

Introduction

You’ve probably heard about the fellow who was told, “*Cheer up. Things could be worse!*” He said later, “*I did as I was told. I cheered up, and sure enough, things got worse!*” That seems to be true of this year doesn’t it?

The Apostle Paul was writing this from a prison cell in Rome, knowing that his own death was at hand! He warned his young son in the faith, Timothy, as well as us, of difficult days that were going to come in the last days!

Understand that as the LORD revealed the future to His prophets and His apostles, He did not reveal to them the timing of these things!

The Apostle was deeply concerned about the trends he saw in his day as well as the difficult days that the LORD showed him were coming in the last days! He didn’t want Timothy (or us) to be caught unaware when these times came!

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We hear the question all the time, “*What is this world coming to?*” It is usually spoken right after something happens that shows our society or this world in general has **degraded another step down in ungodliness!**

Well, what is this world coming to? The Word of God gives us some insight into what will take place with regard to this world, the end time events, and even the glorious future of the children of God!

Read: 2 Timothy 3:1-9

We might refer to this section of Scripture as the “*signs of the times.*” What times? “*The last days.*”

“*The last days*” actually includes the entire period from just after the resurrection and ascension of Christ to Christ’s return. (i.e. The time period we refer to as the Church age!)

“*The last days*” are described here by Paul as “*perilous times.*” (vs. 1)

In this passage, we learn that in “*the last days*” there will be a period of time when what is described as “*perilous times*” would come. “*Perilous*” comes from a word that means “*violent, dangerous or savage.*”

Its only other usage in the New Testament is found translated in *Matthew 8:28* where two demon-possessed men are described as “*exceedingly fierce.*”

Matthew 8:28–“*And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.*”

Though **evil has been with us in every generation**, it seems that **many standards of basic morality and common decency are being ignored more and more as time goes on.** I’m speaking from my personal observations over these 64+ years of my life! Can you sense what I am sensing?

Paul was saying that this wickedness that he describes here will reach to a “*perilous*” or “*exceedingly fierce*” point as the *last days* draw to an end. Now, we are not told how “*exceedingly fierce*” or “*perilous*” that it might get! But I think **we can see and sense that**, if we are not there, we are most certainly approaching there! We are seeing an ever increasing crescendo of these characteristics that are listed here.

I believe the LORD would have us to look at the description that Paul gives us here as he describes these *perilous times*. This description here tells us what **the prevailing attitudes and actions of mankind will be** as the coming of the LORD draws near!

1. “*Lovers of their own selves.*” (literally, “*fond of self*”) So, the individuals he mentions here are identified first of all by what they love. It is very appropriate that the first characteristic he mentions is “*lovers of their own selves*” Paul is describing **a person who cherishes or is obsessed with himself.** We will see as we go through this list that **this SIN is closely related to the other sins listed here and is the sin from which the other SINS flows from!** Think of it as:
S - Self
I - Interested
N - Nature

There has never been a time when people have been as self-centered as they are today? We live in the age of “*selfies*”!

Never before in history has society been so **motivated by self-love, self-gratification, and self-exaltation!** The very rage of social media is the **exaltation of self!** *FaceBook, Twitter, Instagram, Snap-Chat, Tik-Tok* and more are mainly avenues of **self-exaltation!**

The **“Me-first”** mentality has truly become the American way of life! But it is not limited to our nation as we are seeing this now more and more on a world-wide basis!

For the most part, people have a **“What’s in it for me?”** attitude! Whether we’re talking about **work, play,** and sadly now, even **worship.**

First, let’s talk about the home—Many homes are being destroyed today because of selfish attitudes! We are seeing too many times of where a husband or wife decide that their needs aren’t being met by their spouse, so they abandon their marriage to seek fulfilment elsewhere! (I’m not talking about those who flee abusive marriages.)

Immorality abounds in our society and even in many Churches today as people hop in and out of relationships continuously looking for self-fulfilment.

And sadly, some Churches have dropped their Biblical standards to accept members who are living fornicating lifestyles because they are more interested in exalting their Church as an institution than they are of exalting the Lord Jesus Christ whose Body is the Church!

The so-called **“Emerging Church Movement”** is all about giving people what they want! **“Church the way you hoped it could be.”**

Listen to me, **Church is not supposed to be the way you want it to be or the way I want it to be or the way that either one of us hopes it will be!** Church is supposed to be the way the LORD would have it to be!

Many Church pews are empty because of selfish attitudes!

People have other places to be...other things to do...other things that take priority over God and His Church!

And many of the Churches that draw large crowds do so because many of these so-called Churches have a consumer-centered Church rather than a Christ-centered Church! (i.e. Giving people what they want rather than what they need!) I get solicitations of all kinds from those who desire to help US be that way—For a price

Whatever happened to loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength? Whatever happened to seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness? Sadly, if God is given anything, He is more likely to be given what’s left instead of what’s right!

“Lovers of their own selves”

2. **“Covetous”** (literally, **“fond of silver or money”**)
Ecclesiastes 5:10—“He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity.”

The “covetous” attitude can be described many different ways:

- a. **To be “covetous” means to be dissatisfied with one’s lot in life!** *By that I mean it is to love and pursue money and personal wealth instead of being content with the basic needs of one’s life and pursuing righteousness and the will of God!*
- b. **To be “covetous” is an excessive eagerness to obtain or possess things!** *i.e. Lovers of money and the things that money can buy!*
- c. **To be “covetous” is having a desire for that which is not one’s own or for that which is forbidden!**
- d. **To be “covetous” is to make possessions the focus of one’s life!**
- e. **To be “covetous” is to live for self-pleasure instead of living for God’s pleasure!**

In this universe there is **God**, and there are **people** and there are **things**. We should **worship God, love people, and use things** (wisely).

But when one starts **worshipping self, they begin to ignore God and start loving things and using people**. And that is a sure fire formula for a miserable life, but it sadly characterizes most of America today and even many who call themselves “*Christians*”.

The world’s craving for more things is just one more evidence that their hearts have turned away from God! And because covetousness is so prevalent in our day, it has brought on enormous debt in the lives of many!

The Christian financial guru, Dave Ramsey said that, “*People buy things they don’t need, with money that they don’t have, to impress people don’t like!*”

Even many Believers, because of covetousness, have over-extended themselves to such an extent that they “*can’t afford*” to tithe or give to missions!

Understand that to be “*covetous*” is tied very closely to that “*self-love*” that we just mentioned! A lot of times it is about trying **to elevate one’s self-worth!** The more people have, the more they feel **exalted before and above others!**

Now, In last Sunday night’s message I dealt with this matter pretty extensively as it relates to believers! And then we dealt with it again in our Wednesday night Bible study this past Wednesday as we looked at the greed of Elisha’s servant, Gehazi! So, I’m not going to spend anymore time on it tonight, but we know it to be a problem in our world and especially in our own dear country!

3. “**Boasters.**” (literally, “*braggart*”)

The word “**boasters**” describes an **arrogant individual who exaggerates or is disposed to exaggerate their own worth or importance in an overbearing manner.**

In their boastings, **they tend to stretch the truth in order to magnify themselves in their attempt to impress others.**

Selfish people are naturally boastful. If you want to know whether somebody loves themselves, then just listen to who they talk about. Our society has taken this **self-esteem** thing to a whole new level.

We find it **at school, at work, in sports and other places. Attitudes:** “*Look what I did!*” “*Look what I have!*” “*I am the best!*” or “*I am the greatest!*”

Again, this “**selfie**” generation we live in is all about **self-love** and **self-exaltation!**

4. “**Proud.**” (The word translated “**proud**” here means “**appearing above others (conspicuous), that is, (figuratively) haughty**”)

Boasting is the outward manifestation of the inward **pride or arrogancy.**

The man who is proud in his heart normally has contempt in his heart for everyone else including God.

Psalm 10:4–“The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.”

Pride in its ultimate form has no need or want God!

Proverbs 8:13–“The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.”

Proverbs 13:10–“Only by pride cometh contention...”

Pride is the ultimate cause of fighting and war of any kind!

Proverbs 16:18–“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.”

This naturally leads to the fifth characteristic here:

5. **“Blasphemers.”**

Given to bitter and defiant speech!

It's the attitude of, *“I don't need you and I don't need your God!”*

Webster = *“To speak evil of; to utter abuse or slander against; to speak reproachfully of.”*

Pride first leads to the former **boasting** we talked about. But it will ultimately lead to **blasphemy!**

Have you ever seen a time when folks talk so abusively and disrespectfully to and about others?

Have you ever seen a time when God's name and the name of Jesus Christ have been taken so lightly? There is little to no regard of God or His Son, Jesus Christ!

Where there is no regard for someone, men seem to profane them!

6. **“Disobedient to parents”**

Some of this has to do with parents not being what they should be! If parents are **selfish** and **self-centered** in their life, what makes them think that their children would be anything less!

We see a lot of **open defiance against parents!** I'm amazed at what some parents put up with from their children in our day. Some of it goes back to parents not wanting to hurt a child's self-esteem.

God forbid that you would tell a child **“No!”**
Why it might warp them for life!

Children need some warping or they'll grow up full of the characteristics of this list! AMEN!

7. **“Unthankful.”** (means *thankless; ungrateful*)
i.e. No sense of gratitude or appreciation for what one has and/or receives; no giving of thanks to God or man.

Many people today feel that the world, society in general, including both business and government **owe them** the good things of life. They have little, if any, sense of debt to others. That's why we have largely become a welfare state and it is getting more so that way as time goes by.

The man who is consumed with self can find little room to appreciate others.

Some folks waste time on the job, while doing mediocre work, and feel little obligation to the world and society. They fail to see how privileged they are to be alive and to live in such a beautiful world and to have a job and friends and neighbors.

They fail to see how good God has been to them, and how caring and responsible some people are.

Therefore, they reach out to get more and more without sensing any need to express thanks and appreciation.

They take and take and forget all about the thanksgiving they owe to God and men.

Romans 1:21 speaks about this downward spiral of mankind.
“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened”

1 Thessalonians 5:18—“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

Psalms 100:4—“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.”