

Bible Studies for Life: October 16

Why We Need God's Word • 2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13-17

By Laura Lee Leathers



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- "The fastest growing religion in Mississippi is the NONES. They claim to have no religious preference.
- Only one out of three people believe that Jesus is the only way for salvation.
- 38.5% of Mississippians agree with the statement: 'I have a personal relationship with Jesus.'
- Our churches in Mississippi have seen a decline from 39% in 2017 to 25.7% in 2021."

Staggering statistics for our state! It's not just our state – it's global. The question is, why? The answer takes us back to the garden of Eden: deception.

Sin abounds in our culture (2 Timothy 3:1-5, NKJV). In the previous chapters of Second Timothy, the Apostle Paul has written words of exhortation and instruction. In chapter three, he warns, "But know this, in the last days perilous times will come."

The last days began when Jesus ascended to heaven and with the arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and continues until Jesus returns and reigns.

In verses two through five, Paul gives eighteen vices, describing people who are against Jesus and His followers: "lovers of self, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."

Note the references to the word, "love." Rather than a fear (respect) and love for God, people are lovers of self, money, and pleasure.

Appearances can be deceiving. People may have "a form of godliness," but their lives are not pleasing the Lord. They deny God's power in their lives by rejecting His Word (Matthew 23:28). Paul then issues a command to "Avoid such people." This might involve drastic measures such as ex-communication.

Avoiding sin requires the wisdom of God's Word (2 Timothy 3:13-15). Notice the phrase, "But you" (v. 10), referring to Timothy, are to follow "my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings" (vv.10-12 ESV). All these statements are examples of a mentor, a leader who has stayed true to the Word of God. Paul is reminding Timothy to stay on

track.

Timothy needs to be prepared because “all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” Jesus warned his disciples that they would be persecuted (John 15:20; also see 1 John 3:13).

Another warning about “evil men and imposters” is that their character will not improve but only grow worse. The deception will be so evil that those who are deceiving are themselves deceived.

“But as for you,” it’s as if Paul is like a parent trying to bring his child back into focus; Timothy is to adhere to what he had learned from childhood – the Holy Scriptures – and who taught him: his mother, grandmother, and Paul.

“Scripture can lead to ‘knowledge of truth.’ It has the power to bring its readers to faith. This is in direct contrast to the false teaching which, as stated throughout the letter, leads only to useless disputes and ungodliness” (ESV Study Bible). The Word of God shows us His grace and leads us to salvation through faith in Christ.

God’s Word comes straight from God to mature and equip us (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Holy Scriptures have a divine origin – “breathed out by God.” It’s interesting that the Greek word is *theopneustos*, and doesn’t appear until this letter is written to Timothy (ESV Study Bible).

All of Scripture is inspired and authoritative, from the first word in Genesis to the last word in Revelation.

Spend this week digging deeper into these two verses and what it means to be “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.” When you do, you will discover the benefits of doing so are being competent and equipped for every good work.

“The world in which we live continues to spiral out of control as many people pursue sinful pleasures and material gain. Christians should stand against evil by living as God would have us to live. Through Scripture, God our Creator has revealed all we need to know to live victoriously in today’s world” (LifeWay).

We all need to be like Timothy, holding tightly to the Holy Scriptures, firmly established, and depending upon His wisdom. Trust in the sufficiency of the Scriptures.

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