



“...all who desire to live Godly.”

- **2 Timothy 3:10-17**

**by Pastor Tim Dodson
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10 But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, 11 persecutions, afflictions, which

happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of [them] all the Lord delivered me. 12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. 13 But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14 But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned [them], 15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

3:10-11

Paul had been talking about the fact that within the realm of the greater church, as well as outside, there would be those who could and would evidence some seriously ungodly traits, especially as we live through these “end days.” Indeed there will be those who will talk the talk and put the Jesus-fish on their car but still embrace the world and its offerings and often even quiet *blatant sin*. Some of the guilty will even stand behind the pulpits of churches.

However, Paul’s life, unlike those we have been looking at over the past few weeks, was not about words, or “degrees,” or status; His life spoke louder than these exterior things. He was telling Timothy, “you *know* me. You have seen my life and the way that it has been lived.” It’s been said that men are more easily led by precedents than by precepts; or what they see more than what they hear. The fact is, we become like the people we hang out with.

Christianity is not a matter of knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, or who can “talk the talk,” serve the most and look the part. It’s about relationship and interaction! And Paul lived that out to the fullest! “For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” (1Cor 2:2)

The great Baptist missionary to Burma, Adoniram Judson once said “*A life once spent is irrevocable. It will remain to be contemplated through eternity...the same may be said of each day. When it is once past, it is gone forever. All the marks which we put upon it, it will exhibit forever...each day will not only be a witness of our conduct, but will affect our everlasting destiny...*”

Paul preached what he believed and lived out what he preached. Those in his path could attest to his doctrine. People actually saw his ‘manner of life.’ They actually *witnessed* his purpose and faith, as well as how he endured the persecutions and the suffering that inevitably come with a committed faith. And through it all, those around him were the receivers of his love. Through it all, he was the example!

3:12

Here's a biblical promise that is rarely quoted, let alone embraced in our modern version of Christianity! Perhaps you could read this verse and say, "Well, that's odd...*I'm* not being persecuted!" Well, in light of this verse... what does that tell you about your faith?

Paul said that a committed and radical faith *will* generate persecution against you. From this verse we can only surmise that if we are not being persecuted, we are *not* living committed and radical lives!

The truth is that while the gift of Christianity and eternal life is a free gift, there is a price tag to actually walking out our discipleship. But on the other side of this fact is that with such comes a rare participation in the *ways* of God, beyond simply seeing the *acts* of God.

"He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel." Ps 103:7

Some of us will never participate and experience the *ways* of God, but will just stand on the outside to only see the *acts* of God.

But the reality is, for many of us, that is not a disappointment. A great many of us do not really desire to live in such a manner. In fact, if that is the true 'cost,' then often we are quite willing to exert any amount of effort and expense to avoid that persecution and discomfort! Then on top of all of that, there is the cold hard truth that much of that persecution is actually coming from the "Jannes and Jambres" of this world. The pseudo-religious who will try to kick you to the curb in an effort to make themselves *look* good and moreover *feel* good.

"But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me." John 15:21

The question arises: why would anyone persecute a committed believer? Because a life like Paul's shines a very bright light on the wickedness of others! And such folks don't care to be exposed. So instead of turning away from their ungodliness and turning to Christ, they try instead to destroy the one who has exposed them...even unwittingly, for being the "light" that they are. It's a crazy reaction, but innately the behavior of fallen man, and even those who are pretending to be something other than that!

Paul wasn't alone in this warning. Jesus spoke in the beatitudes of such folks: Matthew 5:10-12 *"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*

And the apostle Peter chimed in also in 1 Peter 4:12-14 *"Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified."*

Clearly this is a very real truth of Christianity and a fact in our living it out. Many pastors and churches will avoid this aspect of faith in every way possible, and thus it becomes the "dirty little secret" of Christianity. We're not talking about the Sunday-go-to-meeting occasional church goer...the moralistic republican who faithfully drops 5 dollars in the tithe plate once a month and thinks he therefore is the living embodiment of Christ Himself because he's *so* swell.

William Hendriksen once wrote that “Scars are the price which every believer pays for his loyalty to Christ.” Those scars may be physical or emotional, but they are real for the true follower of Christ!

3:13

We cannot close our eyes to this fact. I know that we can grow tired...a kind of spiritual PTSD that will drive you to your knees or drive you out the door. 1 John 5:19 reminds us that “We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.”

Timothy had to realize that not only are difficult days going to bring difficult people, but those days would continue to grow even *more* dangerous and *more* deceptive spiritually and the likelihood of his being persecuted for the sake of gospel would increase every day! Ironically, those who are responsible for this deceiving always eventually become caught in their own web and end up being on the receiving end of deception themselves. The one who is guilty of deceiving others will become less and less able to recover from a life filled with error and will ultimately fall more easily to the lies of others. Those who deceive others will certainly see their own sense of reality skewed between truth and lies, and eventually they will weaken their power of resistance to self-deception and to the lies of others!

Matthew Henry adds that “As good men, by the grace of God, grow better, so bad men, through the craft of Satan, and the power of their own corruptions, grow worse. The way of sin is down-hill; such go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. Those who deceive others, deceive themselves, as they will find at last, to their cost.” These men are living proof that “whatever a man sows (deception), this he will also reap. (Gal 6:7)”

3:14

“*But you must continue...*” Paul calls Timothy, and by way of the scriptures, us also, to a life of continuity. And he obviously believes that such a life is possible in Christ, and through the Holy Spirit.

The term “must” is not meant to be a threat but rather given as a facet of survival. It is intimated that if Timothy fails to be faithful to continue in what he knows to be fact...what he has seen and learned, he will not survive the journey. He will not withstand the attacks of those opposed to Christ and to faith. Throughout scripture, we are repeatedly called to “stand,” to “remain,” and to “abide.” Thus we can understand Paul’s desire to “finish well.” Countless individuals have begun this race, only to “fold” along the way. Many begin, but *many fail*.

Therefore we are being given a call to conduct a habitual and constant lifestyle of faithful living...of scriptural embrace, discipleship maturing and enduring forward motion of service and relationship. 1Th 5:6-8 speaks of such, saying “*So be on your guard, not asleep like the others. Stay alert and be clearheaded. Night is the time when people sleep and drinkers get drunk. But let us who live in the light be clearheaded, protected by the armor of faith and love, and wearing as our helmet the confidence of our salvation.*” Our learning in this church cannot be merely for head knowledge or religious motions. Such will only prove to be ultimately worthless and in fact will only add to Satan’s hold on you by “puffing you up” with spiritual ego.

1 Cor 8:1 reminds us: “*We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.*”

You as a believer must have an “end game” here. A goal. A vision. A plan. So many of us are just tumbleweeds in the wind. There is no method. There is no design. No strategy. We don’t really remember where we came from and we certainly have no idea where we are going. Paul says we must “continue” in what we have learned. We must hold tightly to the things we have seen...the things God has promised us and assured us of. We must

not forget the things we have witnessed, the manifest of His power and healing in our midst. And most of all...not resting on the past laurels or 'old stories' of triumph...we must continue onward.

Paul says *“Timothy...remember where you learned these things...be loyal also to those who brought you up in the faith.”* Such will keep us moving forward and out of the hands of the likes of men Paul had been warning us about.

3:15

The bottom line however was not just to give mere allegiance or some undying gratitude to years of righteous teaching or even years of spiritual outpouring by those who have humanly brought us this far. Paul is saying, *“Timothy...remember the words of scripture and stand on them. Be unmoving and unflinching according to the Word of God.”* Such is our safety...our baseline...where we stand unflinching. The Word became flesh...and he dwelt amongst us... and His name is Jesus! (John 1) Yet it is more than just feelings and gratitude...Paul says that it is God's words...His directions that we must also hold to without wavering! Not some sort of nebulous mysticism or hyper-spiritual ideal, but concrete instructions that are given by someone who is the “same yesterday, today, and forever.”

With that being said, such facts do not rule out the issue of faith. For it is impossible to please God without faith! Our faith makes the Word of God activate in our lives and empower us to live out the pages of scripture in our lives and our world. But faith without the knowledge of *...and the adherence to...* the Word of God, will result only in “zeal without knowledge.”

Romans 10:2 *“For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.”*

Learn...grow...embrace it and live it. In this...knowledge and Spirit...we remain rooted! Such a path keeps us away from false spirituality...the “false spiritualists,” and helps us to stick with the basics. If we forget to keep such in the front of all we do, we will fail. We will not finish this race. Paul says *hold to it Timothy* and you will be “wise for salvation...” equipped for life on “this side!”

Matthew Henry reminds all "young Timothys": It is not enough to learn that which is good, but we must continue in it, and persevere in it unto the end. Then are we Christ's disciples indeed."

Oswald Chambers exhorts us, writing, “Am I learning how to use my Bible? The way to become complete for the Master's service is to be well soaked in the Bible, some of us only exploit certain passages. Our Lord wants to give us continuous instruction out of His word; continuous instruction turns hearers into disciples. Beware of “spooned meat” spirituality, of using the Bible for the sake of getting messages; use it to nourish your own soul. Be a continuous learner, don't stop short, and the truth will open to you on the right hand and on the left until you find there is no problem in human life with which the Bible does not deal. But remember that there are certain points of truth Our Lord cannot reveal to us until our character is in a fit state to bear it. The discernment of God's truth and the development of character go together. The life God places in the Christian worker is the life of Jesus Christ, which is continually changing spiritual innocence into glorious practical character.”
(Complete for the Master's Service - Approved unto God)

Timothy was not left to his own devices to pursue the scriptural roots he so desperately needed. Not as a young pastor and student, for Paul was there to speak into his life. And not as a child! His mother and grandmother...no doubt the parental concern in his life, made sure he had what he needed. That was their

calling, their duty! To “train up a child in the way that he should go...and he will not depart from it.” (Prov 22:6) Apparently Timothy did not...

3:16-17

Note the exact language here; **ALL** scripture. Often there are people who want to pick and choose the parts they want to receive and accept. But the Word of God is a package deal. It's all or nothing. For the Scripture is all intertwined and interdependent. If one block of truth is removed, the whole house comes crashing down like dominos. If we begin to cut out the parts that make us uncomfortable, we eventually have 66 books of truth that are just a mumbo jumbo that lack cohesion and direction!

This is our protection from all the aforementioned deception and heresy. “...as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature...” (2Peter 1:3)

Verse 16 uses the word “inspiration” as in the “inspiration of God.” That literally means “God breathed.” Now we are to actually take that Word and use it as doctrine; for our life direction...for admonishment and correction...to instruct ourselves and others.

All given to us so we might be “perfect” (gr) meaning “complete, and whole.” All given to us so we might be prepared and equipped to serve God. Built for ‘good works.’ Please note that! *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.* (Eph 2:10)

Jesus said, “*Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word which proceeds out of the mouth of God*” (see Matthew 4:4). Here in Timothy, we see that scripture is given and scripture is inspired so that we can be prepared “for all good works.” So for all the reasons we have been given the Word of God, this is the “bottom line;” equipped to do the work of God and kingdom...