

Be Guided By God's Word  
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2 Timothy 3:1-17

Before we get into our lesson, would anyone share about how God has spoken to YOU this week? Through your quiet time in His word; through an experience or an encounter; something from last week's lesson or sermon?

When most of us were teenagers, a guy named Dave Mason sang these lyrics:

*"So let's leave it alone, 'cause we can't see eye to eye.  
There ain't no good guys, there ain't no bad guys.  
There's only you and me and we just disagree."*

- No "good guys," no "bad guys," we just agree to disagree. Maybe in the song...not in the church. Paul writing to Timothy in 2 Timothy chapter 3 makes it plain: There ARE bad people who cause "difficulty" in the church. Expect it! Prepare for it!
- God's people can't just let "evil impostors" in the church lead others astray.
- WE have to be the "good guys" who fight false teachers with THE TRUTH.
- To do that, we have to KNOW and FOLLOW the TRUTH...God's INSPIRED word.
- Short version: There are bad people in the world, even in the church and the only way to deal with them is to KNOW YOUR BIBLE! God's TRUTH defeats Satan's LIES.
- Let's begin in verses 1-5 of Chapter 3:

2 Timothy 3 (ESV)

3 But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. 2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, 4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.

- **What does it mean when someone older and wiser starts a conversation with "understand this"?**
- Difficulty = distressing; perilous; terrible; SAVAGE times.
- Paul gets very specific in identifying those who cause havoc in the church.
- His words are plain. Think about the kind of person he's describing:
- *"It's all about me! It's all about what I can GET! I'm better than everyone else! I'm smarter than everyone else! I walk on anyone in my way! I don't need the outdated ideas of my parents! Nothing is ever good enough for me. I don't need religion. I'm hardhearted so emotions don't get in my way. I don't get along with anyone and I don't care. I spread dirt about others so I look better. I'll do anything, say anything, hurt anyone to get my needs met."* Sounds like someone you can't wait to be around, huh?
- Paul said these types are "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."

- Then he said something interesting about these people. They have “the appearance of godliness, but denying it’s power.” **What do you think that means? Can you think of examples today?**

Chuck Swindoll writes:

*This false godliness can range from depraved, demented fanatics flying planes into tall buildings, to corrupt media ministers fleecing the flock for personal gain, to businessmen seeking networking possibilities within the church, to sanctimonious Christians rationalizing their greed.*

- **Verse 5: What does Paul say we are to do about these people he describes?**
- **Does this mean we should SHUN unbelievers? What do you think he meant?**
- Next Paul pointed out an especially dangerous type of person. Verse 6:

6 For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, 7 always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.

- Paul’s words in verse 6, “capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions,” doesn’t refer to women in general, but certain susceptible women.
- **What do you think he’s describing?** (Clues: “creep,” “capture,” “weak,” “led astray.”)
- Beware of RELIGIOUS HUCKSTERS who prey on people who are weakened by their past sin, and their problems, and are looking for a quick and easy “fix.” They exploit these “weak” people usually for money -- all in the name of religion.
- Verse 7: These weak people jump from false teacher to false teacher never coming to the saving knowledge of the truth. Many times “baby Christians” fall victim to this.

8 Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, [Paul refers to two men believed to be Pharaoh’s magicians who opposed Moses.] so these men [FALSE TEACHERS and RELIGIOUS HUCKSTERS] also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. 9 But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.

- Eventually the TRUE COLORS of FALSE TEACHERS show through and their evil ways are EXPOSED. Unfortunately, AFTER they HURT and MISLEAD many people.
- As we said: There are bad people in the world, even in the church and the only way to deal with them is to KNOW YOUR BIBLE! What was Timothy to do?
- First, Paul reminds Timothy of where he’s come from and who he is...

10 You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, 11 my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. 12 Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 13 while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from

childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. [Then a VERY IMPORTANT VERSE] 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

- Verse 14 says CONTINUE in what you have LEARNED and FIRMLY BELIEVED
- **What's the difference between LEARNED and FIRMLY BELIEVED?**
- *"Satan KNOWS the Bible but he's NOT saved." (Wiersbe)*
- **How long had Timothy been "acquainted" with scripture? What's the LESSON for parents?** Deuteronomy 6:6–7 (ESV) 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.
- **End of verse 15: What is the FIRST THING scripture does for people?**
- **Verse 16: What is the significance of the word ALL? No "cherry picking."**
- **Verse 16: ALL scripture is God-breathed. What does that tell us?**
- Key words in v.16: TEACHING; REPROOF; CORRECTION; TRAINING
- Verse 16: Picture of a parent correcting a child; or an expert coaching a student.

John MacArthur in his book *How To Study The Bible* writes:

*The Bible is a fantastic Book. It can take somebody who doesn't know God, who isn't saved, and then save them. Then it will teach them, reprove them when they do wrong, point out the right thing to do, and then show them how to walk in that right path. The result is stated in verse 17: "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The incredible reality of the Bible is that it is sufficient to do the whole job.*

- If the Bible does all that for us, why do MOST Christians not read it?
- Last September Lifeway Research (Southern Baptist) released a study with this fact: *(They) surveyed more than 2,900 Protestant churchgoers and found that while 90 percent "desire to please and honor Jesus in all I do," only 19 percent personally read the Bible every day.*
- "No thanks...I'm good." That's what we're saying to God when we don't read His word.
- Would you plant a garden and refuse to water it? Plant it under a tent?
- Nourishment? Food for your soul - Complain how weak we feel but refuse to EAT!
- Complete as a Christian (v 17). Do we want to be ALL WE CAN BE for God?
- *"Lord, I want you to make me about 50% of the Christian you would have me to be and that's enough." 75%? 85?*
- *"Man! I've got all these pressures and problems. I don't know where to turn!"*
- Picture Jesus standing there offering His word to you. *"Want to know how to live today?" "I have it all right here for you." -- "No thanks, I'm good."*
- **Why do you think so many Christians don't read their Bible?**

Suggestions (all in the notes):

- Time: Only one answer: Drop something. Start small if need be, and increase the time.
- Where do I start? Make it convenient - One Year Bible; Apps like YOU VERSION; Devotional books (as a starter NOT in place of the Bible!) Listen to Biblical preaching [www.oneplace.com](http://www.oneplace.com) ; ChristianRadio.com's NEW APP.
- It's hard to understand - Get a good study Bible; other commentaries; trusted sources like [www.Biblestudytools.com](http://www.Biblestudytools.com); ask trusted Christian friends about tough passages.
- Above all PRAY and ask God to OPEN YOUR EYES.
- Don't just READ and FORGET. Read and ask questions about what you've read: What does it say? What does it mean? How does this apply to my life?
- Don't just READ but DO! As James said: Be DOERS and not just HEARERS.
- Steps to Bible Study by John MacArthur: <http://www.christianity.com/bible/bible-study-tips/simple-steps-to-solid-study-11528881.html>
- Tips from Focus on the Family: [http://www.focusonthefamily.com/faith/the\\_study\\_of\\_god/why\\_study\\_the\\_bible/how\\_to\\_study\\_the\\_bible.aspx](http://www.focusonthefamily.com/faith/the_study_of_god/why_study_the_bible/how_to_study_the_bible.aspx)

So, What's the Takeaway?

There are bad people in the world, even in the church and the only way to deal with them is to KNOW YOUR BIBLE! The only way to KNOW it is to READ IT; ABSORB IT; and OBEY IT! Don't waste time feeling guilty...pick up that Bible and ask God to SHOW you what He wants you to know!