

Letters to Lead By

2 TIMOTHY 3

FIRST DAY: Introduction

Want the bad news first? We live *in the midst of a corrupt and perverse generation*. But don't despair, there is good news—in the midst of this darkness, we *shine as lights in the world* (Philippians 2:15). It is in darkness that light becomes a hope, a draw, and a guide to salvation. As believers, we will always stand in contrast to the ungodly culture around us as we shine with the light of Jesus.

Darkness is inevitable in the times in which we live. Too often, however, rather than shining brighter, we become aggressive against the culture. The Lord wants us to understand the dark times we are living in and simply shine brighter by the power of His Word living in us!

Paul alluded to this very contrast between darkness and light, culture and Christianity, in the third chapter of his second letter to Timothy. In detail, Paul listed the pervading attitudes in the culture that would characterize the last days. Timothy was not to be overcome, overwrought, or overwhelmed by the darkness. Instead, Paul instructed Timothy to know the reality of ungodliness, the inevitability of persecution, and the power of the Holy Scriptures to thoroughly equip him for every good work.

The darkness that characterized Timothy's culture is still with us today. The way to deal with this present darkness is not by acquiescing to it or being aggressive against it. Rather, we need to shine brightly by continuing in the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make us wise and thoroughly equipped for every good work!

*Ask God to thoroughly equip you in His Holy Scriptures
that you might shine even brighter!*

SECOND DAY: Read 2 Timothy 3:1–5

1. *Last days* is a phrase that Paul used in 2 Timothy 3:1 and includes the time following Christ's death until the present. Recall from 2 Timothy 2:15, 22, 24–25 how Timothy was to behave in the *last days*.
 - a. Paul said the *last days* would be marked by *perilous times*. The Greek word for *perilous* could be used to describe a wild animal or a turbulent sea. It is the same word used to describe the two vicious demoniacs in Matthew 8:28. What does this suggest to you about these *times*?

2. In 2 Timothy 3:2–4, Paul listed eighteen traits that would characterize *the last days*. Fill in the blanks below to identify them:
 - a. *l* _____ *of* _____
 - b. *l* _____ *of* _____
 - c. *b* _____
 - d. *p* _____
 - e. *b* _____
 - f. *d* _____ *to* _____
 - g. *u* _____
 - h. *u* _____
 - i. *u* _____
 - j. *u* _____

- k. *s* _____
- l. *w* _____
- m. *b* _____
- n. *d* _____ *of* _____
- o. *t* _____
- p. *h* _____
- q. *h* _____
- r. *l* _____ *of* _____
rather than _____ of _____.

(1) Share any observations or discoveries you noticed.

3. Paul used the Greek word *form* in 2 Timothy 3:5 to connote *the appearance or the shape of something*. What *form* do all the individuals in 2 Timothy 3:2–5 share?

a. What do you find disturbing about this?

b. In spite of this *form*, what do these people do?
2 Timothy 3:5a

(1) Share a way you see the attributes of 2 Timothy 3:2–4 being a direct result of this *denying*.

c. What is Paul's command to Timothy concerning these people? 2 Timothy 3:5b

(1) Link this with 1 Corinthians 5:9–13 and share your thoughts.

4. Paul stated his hope for such people in 2 Timothy 2:25: that *God will grant them repentance*. How should such an attitude shape our behavior and prayer?

THIRD DAY: Read 2 Timothy 3:6–9

1. Paul goes on to describe the *sort* of people who have *a form of godliness*. Read 2 Timothy 3:6–9 to answer the following questions:

a. Their tactics (verse 6a)

b. Their *captives* (verses 6b–7)

c. Their resistance (verse 8)

(1) Jewish tradition has identified Jannes and Jambres as Pharaoh's magicians. Read about them in Exodus 7:10–11, 20–22; 8:6–7. What stands out to you?

d. Their *progress* (verse 9)

(1) Link this with Exodus 8:18–19; 9:11. What do you see?

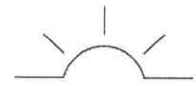
(2) What hope does this give you?

2. What caution do you receive from your study today concerning:

a. False teachers

b. Sin and vulnerability

c. The truth



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Although the names Jannes and Jambres only appear here in the Bible, they do appear in other ancient writings, such as the Targum (Aramaic translation of the Hebrew Bible) and the writings of Pliny, among others.

3. As women, we need to recognize our vulnerability. In light of your study today, why is it essential to have a *knowledge of the truth*?

FOURTH DAY: Read 2 Timothy 3:10–12

1. Paul's own testimony contrasted sharply with that of the corrupt men he warned Timothy about. From 2 Timothy 3:10–11a, list the characteristics Timothy *carefully followed*:

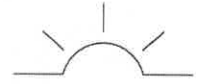
- | | |
|----|----|
| a. | e. |
| b. | f. |
| c. | g. |
| d. | h. |

(1) In contrast to the ungodly behavior in 2 Timothy 3:2–5, why is Paul's example worth *carefully following*?

2. According to 2 Timothy 3:11a, Paul endured *persecutions* and *afflictions*. Use the following Scriptures to note and comment on what *happened* to Paul in:
 - a. Antioch (Acts 13:14, 49–50)

 - b. Iconium (Acts 14:1–6)

 - c. Lystra (Acts 14:6, 19)



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

According to Acts 16:1, Timothy was from Lystra and joined Paul there on his second missionary journey. No doubt, he knew of Paul's *persecutions* in that region.

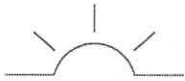
- (1) From 2 Timothy 3:11b record and remark on Paul's testimony concerning these *persecutions*.
- (a) Link this with 2 Corinthians 1:9–10. What do you see?
- (b) What do you find most notable about Paul's testimony considering all he *endured* in these cities?
3. Recalling the *perilous times* and Paul's own experience, write out his definitive statement concerning *persecution*.
2 Timothy 3:12
- a. Link this with Jesus's words in John 16:33 and share your thoughts.
4. From your study today, how does Paul's testimony minister to you concerning:
- a. Being an example

b. God's deliverance

c. Persecution

FIFTH DAY: Read 2 Timothy 3:13–17

1. As Paul continued his warning concerning the perilous times to come, what did he say was inevitable?
2 Timothy 3:13a



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Greek word for *imposters (goés)* is found only here in the Bible. It is used to speak of a *sorcerer, a cheat, and a swindler.*

a. As a result of their behavior, what will happen to these men? 2 Timothy 3:13b

(1) Why is it important to remember this?

2. In 2 Timothy 3:14, Paul exhorted Timothy to *continue*. The Greek word for *continue* can also mean *to remain or abide*. What was Timothy to *continue* in?

3. Paul stated that Timothy had *known the Holy Scriptures from childhood* (2 Timothy 3:15a). Link this with 2 Timothy 1:5 and share your thoughts.

a. According to 2 Timothy 3:16, because *all Scripture* is God-breathed, it is therefore *profitable* (advantageous, beneficial). Give an example of how God's Word has been *profitable* to you for:

(1) *Doctrine* (teaching)

(2) *Reproof*

(3) *Correction*

(4) *Instruction in righteousness*

6. What is God's Word able to do? 2 Timothy 3:17

a. How does this motivate you?

SIXTH DAY: Review

1. How does the fact that *all Scripture* is God-breathed, *profitable*, and able to equip you for *every good work* speak to you concerning how to live:
 - a. In perilous times

 - b. Through persecution

 - c. With precautions toward evil men and imposters

 - d. With perseverance

2. Take a moment to pray for your church to *be complete, thoroughly equipped* by God's *Holy Scriptures*.