

## Message #11

## II Timothy 3:1-9

The state of Indiana has really hit the news big time because of a new law that permits business owners to follow their own religious beliefs in their choice of doing business. This has particularly upset the homosexual community because it could mean that a business could discriminate against them. Frankly, if a business is going to follow their beliefs and not do business with sinners, that business will be out of business because all people are sinners. If you take that list of sins in I Corinthians 6:9-10, which specifically mentions homosexuals, it also mentions fornicators, adulterers, idolaters, drunks, thieves, verbal revilers and swindlers. So if one was to be consistent, one would have to cut off doing business from all these people and you would be out of business.

But be that as it may, this does raise an interesting point. Would you have believed back in the 60's or 70's that this would even be an issue? Would you have ever dreamed that a state would be hated because it took a stand for religious freedom? Times have changed. The world is not getting better; it is progressively spiraling downward and getting worse. This fact was clearly predicted in Scripture. The world is going to get worse and worse until finally Jesus Christ comes back and takes charge of it.

Now you will notice from **verse 1** that the discussion concerns the times known as the "last days." **Now the words "last days" do not mean they are few in number, but final in time.** This term may mean three things: 1) The last days just before Jesus Christ returns to Jerusalem as King of Kings, which days would include the days of the Tribulation; 2) The last days of the Church Age—just before the Rapture; 3) The last days of any time frame—things will always get progressively worse. The term covers all last days' things, but primarily Paul has in mind the final days that lead to the Rapture of the Church and the end of the Church Age.

There is no doubt that as we near the end of the Church Age, difficult times will come. One of the greatest difficulties will actually be finding godly people and godly ministers who will preach the truth. There will be all kinds of ministers who will stand up and talk; but few who will actually rightly divide Scriptures. There will be plenty of people who will go to church, who have the outward appearance of being godly; but it will be the rare believer who truly and actually is pursuing a Biblical godliness.

We are not speaking here about being sinless. There is no such thing as a sinless person. In fact, John said in his final days on earth that if we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves. So the idea of being godly is not the idea of being sinless. But it is the concept of being right in our relationship with God because we are lining up our lives with God's precious Word. We can be sinful and still be spiritual, as long as we are facing things and confessing things to God and maintaining a walking in light fellowship with Him. But the truth is in the last days of the church, finding religious people won't be a problem; but finding those who are Biblically right with God will be a big problem.

**IN THE LAST DAYS OF THE CHURCH AGE, THINGS WILL BECOME DIFFICULT FOR FAITHFUL PEOPLE BECAUSE THERE WILL BE A MAJOR DEPARTURE FROM TRUE GODLINESS BY THOSE WHO PRETEND TO BE RIGHT WITH GOD.**

That word “difficult” in **verse 1** describes a time that is hard, painful and difficult to deal with if you are a faithful believer (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 478). The days will become progressively difficult for those committed to godliness and the truth of the Word of God.

Faithful people will find it very hard and difficult and when they speak out or stand up for the truth of God, they will receive fierce reactions. Paul says faithful believers need to “realize” or “know” this. Religion will flourish, but true godliness will not.

Now the main challenge of **verse 5** is to avoid men who manifest these things. It seems to me that “the men,” articular in Greek, refers to men who are leading people.

There are two simple points Paul communicates to Timothy:

**POINT #1** – Realize that godless qualities of religious people will increase. **3:2-5a**

Paul is about to list, by my count, 19 qualities that will dominate most religious people and most religious leaders. One commentator said this is one lengthy “vice list.” These qualities are qualities we definitely want to avoid ourselves. I think as we near the end, we will war with some of these things ourselves in our own flesh. This is what I find so troubling about this list, there are some things in the list we struggle with ourselves and what we want to do is go to work on avoiding them. And also those who consistently have these qualities we want to avoid them too.

The verb “shall be” that goes with all of these qualities is a future tense, middle voice, indicative mood verb. What that means is it is a fact that these qualities will intensify (indicative mood); these qualities will exist and those who let them exist in their lives are aggressively causing the action (middle voice) and this will intensify in the future (future tense).

**Quality #1** - Religious people will be self-lovers. **3:2a**

**I am convinced that the more spiritual we are, the more we loathe ourselves and not love ourselves.** At least this is the way it is working in me. I see more and more of the failure I really am. Paul saw himself as a wretched man, not as a man who loved himself. It is imperative that in some respects we loathe ourselves because that is what causes us to love Jesus Christ. In Romans 7:24, where Paul calls himself a wretched man, he focuses his attention in Romans 7:25 on Jesus Christ.

As we near the end, more and more religious people will fall in love with themselves. They will fall in love with a “self-centered narcissistic” philosophy. More and more people will love themselves and the way they are to the point they don’t even think they need to change.

**Quality #2** - Religious people will be money -lovers. **3:2b**

The word literally means just what it says. More and more people will fall in love with the loot. This is especially true when it comes to religious people. As we near the end, they will love their money. They will not sacrificially give their money to the Lord; they love it too much.

They will claim their money is proof they are right with God. There will be a rise of self-centered greedy people whose goal it is to heap up a great fortune here on earth. They will love their money; they will hoard their money and they will spend it on themselves.

This is a threat to us all because we all need money to live. But what we don't want to do is ever forget that how we use our money on earth will in part determine our treasure in heaven.

**Quality #3** - Religious people will be boastful. **3:2c**

This is a very intriguing word because it refers to one who arrogantly boasts about their own abilities and skills, but really they are an imposter. This is a specific boasting that is proud of one's own significance. It is a boasting of one's own importance, when in all reality it isn't true.

This is seen in many ways. There are those who claim they know Greek and Hebrew, who did not know it nor have they formally studied it. There are those who claim they have seen God do so much with them when in all reality God hasn't done much of anything. There are those who brag about their skills and abilities, when they don't actually have those abilities. As we near the end, more and more of this kind of boasting will escalate.

**Quality #4** - Religious people will be arrogant. **3:2d**

As we near the end, there will be a total lack of humility. Men, in the arena of religion, will be arrogant and haughty and proud. They will be proud of their accomplishments, proud of their education, proud of their spiritual achievements and even proud of their sin. But there will be no humility seen at all.

**Quality #5** - Religious people will be revilers. **3:2e**

This word has to do with speaking lightly or profanely about sacred things. This is one who speaks impiously or slanders God. As we near the end, verbally abusive people will multiply. They will speak out against anything or anyone. People will speak out against things sacred such as sanctity of life; the sacredness of marriage or even the exposition of the Scriptures.

**Quality #6** - Religious people will be disobedient to parents. **3:2f**

Timothy's parents had been a great influence upon him (1:5). As we near the end, there will be a major defection from parental instruction and, as one commentator said, children will not respond to "parental discipline." Children will disregard things parents held as sacred.

Children will disobey their parents' council and question their beliefs. It will be as Agur said in Proverbs 30:11—"There is a generation that curses their father and does not bless their mother."

Opposition against parental authority is one of the key marks of our age. Colleges, Universities and even some High Schools teach children to disregard the values of the parents. Children are not being controlled today; they are more out of control.

There was someone who came to this church who was a parent who said what this church does is exactly what a church should do; but they were not coming because they went to a place where the children thought it was fun. The parent didn't have the say, the children did.

**Quality #7** - Religious people will be ungrateful. **3:2g**

As we near the end, people will be unthankful, ungrateful and unappreciative. Thankfulness is something God wants in our lives. He wants us thankful people. As we near the end that quality will disappear from even those who are going to church.

**Quality #8** - Religious people will be unholy. **3:2h**

This word refers to that which is profane in the sense of not having piety, holiness or righteousness. People will be given to things not pure. This word has to do with a real lack of righteousness in people who are going to church and those leading the church. As we near the end, those who are striving to be holy, as God would have them be, will be fewer and fewer. Men will be more and more separated from the world; but will be more and more drawn into the world.

**Quality #9** - Religious people will be unloving. **3:3a**

The particular Greek word used here speaks of not having the normal love for family that one normally would have. As we near the end, we will see more and more religious people who will not have the love they should have for even their own family.

As we near the end more and more husbands and wives will cheat on their mates, hate their mates or walk away from their families. We will learn of more and more cases of child abuse. There will be an increase of an unloving spirit even in homes that claim they are Christian.

**Quality #10** - Religious people will be irreconcilable. **3:3b**

As we near the end there will be an escalation of an unforgiving and irreconcilable mindset in people who claim they are right with God. People will hold grudges and there will be nothing that can be done or said that can appease or pacify the situation.

When people come to us and say "they are sorry" and that they did wrong, we are obligated to forgive them.

As we near the end, it won't matter if people do this or not, they will not let it go. As Dr. Hendriksen said, "their feuds never end."

People who are right with God are kind, tenderhearted and forgiving people (Eph. 4:32). But as we near the end more and more people will be irreconcilable.

**Quality #11** - Religious people will be malicious gossips. **3:3c**

As we near the end, more and more people who claim they have a great relationship with God; will not control their tongues. They will shoot of their mouths and slander people and talk about others even if it is not true.

**Quality #12** - Religious people will be without self-control. **3:3d**

As we near the end, more and more people who claim they are right with God will lack self-control and self-restraint and self-discipline. They will not be able to restrain themselves from anything. They will be powerless to control themselves and obviously one reason why they are powerless is that they are not walking in an honest relationship with God. They will not be able to say "no" to their emotional impulses even if those impulses are morally wrong.

**Quality #13** - Religious people will be brutal. **3:3e**

This word describes one who is untamed, ferocious and savage. One commentator said this describes one who is "brutal, brutish, and uncivilized." Keep in mind these are people going to church who claim they are right with God. These are people who would literally rip someone to shreds if it meant they got more.

**Quality #14** - Religious people will be haters of that which is good. **3:3f**

These people will actually hate anything God's Word would classify as good. They will hate good things; good people; good teaching and good worship. These kinds of people will be drawn to things that aren't good. They will be "antagonistic toward whatever is good."

**Quality #15** - Religious people will be treacherous. **3:4a**

The word "treacherous" was a term used for Judas and was translated "traitor" (Luke 6:16). It describes one who betrays another. As we near the end, people who claim they are right with God will not be loyal people. They will be disloyal traitors.

**Quality #16** - Religious people will be reckless. **3:4b**

This word means that as we near the end, more and more people claiming they are right with God will recklessly move forward with a lack of clear thinking and planning.

They will not pray and wait on the Lord; they will just hastily move forward in a reckless way. They will be headstrong and not teachable and pliable.

**Quality #17** - Religious people will be conceited. **3:4c**

This Greek word means they will be puffed up with pride. As we near the end, more and more people will be full of themselves. They will be puffed up with pride and not humble.

**Quality #18** - Religious people will love pleasures more than God. **3:4d**

As we near the end, more and more religious people will be personal pleasure lovers. If given a choice to love pleasure more than God, they will choose pleasure.

**Quality #19** - Religious people will have a form of godliness, but not the power of it. **3:5**

Now the true source of power is the Word of God, which is applied by the Spirit of God. As we near the end, more and more people, who claim they are right with God, will have no interest in accurately understanding the Scriptures and then yielding to the Spirit.

The participle “having” is present tense and means this will be the habitual and continual action all of the time. In other words, this is not just some flesh failure; this is the continual and habitual pattern of life. These people continually say, “no, deny and disown” the power of God. This is the way they are behind the scenes all of the time.

**POINT #2** – Realize we are to avoid these qualities and those who continually manifest them. **3:5b-9**

Some people don’t get this point. They think it is just fine to hang around any religious person. If people are not committed to understanding and applying God’s Word, we are to avoid them; not fellowship with them.

Now the verb “avoid” (**3:5b**) is a singular, middle voice, imperative verb. Paul is commanding Timothy to make a decision, in and of himself, to turn away from these kinds of religious people. There are four reasons why we want to avoid these kinds of things and these kinds of religious leaders:

**Reason #1** - Because of their leading. **3:6**

These are deceitful people who creep into the lives of pliable women and lead them astray. These are the kinds of people who will lead others right into sin.

I truly believe that women are more susceptible to false religious stuff than men. Men are skeptical. If women would right now stop supporting the heretical TV evangelists, they would be out of business.

Husbands, you have a responsibility to know truth and see that your wife is solid in truth and in a church where she can learn the truth. A woman is emotional and at times impulsive, and false religious leaders know that.

**Reason #2** - Because of their learning. 3:7

These kinds of people always seem to be interested in learning stuff and running to seminars and religious conferences, but they are not ever able to come to a “full knowledge” of God and His Word. There are people who go to meetings, listen to messages, read books, attend lectures and listen to the radio; but their spiritual life never goes anywhere.

**Reason #3** - Because of their rejection. 3:8

Paul says avoid these kinds of people because they reject the truth. These kinds of people reject the Word of God and they reject the teaching of those who are godly. They have depraved, arrogant minds.

They are like Jannes and Jambres, who, according to Jewish tradition, were two Egyptian magicians who resisted Moses (Ex. 7:11; 9:11). Jannes and Jambres-types resist God’s truth and those who accurately proclaim it.

**Reason #4** - Because of their destiny. 3:9

In the end, religious phonies will be seen for what they really were, religious frauds. Eventually godless, religious people will be fully exposed. Eventually it will be obvious to all that they were nothing but play actors.

As we near the end, we need to realize that blossoming in true Biblical knowledge and true Biblical godliness will not get easier. Things will become more and more difficult. But those who make this their objective will get the crown.