

2 Timothy

I. Introduction

A. **2 Timothy 3:1-5** . . . But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. [2] For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, [3] unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, [4] treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, [5] holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

B. Prayer

II. The moral degeneration of society in the last days multiplies life's woes

A. [1] But realize this, that in the last days (*the time preceding the return of Christ*) difficult times (*times that will be hard to endure and just as hard to figure out what to do to endure them*) will come.

1. Jesus gave a description of the end times to His disciples. **Matthew 24:3-13**, "As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?' [4] Jesus answered and said to them, 'See to it that no one misleads you. [5] For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. [6] You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. [7] For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. [8] But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. [9] Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. [10] At that time many (*in the Christian faith*) will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. [11] Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. [12] Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. [13] But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.'"

2. In **1 Timothy 4:1** we read: "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons."

3. And in **Jude 17-19** we read: “But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, [18] that they were saying to you, ‘In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts. [19] These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.’”
4. Notice that in all three portions of scripture, the ones who are misled, the ones who fall away, and the mockers following their own ungodly lusts, are in the church.
 - a. Undoubtedly, we will see unbelievers displaying the attitudes and behaviors described in **2 Timothy 3:1-5**, but these three portions of scripture are written to those inside the church.
 - b. And the reason they are written to us is so that we remain on the narrow path to the end of our lives – whether we are still alive at Christ’s return or die long before.
5. The writer of Hebrews said it this way:
 - a. **Hebrews 3:6**, “Christ was faithful as a Son over His house – whose house we are, **IF** we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.”
 - b. **Hebrews 3:12-14**, “Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. [13] But (*as a group*) encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called ‘Today,’ so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. [14] For we have become partakers of Christ, **IF** we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end.”
 - c. **Hebrews 10:23-25**, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; [24] and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, [25] not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”
6. The point of all this is, difficult times are coming – and maybe they have already begun. Yet just because you are a Christians, it does not mean you are or will be immune to the sinful, worldly, self-serving, fear-based, and misleading influences that will thrive in the world – and apparently in the church – during the last days.
 - a. We have only to look back fifty years to see how much the ways, the attitudes, and the values of the world have found their way

into the church and into the lives of individual believers. And the last ten years have provided undeniable examples of this.

- b. Therefore, the wise among us will prepare themselves, now, to remain faithful to the end, and to help other believers remain faithful, so that as few as possible within the church fall away from the faith.
- B. [2] For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,
1. **Lovers of self** – These three words are not referring to a healthy and proper love of self – that is, to the kind that brushes your teeth or eats healthy food or tries to get enough sleep each day.
 - a. These three words are referring to a love of self that places your interests above the interests and good of others – a love that makes your love for God and those near and dear secondary to your love of self, and makes the way they treat you more important than how you treat them.
 - b. It is a love that is expressed in ways that are commonly seen as selfish, and in its more extreme forms, narcissistic.
 - c. It is my opinion that this kind of self-love, mingled with pride, feeds distrust of God, and makes the self-serving ways of the world, our flesh, and the devil so appealing.
 - d. The point in **vs 2** is that this sick kind of love will become so wide-spread that its destructive consequences will make life much more difficult than it is.
 2. **Lovers of money** – Money, in one form or another, has always been sought after. The reason being, money provides the means to obtain desired possessions, pleasures, protection, provisions (*such as food, shelter, and clothing*), luxuries, health care, and reassuring forms of security.
 - a. It is for these reasons that many treat money as if it were a god who has the power to make their lives better.
 - b. So consider, if the world economy continues to grow so that more people have access to more money, than it is reasonable to conclude that the vast majority of people will love money because of what it is able to do for them.
 - c. However, money is a false god that will not only fail you, it will feed selfish choices and behavior, and in so doing, make your life and the lives of those around you worse – which is why the increase in lovers of money will make life difficult for us all of us.

3. **Boastful** – To be boastful is to claim to be more than you are or can be, and claim to do more than you have done or can do.
 - a. The boastful person is conceited. He is convinced he is better than he is, which drives him to expect more praise, power, positions, and opportunities than he deserves.
 - b. When his expectations are not fulfilled, he feels cheated and responds like a victim – often with anger or a “poor-me” attitude.
 - c. The reality is, the boastful person makes life more difficult for those around him, and when the number of boasters reaches a certain level in society, they will make life more difficult for all of us.
4. **Arrogant** – the arrogant person sees himself as superior while seeing others as inferior. He expects those he deems inferior to treat him with the deference due a superior, while he ignores them until he wants something from them, or treats them with contempt. Imagine a family or community or nation with a high percentage of arrogant people. It would not only make life difficult, it would make life painful for all who are considered inferior. This is what the last days will be like. It seems to me we are well on our way.
5. **Revilers** – a reviler is someone who verbally attacks and degrades another person or a group (*particular church, theology, or political stance*) or a system (*religious denomination or political system*) with crude, derogatory, contemptuous, or vile language.
 - a. To the reviler, demeaning and shaming his opponent is more important than truth – which is why a reviler will attribute evil motives or allege disgraceful behavior without any proof.
 - b. We have only to look at the current behavior of politicians, and politically biased talk shows, podcasts, news shows, and journalism to see that reviling goes hand-in-hand with arrogance, exaggeration, name-calling, hostility, and the failure to think and speak in an honest, fair manner.
 - c. Sadly, this kind of behavior is found more and more among Christians – who ought to have the mind of Christ and be speaking the truth in love.
 - d. If our attitudes, words, and behaviors follow the world in this regard, who will be left to model intelligent, honest thinking, and honest and respectful debate and discussions over issues that separate and divide us?
 - e. The point of this is that the increase in reviling will increase the difficulties of life – both in the church and in the world.

6. **Disobedient to parents** – This is not speaking of an adolescent or younger teen, for it is expected that they will disobey – which is why God gave children parents to raise and train them.
 - a. Proverbs speaks to the responsibility of parents in **Proverbs 29:15**, “The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.”
 - b. The reality is, the breakdown of a proper respect for and submission to authority begins in the home, and if it is not learned there, the grownup child won’t be eager to learn it out in the world.
 - c. In other words, if a child gets his own way in the home, he will expect his own way in the world. Therefore, he will have no more respect for and submission to the authority in the world than he had for his parents – which will make life in the world around him as difficult and painful as he made it in the home in which he grew up.
 - d. There are two points here. **First**, in the majority of cases, disobedient children are made by parents who fail to properly discipline their children. **Second**, adults who have little or no respect for authority and therefore do as they please, spread their carnage wherever they go – so that the community suffers like the people in their home suffered.
 - e. And when this kind of disobedience becomes the norm, both the home and the community pay the price – which is another reason difficult times are coming.
7. **Ungrateful** – Ungratefulness comes from focusing on (1) my needs and wants, (2) from an attitude of entitlement, and (3) from the belief that my well-being and happiness is what matters most.
 - a. To the ungrateful, the needs, wants, well-being, and happiness of others only matters in so far as it serves their purposes, or does not get in the way of what they want.
 - b. Therefore, to the ungrateful person, there is no logical reason to be grateful. And their ungratefulness is not just in the lack of words, it is in the lack of caring, sharing, giving, and returning – such as returning kindness for kindness, love for love, favor for favor, and blessings for blessings.
 - c. Imagine a world full of ungrateful people who spend their lives grasping, demanding, expecting and taking while giving nothing of value in return – including verbal expressions of gratitude. This would be a sick, painful world in which to live.

8. **Unholy** – I am not sure why this designation is included since in a general sense it covers anything and everything that is ungodly – be it evil intent, ungodly thoughts, or sinful practices.
 - a. However, imagine a world more unholy than it is now. A world where numerous evils are called good, and good is called evil. Where a love of self that places my interests above the interests and good of others is normalized and even promoted. Where money is a god, and accumulating money – even to the harm of others – is held in high esteem. Where theft, dishonest business practices, and profit at any cost to the consumer, is rampant. Where pride and arrogance are considered important for good mental and emotional health. Where power is used to control, take advantage of, mistreat, and abuse the weak. Where common and established forms of morality are progressively broken down and replaced with immorality. Where the abuse and mistreatment of women and children are overlooked as if they don't matter. Where war, with its numerous miseries, is common place. Where dictators abuse their power with impunity. Where Christians and the children of Christians are hated, persecuted, tortured, and killed just because they are Christians.
 - b. If you can imagine that kind of world, then you are imaging a world where many, and I mean many, are willingly, deliberately, and cheerfully unholy.

III. Conclusion

- A. However, this kind of world is not an imaginary world. It is a coming reality – which is why we are advised in **2 Timothy 3:1** to realize that life on earth – in the church and in the world – is going to get worse. Difficult times are coming, and when they come, they will be a sign that we are in the last days.
- B. But you say, many times people thought the last days were here already – yet it is obvious they weren't.
- C. The reality is, there are ebbs and flows in the moral condition of our world, and there are times that have appeared to be the last days.
- D. However, **vs 1-5** were not written to help us discern the last days, but to stay away from church attendees who fit the description of what people will be like in the last days. May we learn the intended lesson.