15).

The music of *Oasis* and the warped thinking of its leader cry out for sharpest criticism. Yet what place does Jesus occupy in our lives? Is God supremely important to us? Are we thrilled by music that magnifies the gospel? Are we grateful for our salvation? And are we praying for those, young and old, who haven't yet put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? What means most to us? —VCG

*The arrogance of those, O Lord,
Who do not honor You!
Yet do we always put You first
In all we say and do? —Sper*

**WHAT WE DO WITH CHRIST NOW DETERMINES
WHAT HE WILL DO WITH US LATER.**

(From Our Daily Bread, Saturday, January 16, year unknown)

The Parable of the Red Volkswagen

A friend tells a delightful story of a woman who bought a new red Volkswagen. One day she took her children to the zoo. She left her car in the parking lot near the elephant show. When she returned, late in the afternoon, she was dismayed to learn that her car was badly smashed on the roof and sides.

What she was alarmed to hear was that, during the day, an elephant had gotten loose. It had been trained, as part of the act, to put its foot on a big red drum. Dutifully, after years of training, it had put its great foot right down on top of the VW! The woman was frantic. The zoo authorities assured her that they would assume the expense of the repairs.

On the way home she was stopped by a policeman, who accused her of having left the scene of an accident. He saw the damage but did not know the unusual circumstances. "But officer, I have not been in an accident!" she explained. "An elephant put his foot on my car." His response to this was to give her a drinking test and take her to the nearest police station. "But you don't understand! Please call the zoo!" was the woman's plea to the desk sergeant. Finally he did and was assured by the zoo authorities that she was telling the truth. Chagrined, he released her with apologies.

How wide the believability gap often becomes! Things are not the way they seem. We say one thing but the evidence seems so contrary. Our talk about God's power of love in the cross is not matched by the observable facts of our lives. The woman's story is an extreme example of the breakdown of communication, but some of the contradictions of our own words and life are no less startling!

(From *Our Daily Bread*, September 15, year unknown)

Commercialism

My fear will be that in 15 years time Jerusalem, Bethlehem, once centres of strong Christian presence, might become a kind of Walt Disney Theme Park.

George Carey (1935-), British Anglican bishop.
The Observer (London) (January 12, 1992).

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GALLUP POLL

Addressing a national seminar of Southern Baptist leaders, **George Gallup** said, “We find there is very little difference in ethical behavior between churchgoers and those who are not active religiously . . . The levels of lying, cheating, and stealing are remarkable similar in both groups. Eight out of ten Americans consider themselves Christians, Gallup said, yet only about half of them could identify the person who gave the Sermon on the Mount, and fewer still could recall five of the Ten Commandments. Only two in ten said they would be willing to suffer for their faith.

Erwin Lutzer, *Pastor to Pastor*, p. 76

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

BELIEF SYSTEM OF THE MODERN MAN

James Engel summarized the belief system and the presuppositions that commonly prevail among what he calls modern man:

- God, if He exists at all, is just an impersonal moral force.
- Man basically has the capacity within himself to improve morally and make the right choices.
- Happiness consists of unlimited material acquisition.
- There really is no object basis for right and wrong.
- The supernatural is just a figment of someone's imagination.
- If a person lives a "good life," the eternal destiny is assured.
- The Bible is nothing other than a book written by man.

Living Proof by **Jim Peterson**, NavPress, 1989, p. 198

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

(In the Face of God: The Dangers & Delights of Spiritual Intimacy by Michael Horton) Dallas, TX: Word. Copyright - Word Publishing, Inc., 1996.

Some things never change. In a *Los Angeles Magazine* article titled, "God For Sale," **Kathleen Neumeyer** wrote, "It is no surprise that when today's affluent young professionals return to church, they want to do it only on their own terms—what's amazing is how far the churches are going to oblige."¹

1. *The Los Angeles Times Magazine*, February 1989, p. 174.
p. 49

(Seeing Through: Reflecting God's Light in a Dark World by David Roper)
Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright - David Roper, 1995.

When Paul encountered the sophistries and idolatries of Athens, his spirit was deeply “distressed.” The word suggests a storm of angry emotions and a militant frame of mind. He was incensed that people could be so thoroughly deceived. Yet what did Paul do? Did he resort to power plays and pressure tactics? Did he invest his time on press releases, demonstrations, protests, product boycotts, or media events?

No.

What did he do? He “reasoned in . . . the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there” (Acts 17:17).

p. 64

(Congratulations! Now What?: A Book for Graduates by Bill Cosby) New York, NY: Hyperion. Copyright – William H. Cosby, Jr., 1999.

Well, I also knew what nondenominationalism is. That's the belief that a church should take credit cards.

p. 89

(Are Christians Destroying America? How to Restore a Decaying Culture by Tony Evans) Chicago, IL: Moody Press. Copyright – Anthony T. Evans, 1996.

One recent poll stated that there are more than 50 million evangelical Christians in America. Now if that's true, it poses a great problem.

How can we have all these Christians in all these churches, led by all these pastors and supported by all these deacons, and still have all this mess? The answer is simple. We don't have enough disciples.

p. 81

(Are Christians Destroying America? How to Restore a Decaying Culture by Tony Evans) Chicago, IL: Moody Press. Copyright – Anthony T. Evans, 1996.

My friend, the church isn't going to get much done until you and I decide to be disciples. This kind of commitment guarantees us some trials, suffering, and inconvenience, but it also promises us the power, presence, and provision of Christ that give us something to offer a nation full of people who have run out of options.

That's a war on for America. Millions of souls are at stake. You can't be neutral when you're standing in the middle of the battleground. In this war, the church must decide whether it is going to fight the fight of faith or stand by and watch America be destroyed.

I'm choosing the former option, and I'm going for victory. It's ours in Christ if we will claim it by becoming His disciples. I urge you to fight the good fight in Christ's army by being His disciple. There are a lot of people depending on you. Satan can handle ordinary Christians, but he's no match for disciples!

p. 94

(The Church: What We Are Meant To Be by Ken Hutcherson) Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright - Ken Hutcherson, 1998.

We've got High Church and Low Church. We've got fundamentalists, evangelicals, neoevangelicals, and mainliners. We've got charismatic and noncharismatic, traditional and contemporary. We've got Free Methodists and United Methodists. We've got multiple-choice Presbyterians, a rainbow variety of Lutherans, and more flavors of Baptists than Heinz has pickles.

p. 47

(The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart: And 1,501 Other Stories by Charles R. Swindoll) Nashville, TN: Word Publishing. Copyright - Word Publishing, Inc., 1998.

I WOULD LIKE TO BUY \$3.00 worth of God, please. Not enough to explode my soul or disturb my sleep, but just enough to equal a cup of warm milk or a snooze in the sunshine.

I don't want enough of Him to make me love a black man or pick beets with a migrant. I want ecstasy, not transformation; I want the warmth of the womb, not a new birth. I want a pound of the Eternal in a paper sack.

I would like to buy \$3.00 worth of God, please. No, no, not the flesh and blood one . . . He will keep me from my appointment with the hair dresser and make me late for the cocktail party. He will soil my linen and break my strand of matched pearls. I can't put up with pundits from Persia or sweaty shepherds trampling over my nylon carpet with their muddy feet. My name isn't Mary, you know!

I want no living, breathing Christ—but one I can keep in its crib with a rubber band. That plastic one will do just fine.

—Wilbur Rees, quoted in Charles R. Swindoll,
Improving Your Serve

pp. 479-80

(Final Roar by Bob Briner) Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman. Copyright – Martha Ann Briner, 2000.

RARELY, IF EVER, IN THE ANNALS OF HUMAN HISTORY HAVE so many with so much to give to their society actually given so little and done it so maladroitly as have American Christians over the past fifty years. Speaking as only one Christian, I feel the need to apologize. I feel the need to say, "I'm sorry." Perhaps others share this sentiment, but I certainly do not speak for anyone other than myself. I do not offer this book as any sort of group apology, and I do not believe in repentance *en masse*. We are individually responsible and individually rewarded.

p. 5

(Final Roar by Bob Briner) Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman. Copyright – Martha Ann Briner, 2000.

This is what Jesus was talking about in the Sermon on the Mount when he said that his followers were to be “the salt of the earth.” Of all the ways Christians have failed America, the failure to be a preservative in our society is, perhaps, our biggest and most telling failure. While not a pleasant thing to do, it is important for us to reflect on the consequences of our failure in this area. We see some of the consequences all around us in the broken lives of our fellow Americans and in the breakdown of many of our society’s most important institutions. What should be of even more concern to Christians is what Jesus said of those who failed to be obedient in this area. In effect he said that they are worthless to him and should be thrown out and “trampled under foot” (Matt. 5:13). It is obvious that most of us have failed to be obedient in this area and that our country has suffered as a result. I am very sorry about this. We are at grave risk of losing our saltiness, of no longer being a preserving ingredient in the world, and of being considered worthless to the Lord’s kingdom we claim to love and serve.

p. 8

Every soul belongs to God and exists by his pleasure. God being who and what he is, and we being who and what we are, the only thinkable relation between us in one of full lordship on his part and complete submission on ours. We owe him every honor that it is in our power to give him.

—A. W. Tozer (1897-1963)

God and man exist for each other and neither is satisfied without the other.

—A. W. Tozer (1897-1963)

Hollywood has not yet recognized what truly tingles the spine, buckles the knees, quakes the heart, and turns bones into jelly. To meet God is a terrifying adventure.

—Terry Lindvall

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

DESERVING, BUT WITHIN LIMITS

Linus and Lucy were talking.

Linus: “I’ve been thinking. Charlie Brown has really been a dedicated baseball manager. He’s devoted his whole life to the team. We should give him a testimonial dinner.”

Lucy: “Is he that deserving? How about a testimonial snack?”

—Reader’s Digest

(From *Parson’s Technology*)

Somebody told me about a BUMPER STICKER they saw the other day:

JESUS SAVE ME FROM YOUR PEOPLE!

(source unknown)

What a sad commentary on our society and our witness to the culture.

(Fresh Power: Experiencing the Vast Resources of the Spirit of God by Jim Cymbala with Dean Merrill) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright — Jim Cymbala, 2001.

I am finding out that in Christian conferences and meetings today, not everyone is open to the Word of God. Many have their own agendas and traditions, which they dearly cherish even though they contradict or deny Scripture. It seems their goal is not so much to grow in Christ as it is to maintain the status quo at all costs.

How dare anyone even hint that God desires to change some part of their lives or church ministries! They bristle at preaching that confronts them with God’s promise of power from on high, or the kind of church we find in the New Testament.

p. 177

(Renewed Day by Day: Daily Devotional Readings: Volume I by A. W. Tozer, compiled by Gerald B. Smith) Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications. Copyright – Christian Publications, 1980.

A new Decalogue has been adopted by the neo-Christians of our day, the first word of which reads, “Thou shalt not disagree”; and a new set of Beatitudes too, which begins “Blessed are they that tolerate everything, for they shall not be made accountable for anything.”
(September 24)

2 Corinthians 13:5

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!
Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?

v. 6 For of these are those who are worming their way into houses and captivating silly women having been overwhelmed by their sins, who are being led on by various desires.

Now we have a **STATEMENT** of the **REASON** why Paul gave Timothy the command at the end of verse 5:

“turn away from such men as these.”

The **REASON**:

“FOR OF THESE ARE THOSE WHO ARE WORMING.”

That is, they are the **CREEPERS**! They are following their master Satan’s modus operandi as he slithered into the garden in Genesis 3.

They are **DOMINATED BY DESIRES**. They are **LED BY LUST**.

“FOR OF THESE ARE THOSE WHO ARE WORMING THEIR WAY INTO HOUSES AND CAPTIVATING SILLY WOMEN.”

They are **SETTING TRAPS** just like Satan has set traps back in chapter 2.

The word **“SILLY”** here could be translated:

UNSTABLE or

NEEDY WOMEN.

They are women who had:

1. "BEEN OVERWHELMED BY THEIR SINS."

There has been a PILING UP OF SINS, a great many sins.

THEY ARE VERY GUILTY.

They have "BEEN OVERWHELMED BY THEIR SINS." The burden of their sin on their conscience has caused this.

They are not willing to face the QUESTION.

They are women who want the NEW LOOK. They are being led on by various desires for new things.

Jeremiah 8:11

They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious.
"Peace, peace," they say, when there is no peace.

A. T. Robertson says:

Ramsay suggests "society ladies." It is amazing how gullible some women are with religious charlatans who pose as exponents of "new thought."
p. 624

He says further:

Agomena (present passive participle) means "continually led astray or from time to time."
p. 624

King says:

You will see at once that they are (a) *Masters of cunning*—“which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women.” We must be careful about that (i) “Silly”—I think it does not imply lack of brains, but lack of stability. They are not the only ones to be afflicted with this disability; plenty of men are just as weak; but it happens to be women in this case. (ii) “Lead captive”—reminds us of that “taken captive” at the end of the previous chapter; only this time it is such a different word in the original—here it is, indeed, a taking prisoner, with all the loss of freedom and comfort which that involves. Their captives are captive indeed.

p. 92

Quinn & Wacker say:

These women are characterized with four participles, of which the first is . . . “loaded with sins.” The perfect passive participle here is . . . a verb otherwise documented in the NT only in Rom 12:20, which is in turn a citation of LXX Prov 25:22 . . . on heaping fiery coals on an enemy’s head.

p. 725

Towner says:

First, false teachers prey on people who are vulnerable. They tend to pick off the spiritual stragglers. The image Paul raises is one of sneaky infiltration: *they are the kind who worm their way into homes* (v. 6). In this case they had found success in certain homes (literally, “the” homes) or certain kinds of homes where vulnerable people lived.

p. 195

Milne says:

These phoney religious teachers propagate their destructive heresies by exploiting certain kinds of women, as the serpent deceived Eve (1 Tim. 2:14). This is because their notions of spiritual reality are so far-fetched that only those who are psychologically or emotionally disturbed will give them a hearing and a following. These women present an easy prey because they are already burdened with an unresolved sense of sin and guilt, and are quickly overcome by their uncontrolled passions.

p. 160

He continues:

By offering their services as spiritual guides and private mentors, these gurus gain access to the homes and hearts and wealth of such women. In the ancient world many women were isolated at home and relatively uneducated. This laid them open to the clever speeches of religious quacks who peddled a false gospel and played on their natural sensibilities and fears.

pp. 160-61

Larson says:

These false teachers would hold home Bible studies, perhaps, or lead discussion groups with the intent of gaining control over the household.

They found greatest success in the homes of **weak-willed women**. 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**.

This suggests that these women, perhaps the teachers as well, possessed a history of sin which remained unconfessed. Loaded down with a past they could not relinquish, or which they refused to conclude through confession, they became easy prey to faddish doctrines. Not only did their past remain unresolved; it left them susceptible to sins in the present. The weight of guilt reduces a person's ability to make proper decisions. It also leaves the conscience scarred so that temptations overcome the will more easily.

p. 303

Stott says:

The women chosen as victims Paul refers to by the word *gynaikaria*, 'little women', a term of contempt for women who were idle, silly and weak. Their weakness was double. First, they were morally weak, 'burdened with sins and swayed by various impulses'. Their sins were to them both a burden and a tyrant, and the false teachers, worming their way into their home, played upon their feelings of guilt and infirmity. Secondly, they were intellectually weak, unstable, credulous, gullible. They were the kind of women who would 'listen to anybody', while at the same time they could 'never arrive at a knowledge of the truth'. Constitutionally incapable of reaching any settled convictions, they were like little boats tossed hither and thither by a storm . . .

p. 89

Knight says:

Paul now turns to a subgroup of those he has just mentioned γὰρ indicates that this statement provides further explanation why Timothy must "avoid" such people. Present tense . . . speak[s] of what is happening as Paul writes (see Ellicott) and provide another indication that the preceding future tense verbs do not apply only to a distant future.

p. 433

He says further:

It is the immaturity and thus the weakness of these "childish women" that make them susceptible to the false teachers. Paul does not use the term to derogate women but to describe a situation involving particular women. That he uses a diminutive form shows that he is not intending to describe women in general.

The reason that these women are characterized as childish and weak is given in two qualifying participial clauses.

pp. 433-4

Knight then says:

Not only are they overwhelmed by past sins, they are being continually led in the present . . . by a multitude of desires . . .
p. 434

He then says finally:

That their consciences are burdened by past sins and their lives controlled by such desires puts them in a weakened condition and makes them vulnerable to false teachers who “capture” them as followers.
p. 434

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown comment on:

laden with sins—(Isa. 1:4)—applying to the “silly women” whose consciences are burdened with sins, and so are a ready prey to the false teachers who promise ease of conscience if they will follow them.
p. 1379

Hendriksen says:

These women are probably *afraid* of the consequences of their sins, but are not necessarily *ashamed* of them.

Secondly, they are “swayed by various *impulses*” (or “*desires*,” . . . What these evil incentives are is not stated. Perhaps we may think of such things as the following: the desire to find an easy way out of their guilt-complex, the desire to gain recognition, to be considered “well-informed,” to satisfy their curiosity, to have attention bestowed upon them by “prominent” representatives of the opposite sex, etc.
p. 287

Liefeld says:

Those described in verse 6 are women, specifically described as *gynaikaria*—a diminutive, demeaning form of the word for woman. Since “little” may fail to convey the disparaging pathos of the word, translators have tended to expand its connotation with words such as “weak-willed” (NIV), “silly” (NRSV), “gullible” (NKJV), and “vulnerable” (NLT).
p. 271

He continues:

Paul’s main point in verses 6-7 is not to malign women but to show the treachery of the false teachers. One of the ways in which these people carried on their skullduggery is underhandedly to “worm their way into homes” and victimize women. What these men do when they get into the homes is to “gain control over” the kind of women who will respond to them. This verb means literally “to take captive,” but is, of course, not used in a literal sense here. If the word “captivate” (NRSV) were a little stronger—it usually conveys the idea of charming someone—it would be a clever choice.
p. 272

Lea & Griffin say:

In vv. 6-7 Paul describes the victims affected by the sinister activities of the false teachers. Their insidious methods were most effective among gullible women whose instability tilted them to seek new and exciting experiences. By comparing these hucksters with the Egyptian magicians of v. 8, Paul intimated that they were religious humbugs with an assured limitation to their successes (vv. 8-9).
p. 227

Lea & Griffin continue:

Before Paul described the victims of the false teachers, he used two verbs in v. 6 to portray their victimizers as deceitful and ruthless in their desire for control. The verb translated “worm their way” (“some of that ilk sneak into,” Berkeley) is a pejorative term that pictures the actions of the delivers as sinister and treacherous. They had entered homes under false pretenses. Once admitted, they proceeded to “gain control” (“get . . . into their clutches,” NEB). In this context the terms suggest that the false teachers had gained a complete psychological dominance over their victims. p. 227

They say finally:

The verb *sōreuō* means *to heap up* and is metaphorically used to express a cumulation of sins which has become so unbearable that any solution offered is clutched at.

Third, they were “swayed by all kinds of evil desires.” This may refer to some sexual involvement between the false teachers and the women. It *certainly does* describe them as dominated by curiosity, novelty, and self-centeredness. p. 228

Hawthorne & Martin say:

Because the women were still not well trained in the Scriptures (see above), they were most susceptible to the false teachers and could provide a network through which the false teachers could disrupt other homes . . . p. 591

Guthrie says:

Both Moffatt and Eston render the verb *endunō* (*creep*) as ‘worm their way’, implying insidious methods. The verb is used only here in this sense. Evidently the false teachers, having sought out women of the weaker sort, exerted such powerful influence upon them that the women lost their own freedom of thought, and could be described as taken *captive* (the same word as is used of prisoners of war).
p. 158

He then says:

These women were *laden with sins* in the sense of being overwhelmed in their consciences. The verb *sōreuō* literally means ‘to heap up’ and is metaphorically used to express a cumulation of sins which has become so unbearable that any solution offered is clutched at. The last phrase in verse 6 is well translated ‘swayed by various impulses’ (RSV).
pp. 158-9

Hughes says:

The first paragraph profiled the lives of false teachers, and this paragraph describes their “ministries.” Paul continues derisively, “They are the kind who worm their way into homes” (v. 6a).
p. 225

He continues:

These homes were apparently well-known because the original Greek says “*the* homes.” They were probably the spacious homes of the wealthy, where house churches often met. The verb literally suggests “creeping in” under false pretenses. The idea is stealth. They were religious sneaks.
p. 225

Lange says:

The more dangerous it is for women in the world, so much the more must they keep watch over themselves, and implore God for assistance amid temptations . . .

p. 106

Fee says:

They are further described as **loaded down with sins** (which could mean that they are currently full of sin, but more likely means “burdened with a sinful past,” NEB) and **swayed by all kinds of evil desires**.

p. 272

Wilson says:

As Satan’s strategy was first to deceive Eve, so heretical teachers have often chosen to spread their falsehoods by the same method. Impressionable women, oppressed by feelings of guilt, are eager to try any quack remedy which does not require them to abandon their sins. Hence their morbid curiosity in religious novelties prevents them from coming to a realization of the truth.

p. 152

I am reminded of a quotation from my book, The Mid-Life Crisis:

Another song performed by Denver also captures the feeling of an individual in the midst of crisis, an individual, who like the actor Aliterus, has lost his script and lost his way. The following words are the lyrics from “Some Days Are Diamonds (Some Days Are Stone).” They’re classic:

Now the face that I see in my mirror
 More and more is a stranger to me
 More and more I can see there’s a danger
 In becoming what I never thought I’d be.
 Some days are diamonds,
 Some days are stone,
 Sometimes the hard times won’t leave me alone.
 Sometimes the cold winds blow a chill in my bones,
 Some days are diamonds,
 Some days are stone.

(Words and music by Dick Feller. Copyright @ 1975 by Tree Publishing Company, Inc. International copyright secured. Used by permission. All rights reserved.)
 p. 19

1 Corinthians 9:27

but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

v. 7 Always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Since they are endeavoring to find the answers to life apart from Jesus Christ, they are on a **FUTILE JOURNEY**. Always learning and never coming to a knowledge of the truth because Jesus Christ has said Himself:

“I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

Fee says:

Thus the false teachers and these women feed on one another. The women are given “religious training”—of the worst kind, destined to feed their curiosity but not bring them to the freedom of the gospel—and they in turn undoubtedly pay the false teachers handsomely (1 Tim. 6:3-10).
p. 272

Guthrie says:

Their main quest is for sensational rather than serious information, and consequently they fall an easy prey to pseudo-Christian teachers.
p. 159

Lea & Griffin say:

. . . they were “always learning” (“forever getting information,” Berkeley). Hiebert notes: “In their restless quest for the new and novel they turn to every new doctrine that comes to their attention.” They had an insatiable curiosity about religion but little discernment to distinguish truth from error.

Fifth, they were “never able to acknowledge the truth.” They traveled more and more along the path of religious bondage without coming to experience the truth that could set them free . . .

p. 228

Lea & Griffin then say:

All five of these phrases in vv. 6-7 referred to the women in Ephesus who were being led astray by the false teachers. These women were morally weak, emotionally unstable, and forever dabbling with religious novelties.
p. 228

Liefeld says:

The point is that they are susceptible to further encounters of this nature and, ironically, cannot even gain the awareness of truth that Timothy's opponents might have through repentance.
p. 272

Hendriksen says:

Eager disciples are they, "taking it all in," as with rapt attention they sit down to listen to their licentious teachers and to admire them. But their unwillingness openly to confess and to resist the evil promptings of their nature results in their being "*never able* to arrive at the acknowledgment of (the) truth" as revealed in the gospel . . .
p. 287

Knight says:

The terrible consequence of the false teaching is that these women, who are so burdened, never really learn the truth that can make them free.
p. 434

Larson says:

These women were mirror images of the false teachers they followed. They masked the disarray of their inner spirit through religious practices, especially Scripture studies.
p. 303

Milne says:

They are lacking in any real seriousness in their religious questions, being incapable of committing themselves to God's truth. They are only committed to novelty, without a genuine desire to change their lives by repenting of their sins.

p. 161

A. T. Robertson

Pathetic picture of these hypnotized women without intellectual power to cut through the fog of words and, though always learning scraps of things, they never come into the full knowledge . . . of the truth in Christ. And yet they even pride themselves on belonging to the intelligentsia!

p. 624

Wiersbe says:

They are *burdened with guilt* and looking for some escape from bondage and fear. They find themselves unable to control their various desires . . . The emphasis here may be on sexual problems. Finally, they are always searching for truth, trying this approach and that; yet they are never able to be satisfied. This kind of person is fair bait for the cultists and the religious racketeers.

p. 145

Lock says:

A change of heart might still enable them to know: they would then regain the power which true piety gives . . .

p. 107

Matthew Henry says:

A foolish head and a filthy heart make persons an easy prey to seducers. He shows how far they were from coming to the knowledge of the truth, though they pretended to be *ever learning*, v. 7.

p. 1897

A Tantalizing Search for Truth

**Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge
of the truth.**

2 Timothy 3:7

Unless a person receives Christ as Savior and is willing to accept the authority of the Bible, he can never come to a knowledge of the truth (see 1 Cor. 1:18-21). Divine revelation is the one key that unlocks the secret of reality. With only his sin-darkened reason, man cannot find the living God. He may spend a whole lifetime in quest of learning, but it will end in despair unless he gives his heart to Jesus.

In Greek mythology, King Tantalus was punished in the underworld by being chained in a lake. Its waters reached to his chin but receded whenever he bent down to satisfy his burning thirst. Over his head were branches laden with choice fruit, but they immediately withdrew whenever he reached upward to satisfy his hunger. A symbol of utter frustration, his name is immortalized in the English word “tantalize.” So, too, seeking to know God apart from Christ is utterly futile.

If you are among the group of “tantalized sinners,” tired of chasing the will-o’-the wisp of human reason in pursuit of knowledge, give up your fruitless endeavors. Come to Jesus! **He is truth personified**, and His Word alone has the answers to your otherwise insolvable problems. Without Christ and the Bible you’ll never find satisfaction, for “the fear of the Lord is **the beginning of wisdom**” (Prov. 9:10). Unless you surrender to Him, your life will remain a tantalizing search for truth—a blind groping that will finally lead you over the precipice of time into the abyss of eternal despair. —H.G.B.

I sought for truth through many books, but it eluded me;
I sought in things which men had wrought and found a mystery.
At last one day I found a Book, and in that Book the key:
“The Way am I, the Light am I. Ye seek? Come unto Me!”

—Larson

**THOT: Man can’t find the TRUTH, not because it is lost, but because
he is.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Saturday, November 8, year unknown)

IS THAT ANYTHING LIKE CHANGING A TIRE?

"I've changed my mind!" he snapped.
"Fine! Does it work any better now?"

Every calling is great when greatly pursued.

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

The average human being in any line of work could double his productive capacity overnight if he began right now to do all the things he knows he should do, and to stop doing all the things he knows he should not do.

—Elmer G. Leterman

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

(Are Christians Destroying America? How to Restore a Decaying Culture by Tony Evans) Chicago, IL: Moody Press. Copyright – Anthony T. Evans, 1996.

In case I haven't made it clear yet, let me say it right here: The future of American culture is squarely in the hands of Christians. Our problem is not so much the presence of unrighteousness as it is the loss of God's glory. Unrighteousness and evil have dominated our culture because God's glory has departed, and that departure is primarily the result of the removal of Christ's lampstand from the church (Revelation 2:5).

Make no mistake about it. America's future is not in the hands of the politicians or the social scientists. Most don't know what to do. They are "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 3:7).

The reason the future of our culture is in the hands of Christians is that the cause of our cultural demise is spiritual. And if a problem is spiritual, its cure must be spiritual.

p. 123

(The Perfect Christian: How Sinners Like Us Can Be More Like Jesus by Tony Evans) Nashville, TN: Word. Copyright – Tony Evans, 1998.

The double-minded person is the split-personality Christian, the one who can't make up his mind. He is like the bumper sticker that says, "I'm not indecisive, am I?"

p. 12

v. 8 Now in the same manner as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also are these opposing the truth, Men depraved in mind, disqualified concerning the faith.

The apostle now turns to an **ILLUSTRATION** to describe what he means by the **ACTIVITY OF THESE FALSE TEACHERS**.

Acts 19:19

And many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and began burning them in the sight of all; and they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

Micah 7:3

Both hands are skilled in doing evil; the ruler demands gifts, the judge accepts bribes, the powerful dictate what they desire—they all conspire together.

“JANNES AND JAMBRES” were the magicians who **“OPPOSED MOSES”** when he went on his mission that the Lord had sent him on to bring the children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt.

You will remember that the unnamed **MAGICIANS WERE ABLE TO DUPLICATE** the:

making of the **SNAKES** (but Moses' snake swallowed theirs up),

WATER TURNING TO BLOOD, and

PLAGUE OF THE FROGS.

Things, however, changed. At plague number three out of the ten plagues, they were unable to do so. When the **GNATS** were plaguing them, their statement was:

“This is the finger of God!”

They were not able to duplicate the:

GNATS,

FLIES,

LIVESTOCK,

BOILS (because they couldn't stand),

HAIL STORM,

LOCUSTS, or

DARKNESS.

Most of all, they were affected, I'm sure, by the tenth plague:

THE DEATH OF THE FIRST-BORN.

What Paul means here is that they might start out like a house of fire and duplicate some of these things initially. Eventually it is all going to fall apart for them and their folly will become quite evident to all.

There are THREE THINGS said about "JANNES AND JAMBRES":

1. "OPPOSING THE TRUTH,"
2. "DEPRAVED IN MIND," and
3. "DISQUALIFIED CONCERNING THE FAITH."

You could say of them, they were:

REBELLIOUS,

ROTTEN, and

RUINED.

Wiersbe says:

These men opposed Moses *by imitating what he did*. When Aaron's rod turned into a serpent, the magicians cast down their rods and they turned into serpents. Moses turned the water into blood, and the magicians followed with the same miracle. When Moses brought up all the frogs, the magicians duplicated the miracle. But when it came to the miracle of the lice, the magicians could not imitate it (Ex. 8:16-19).

Satan is an imitator; what God does, Satan counterfeits. The religious leaders in the last days will have a counterfeit faith, and their purpose is to promote a lie and resist the truth of God's Word. They deny the authority of the Bible and substitute human wisdom and philosophy.
pp. 145-6

Milne says:

Like the leaders Timothy has to deal with, Jannes and Jambres actively and openly opposed the truth preached by Moses, the servant of God (Exod. 7:11). By their determined opposition they show themselves to be corrupt in mind about the truth and disqualified from believing it. Such is the wasting effect of error when it is received and loved in place of the truth, it finally prevents a person from ever believing the truth and finding salvation.
p. 161

Larson says:

A good workman is approved by God through adherence to correct doctrine and the evidences of a holy life (2 Tim. 2:15, 21). Conversely, these false teachers were unacceptable because they opposed the apostolic teachings, and their lives reflected a progressive degeneration.
p. 303

Liefeld says:

What they had in common with the false teachers at Ephesus was that they also stood against the truth, had "depraved minds," and were rejected "as far as the faith is concerned" . . .
p. 272

Lange says:

“The battle of wickedness against the truth is from the beginning; the whole world-history is a struggle between the kingdoms of light and of darkness. Jannes and Jambres are a type of all seducers and deceivers, as Moses is a type of all faithful witnesses of the truth.
p. 105

Wiersbe says:***Watch for Counterfeits!***

Jannes and Jambres (v. 8) were magicians in Pharaoh's court who imitated the miracles that Moses performed . . . Satan is an imitator who produces counterfeit Christians . . . who infiltrate the church and create divisions. God's people need discernment in these difficult days.
p. 804

Hawthorne & Martin say:

Those teachers who “hold the form of religion but deny its power” are not to be accepted as true Christians but are “disqualified . . . with regard to the faith” (2 Tim 3:5, 8). Likewise, failure to respond to admonition betrays one's true perverted and sinful self (Tit 3:10-11).
p. 44

They say further:

The most frequent contexts in which “Moses” appears are illustrative ones. Timothy is warned that in the last days there will be those who oppose the truth “just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses” (2 Tim. 3:1-9).
p. 620

Hawthorne & Martin say finally:

The truth of the gospel is real, but in the conditions of this world it is always possible for people to decline to receive it.
p. 954

Quinn & Wacker translate the phrase:

these numbskulled counterfeiters of the faith are defying the truth.
p. 711

J. Vernon McGee says:

The account in Exodus reveals that Satan has power, supernatural power, and also that he is a great little imitator—he imitates the things that God does. Jannes and Jambres were able to perform miracles by the power of Satan. Moses did them by the power of God. This is, I believe, the reason reference is made to them here. We need to understand in our day that Satan can imitate the power of God. John warns us in 1 John 4:1, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” Satan can imitate the power of God. In our day I’m afraid that in many places a manifestation of power is misunderstood as coming from God when it really comes from Satan.
p. 471

Patrick & Lowth say:

So they are styled in scripture, who, through their resistance of, and contentions against, the truth, are unworthy to have the faith made known to them, or indisposed to receive it. Thus the heathens, who, “when they knew God, did not glorify him as God, neither were thankful” (Rom. i. [1] 22, 25), are therefore delivered up . . . “to a reprobate mind:” and they here who resist the truth, being “men of corrupt mind,” are therefore “reprobate concerning the faith” . . .
p. 864

Belief

Ten men love what I hate,
Shun what I follow, slight what I receive;
Ten, who in ears and eyes
Match me: we all surmise,
They this thing, and I that: whom shall my soul believe?

Robert Browning (1812-1889), British poet.
Dramatis Personae “Rabbi Ben Ezra” (1864).

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(Grace for the Moment: Inspirational Thoughts for Each Day of the Year by Max Lucado) Nashville, TN: J. Countryman / Thomas Nelson.
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The crowd challenges, “Follow us and fit in.”
Jesus promises, “Follow me and stand out.”

A Gentle Thunder

p. 351

Choice

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Robert Frost (1874-1963), U. S. poet.
Mountain Interval “The Road Not Taken” (1916).

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Choice

Of two evils, the lesser is always to be chosen.

Thomas à Kempis (1379?-1471), German monk and writer.
The Imitation of Christ (1415-1424?).

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v. 9 But they will not make further progress, for their folly shall become quite evident to all, as also that of those two came to be.

The word **"BUT"** forms the **CONTRAST**:

"THEY WILL NOT MAKE FURTHER PROGRESS."

They will get stopped in their tracks and the **REASON** is stated with the word **"FOR"**:

**"THEIR FOLLY SHALL BECOME QUITE EVIDENT TO ALL,
AS ALSO THAT OF THOSE TWO CAME TO BE."**

Plague after plague took place and they were unable to duplicate them in any way.

The snakes, the blood, and the frogs were about it! After that, the other eight plagues put them on the sideline.

Barclay says:

The Christian leader will never lack his opponents. There will always be those who prefer their ideas to God's ideas. There will always be those who wish to exercise power and influence over people and who will stoop to any means to do so. There will always be those who have their own twisted ideas of the Christian faith, and who wish to win others to their mistaken beliefs. But of one thing Paul was sure—the days of the deceivers were numbered. Their falsity would be demonstrated; and they would receive their own appropriate place and reward.

p. 223

Barclay says finally:

The defeat of error depends, not on skill in controversy, but in the demonstration in life of the more excellent way.
p. 224

Wilson says:

But Timothy need not fear that these men will be any more successful than Jannes and Jambres were in opposing the truth. For despite the threat posed by the heretics, their progress is more apparent than real, and the hollowness of their pretensions will soon be revealed. 'Truth *must* prevail in the end, and imposture cannot permanently deceive' (Bernard).
p. 153

Larson says:

Just as Pharaoh's court enchanters succeeded against Moses only to a point, so the false teachers would flourish for a limited time. Eventually, however, the false cannot match the truth.
p. 303

He says finally:

When people peddling bogus philosophies or theologies encounter the truth of God and his power, **their folly will be clear to everyone.** Lies and deceptions must crumble, dissolving to dust. Among the ruins of these elaborate but false beliefs are the men who devised them, exposed in their foolishness.
p. 304

(Seize the Day with Dietrich Bonhoeffer by Charles Ringma) Colorado Springs, CO: Piñon Press. Copyright – Charles Ringma, 2000.

When Everything Has Been Done

2 Timothy 3:1-5

“I think we ought to do all in our power to alter these facts while there is still time and then, when all our efforts have proved fruitless, it becomes easier to endure them.”

—LETTERS AND PAPERS FROM PRISON

We want to see changes take place in our world, particularly changes to situations which perpetuate evil and injustice. Sadly, we are often slow to act because we avoid seeing things for what they really are. Thus we wait until evil becomes more magnified before we respond. And then we often claim that it is too late to do anything. But it is never too late to act. Better to act and not be successful than never to have responded at all.

Meditation

*Faithfulness can never be measured
in terms of success, but only in
terms of commitment.*

(March 18)

CONCLUSION:

What lessons did you learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Be constantly keeping this in mind, “that in the last days [cruel and] hard times will set in” (verse 1).

LESSON #2: The “last days” refers to any time from the resurrection of Jesus Christ to His coming again to take us to be with Himself.

LESSON #3: There are nineteen characteristics of those who chose to live life in Satan’s traps (see verses 2-5).

LESSON #4: Love of self and love of “money” are the roots of many of these other ugly characteristics of those who are living a false profession (verse 2).

LESSON #5: They are “lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God” (verse 4).

LESSON #6: They have an “outward form of godliness, although they have denied its power” (verse 5).

LESSON #7: Paul commands Timothy to “turn away from such men as these” (verse 5).

LESSON #8: They are “always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (verse 7).

LESSON #9: Are you on track spiritually?

LESSON #10: Are you growing and changing?

LESSON #11: Are you experiencing His power?

LESSON #12: Do you have a hunger for the Word?

King says:

Well, this has been a depressing Study; but it is necessary for us to be thus fore-warned, and fore-armed. All this wrong behaviour, and opinion, and affection are to be expected in the perilous atmosphere of “the last days”—

all this hollow religiousness—all this subtle and energetic counterfeit. And if we see these things abounding our day, it may be we are nearer the End-Time than we thought; the Master may, in very truth, be on His way. In any case, we will keep a look-out. But is the hope of His advent only dark and dismal? A thousand times, No! It is characterised by Titus ii. [2] 13 as “that happy hope”.

p. 94

Lea & Griffin say:

Two principles emerge from Paul’s description of the false teachers in this passage. First, it is obvious that character determines behavior. What we are is seen in what we do. Even though we can adjust our behavior temporarily to correspond to what is socially acceptable or in our self-interest, we will eventually show our character by what we do. This fact leaves us with the challenge of allowing God to mold and alter our character.

A second principle is that the love of self (just as the love of money) produces all kinds of evil. Self-love is the basic shortcoming mentioned in the list of vices in 3:2-5. This vice leads to action in vv. 6-9 that is deceitful, determined to dominate, stubborn, and rejected by God. The best term to describe self-centered action is Paul’s term “folly” (v. 9). Only God, who enables us to love him, can keep our lives from being filled with folly.
pp. 229-30

PLACE IN THE WORLD

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Sent into the world | John 17:18; 20:21 |
| • Preaching to the world | Mark 16:15 |
| • The light of the world | Phil. 2:15; Matt. 5:14 |
| • Live godly in the world | Titus 2:12 |
| • Not conformed to the world | Rom. 12:2; John 17:15 |
| • Love not the world | 1 John 2:16; 2 Tim. 4:10 |
| • Passing through the world | 1 Peter 2:11 |
| • No friendship with the world | James 1:27; 4:4 |
| • As a saint, in subjection to it | Rom. 13:1 |
| • As a servant, in service toward it | John 20:21 |

From the Book of 750 Bible and Gospel Studies, 1909,
George W. Noble, Chicago

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

(Seeing Through: Reflecting God's Light in a Dark World by David Roper)
Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright - David Roper, 1995.

You may remember the satirical television program of some years ago, *That Was the Week That Was*, otherwise known as *TW3*. David Frost, who was one of the producers of the program, was seated behind a desk. Behind him were two doors: one labeled "Hell"; the other "Heaven." A series of men and women approached the desk with only one question: "Which way do I go?"

In each case Frost answered, "You know."

Without a word, each one shuffled off to hell.

The Spirit of God has written the truth indelibly on everyone's soul. Our witness corroborates his witness. When we proclaim God's truth, people *know*.

We must be bold in our proclamation, but we must never bully people. "He who wins by force hath won but half his foe," Emerson said.

Paul wrote we must, "fight the *good* fight." It is notable that Paul used the adjective "good" here. The word means "pleasant" or "beautiful." Though we must "content for the faith," as James said, we must not be contentious—quarrelsome, argumentative, unpleasant, and in people's faces.

p. 67

(Resist the Powers by Jacques Ellul) Colorado Springs, CO: Piñon Press.
Copyright – Charles Ringma, 2000.

Promise and Fulfillment

In this life, there is no endpoint to the spiritual journey. Having made progress, we may have to relearn the old and familiar paths. At other times, we are called to journey onward.

God is much more than the God of the past who showed His faithfulness to our ancestors. He is also the God of the present who journeys with us in our joy and pain. But, equally importantly, He is the God of the future who calls us into His future plans and purposes. The movement of the Christian life, therefore, involves an appreciation of the past, a thankfulness for the present, and an anticipation of the future. It is the latter dimension in particular that fills us with hope.

Ellul notes that the Christian life moves “from promise to fulfilment and that the fulfilment contains new promise leading to fulfilment.”

Fulfillment is, therefore, not a terminal point. It is the seedbed for the further journey. Christians consequently cannot rest on their laurels. They are called forward in a walk of discipleship and obedience.

Action

*Work on particular projects and programs,
but bear in mind that their completion is
simply the beginning of something else.*

(May 23)

(Seize the Day with Dietrich Bonhoeffer by Charles Ringma) Colorado Springs, CO: Piñon Press. Copyright – Charles Ringma, 2000.

“It will always be true that the wisest course for the disciple is always to abide solely by the word of God in all simplicity.”

—THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

(May 30)

(Final Roar by Bob Briner) Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman. Copyright – Martha Ann Briner, 2000.

One of the paradoxes of which Christians will have to answer is that the things about which we complain the loudest are the things about which we do the least to change. It is always much easier to complain than it is to do the real work of effecting change or of offering alternatives to troubling things.

p. 62

May God bless them and others like them, and may he show us that the silent servant or the invisible servant is perhaps the very best political model for Christians to imitate.

p. 87

(Renewed Day by Day: Daily Devotional Readings: Volume I by A. W. Tozer, compiled by Gerald B. Smith) Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications. Copyright – Christian Publications, 1980.

. . . Daniel Webster who confessed: “The most solemn thought that has ever entered my mind is my accountability to my Maker!”
(August 9)

(A Bend in the Road: Experiencing God When Your World Caves In by David Jeremiah) Nashville, TN: Word. Copyright – Word Publishing, 2000.

So much depends on me, yet all I have for this task is whatever health and energy You give me. . . . I eat carefully, rest, exercise, and think positive thoughts, and still this wretched lump of clay fails me. You have Creator's rights on my body. You formed every miraculous part. What You take away is Your business. I will do what I can with whatever capability You give me. It's Yours. . . .

The days end as the years end, with never enough time for all the good that could be done, only just enough for Your priorities, if I get them right. You created time, and it does not limit You. But I do not have a thousand years today, God. I have only now.

So this day is Yours; I am Yours; these people are Yours; the resources are Yours. The challenges we face are Yours, as is anything we hope to accomplish.

It's Yours, God. It's not mine.

—Richard Kriegbaum, Leadership Prayers

p. 252

(Great Souls at Prayer: Fourteen Centuries of Prayer, Praise and Aspiration by Mary W. Tileston) New Canaan, CT: Keats Publishing, Inc. Copyright – unknown, 1983.

I Worship Thee, O my God, with all my best love and awe, with my fervent affection, with my most subdued, most resolved will. O make my heart beat with Thy heart. Purify it of all that is earthly, all that is proud and sensual, all that is hard and cruel, of all perversity, of all disorder, of all deadness. So fill it with Thee, that neither the events of the day nor the circumstances of the time may have power to ruffle it; but that in Thy love and Thy fear it may have peace—Amen.

John Henry Newman.

p. 165

JOHN WAYNE

Most of you know John Wayne as an actor. You may not know what happened to him before he died. This is that story!

Robert Schuller's teenage daughter, Cindy, was in a motorcycle accident and had to have her leg amputated. John Wayne is a big fan of Robert Schuller.

He heard Dr. Schuller say on one of his programs that his daughter had been in an accident and had to have her leg amputated. John Wayne wrote a note to her saying:

Dear Cindy, sorry to hear about your accident. Hope you will be all right. Signed, John Wayne.

The note was delivered to her and she decided she wanted to write John Wayne a note in reply. She wrote:

Dear Mr. Wayne, I got your note. Thanks for writing to me. I like you very much. I am going to be all right because Jesus is going to help me. Mr. Wayne, do you know Jesus? I sure hope you know Jesus, Mr. Wayne, because I cannot imagine Heaven being complete without John Wayne being there. I hope, if you don't know Jesus, that you will give your heart to Jesus right now. See you in Heaven. And she signed her name.

She had just put that letter in an envelope, sealed it, and written across the front of it "John Wayne" when a visitor came into her room to see her.

He said to her: What are you doing? She said: I just wrote a letter to John Wayne, but I don't know how to get it to him. He said: That's funny, I am going to have dinner with John Wayne tonight at the Newport Club down at Newport Beach. Give it to me and I will give it to him. She gave him the letter and he put it in his coat pocket.

There were twelve of them that night sitting around the table for dinner.

They were laughing and cutting up and the guy happened to reach in his pocket and felt that letter and remembered. John Wayne was seated at the end of the table and the guy took the letter out and said: Hey, Duke, I was in Schuller's daughter's room today and she wrote you a letter and wanted me to give it to you. Here it is. They passed it down to John Wayne and he opened it. They kept laughing and cutting up and someone happened to look down at John Wayne. He was crying. One of them said: Hey, Duke, what is the matter? He said (and can't you hear him saying it), "I want to read you

this letter.” He read the letter. Then he began to weep. He folded it, put it in his pocket, and he pointed to the man who delivered it to him and said:

“You go tell that little girl that right now, in this restaurant, right here, John Wayne gives his hear to Jesus Christ and I will see her in heaven.”

Three weeks later, John Wayne died.

You never know how your witness to another will effect their eternity!

“To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven.” Ecclesiastes 3

(Received via e-mail from CRoxburgh, April 13, 2001)

The **CHOICE IS REALLY OURS** and is found in Genesis:

Genesis 6:5, 6

The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.

Genesis 6:9

This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.

WHICH WILL IT BE?

FOLLOW THE CULTURE?

OR

BE ONE OF THOSE WHO FORMS A COUNTER-CULTURE?

Following those who have

“an outward form of godliness, although they have denied its power”?

OR

“Turn away” and find our reality through a Redeemer and a relationship by faith with the Lord Jesus Christ?

The choice is really ours.

Can you take Step #8 to a Fantastic Finish and become a Counter Culture that is saying:

“Lord, Where You Lead Me I Will Follow.”