

2 Timothy 3:1-9

# BEING DISCERNING IN A DANGEROUS WORLD

*Paul does not paint the future with rose-color: he is no smooth tongued prophet of a golden age, into which this dull earth may be imagined to be glowing. There are sanguine brethren who are looking forward to everything growing better and better and better, until, at last, this present age ripens into a millennium. They will not be able to sustain their hopes, for Scripture gives them no solid basis to rest upon. We who believe that there will be no millennial reign without the King, and who expect no rule of righteousness except from the appearing of the righteous Lord, are nearer the mark. Apart from the second Advent of our Lord, the world is more likely to sink into a pandemonium than to rise into a millennium... Paul warns us of certain characters which will appear in the last times [2 Tim. 3]. It is a very terrible list. The like have appeared in other days, but we are led by his warning to apprehend that they will appear in greater numbers in the last days than in any previous age. These will swarm like flies in the decay of the times, and will make the days exceeding perilous. We are nearing that period at this very time. That these people would, some of them, be within the church is the most painful part of it...*

—Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-92)

Paul has exhorted Timothy to be a **good soldier** (the spirit of power) and a **faithful servant** (the spirit of love). Now, he exhorts him to be a **wise student** (the spirit of a sound mind). Timothy has to be both discerning of the world (3:1-9) and devoted to the Word (3:10-17).

## DON'T BE SURPRISED BY PERILOUS TIMES (3:1-4)

*But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come (3:1).*

- We must know the bigger \_\_\_\_\_.
  
- We must know the harder \_\_\_\_\_.

  - Sin is a \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Suffering is a \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Humanity is lost in \_\_\_\_\_.

*For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God (3:2a, 4b).*

- The world is messed up because \_\_\_\_\_ are messed up.
- We are messed up because our \_\_\_\_\_ are messed up.

*Our day is one of anarchy in the world, of apostasy in the church, and of apathy in the individual believer.* —Vance Havner

**Eschatos** [i.e., last days] can refer specifically to Jesus' return on the "last day" or more generally to the period of time between His (Christ's) first and second coming.

—Robert H. Mounce

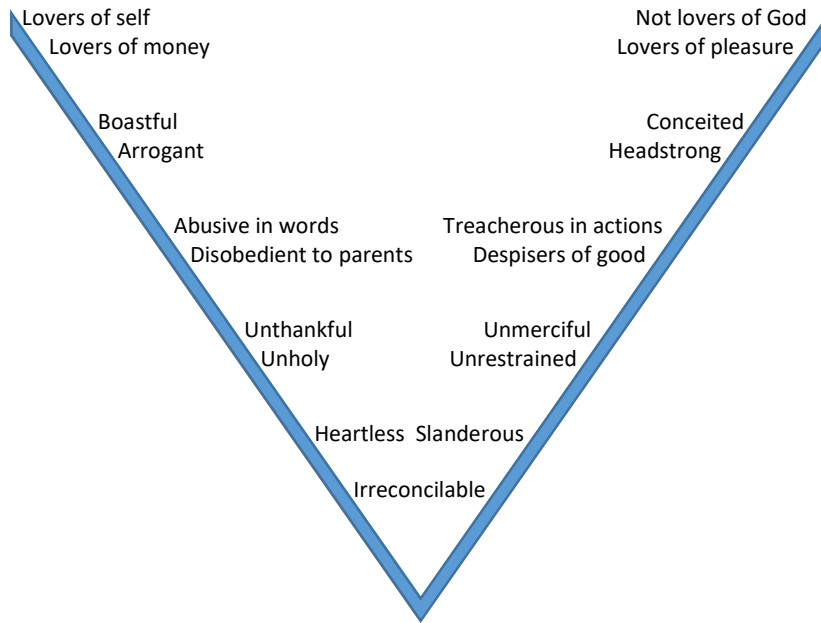
**Perilous.** Greek, *chalepos*, "hard to bear, troublesome, dangerous, fierce, violent" (cf. Matt. 8:28).

*We should note what the hardness or danger of this time is to be— not war, not famine or diseases, nor any of the other calamities or ills that befall the body, but the wicked and depraved ways of men.*

—John Calvin (1509-64)

*This list is one of the most terrible pictures in the NT of what a god-less world would be like... It is no accident that the first of these qualities will be a life that is centered in self... Love of self is the basic sin from which all others flow.*

—William Barclay



**DON'T BE FOOLED BY "SPIRITUAL" CON ARTISTS (3:5-9)**

*Having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people! (3:5, ESV)*

- They \_\_\_\_\_ to act religious.
- They \_\_\_\_\_ worldly lives.
- They \_\_\_\_\_ for easy victims.
- They \_\_\_\_\_ accountability to the truth.
- Their \_\_\_\_\_ will ultimately be exposed.

*People experience life through a self-centered filter, an egocentric bias. —Dr. Anthony Greenwald*

**Boastful.** Grk, *alazon*, “swaggering creature who tries to bluster his way into power and eminence.”

**Unholy.** Grk, *anosios*, “profane.” It carries the idea not so much of irreligion as of gross indecency.

**Heartless.** Grk, *astorges*, “without natural affection.” *Storge* is the natural love within a family, esp. between a parent and a child.

**Slanderous.** Grk, *diabolos*, “false accuser; slanderer; the devil.”

**Irreconcilable.** Greek, *aspondos*, “those who will not be atoned, who being at war refuse to lay aside their enmity.” (Trench)

*They go through all the correct movements and maintain all the external forms of religion but know nothing of Christianity as a dynamic power which changes the lives of men. —William Barclay*

*There is plenty of evidence that religious quackery had an especially fruitful field among women. Both their less-than-satisfying social position in Greco-Roman society and their religious hunger, typical of the era, made women easy prey. —Gordon D. Fee*

*None become so desperately hard as those who are continually repeating holy words while their hearts are running after sin and the world... If you love your own soul, beware of formalism. A painting of fire cannot warm, and a painted banquet cannot satisfy hunger, and a formal religion cannot bring peace to the soul.*

—J. C. Ryle