

## WHERE IS YOUR LOVE?

### 2 TIMOTHY 3:1-2 (And Various Other Scripture)

#### Introduction

Paul is speaking to Timothy about the “*Last Days*.”

Technically, the “*Last Days*” is a term which **includes the entire time between the first century up until Christ’s return**. Remember that the return of Christ for His saints can happen at any time!

From what the Apostle Paul penned earlier in the Scriptures to both the Corinthians Church and the Church at Thessalonica, we know that he believed that the return of Christ was imminent– in other words **Paul believed the return of Christ was likely to happen without delay and that it could happen at any moment**.

In this passage of Scripture, the Apostle Paul knows that he is about to die (2 Timothy 4:6-8). The Holy Spirit revealed to Him that there would be some characteristics of men that would be distinctly observable prior to the end of the “*Last Days*.” Here Paul describes those times which would come in the future. He tells the young preacher, Timothy, that those times would be “*perilous*.”

Anyone that knows what the Apostle Paul endured during the time that he lived for Christ on this earth might be tempted to laugh at the apostle’s choice of words. “*Perilous?*”

Didn’t Paul himself live in some *perilous times*? In a sense, his personal life was one in which he **was often in peril** as many of the other believers were. But Paul saw a day in the future which was characterized by things that caused the days to be “*perilous*” **in general!** These times would be *perilous*, not just to believers, but to mankind in general!

The word “*perilous*” is translated from a word that relates to the idea of *reducing the strength; it means difficult, that is, dangerous*.

**In verses 1-5 Paul lists 19 characteristics of people in the last days that would cause times to be perilous—tonight I just want to deal with one--the very first characteristic that he lists here:**

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#### **“MEN SHALL BE LOVERS OF THEIR OWN SELVES.”**

The phrase “*lovers of their own selves*” is translated from one Greek word which is only found here in the New Testament. It means “*to be fond of self*” or “*selfish*.”

In other words, **people in general would become enamored with themselves and become self-centered**. When a person is self-centered, nobody else really matters—that brings *perilous times!*

Think about some current events which illustrate these self-centered and perilous times—Road rage, Senseless violence, Rampant Divorce, Child Abandonment, Drug Trade...

It is significant that men should be characterized as lovers of self at the beginning of this passage.

What we read that follows is a list of sins that flow from the corrupted hearts that love self rather than loving God or others!

#### **Let’s look at another day and time mentioned in Luke 17:26-30:**

##### **Noah’s Day and Lot’s Day were both a time of great and growing wickedness just like today!**

Morals declined as wickedness grew.

People were totally materialistic without any time for God in their lives.

People were preoccupied with their physical appetites, pleasure, and comfort.

##### **Noah’s Day and Lot’s Day were both a time when the wicked were taken with sudden surprise!**

Judgment was not immediate, but it was inevitable.

The flood came in Noah’s day.

The fire and brimstone came in Lot’s day.

The judgment of God caught them unprepared.

The judgment of God will catch some people unprepared when Jesus comes back!

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**Those were times when people were too preoccupied with their own lives to care about God or other people.**

**Those were times when people were too busy gratifying their own desires to care about God or others.**

Both in Noah's day and in Lot's day, people lived their lives selfishly without regard for God or man! They lived life selfishly!

Some might well say, isn't selfishness an inborn trait that we all have because of our sin nature?

Adam and Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden was one of selfishness in that they wanted what THEY wanted rather than what GOD wanted!

Those of us who have children can testify that we didn't have to teach our children to be selfish! We had to teach them to not be selfish! We had to teach them to share!

But, what Paul speaks of here goes beyond that childhood selfishness. It is a selfishness that through its actions denies a love for God or a love for others.

Before we are too quick to exclude ourselves from being in this group of those considered selfish, let me ask:

### WHERE IS YOUR LOVE FOR GOD? (Mark 12:29-30)

#### I. LOVE CAN BE MISDEFINED!

*"Thou shalt **love** the LORD thy God. . ."*

**What is love?** (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

**A. This Love Is More Than Just An Emotional Feeling About God!** You can have a mushy feeling, but that isn't love.

**B. This Love Is More Than Just A Expression Of Emotions About God!**

You can express so called "love", without it ever being love.

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#### C. This Love Is More Than Just A Fondness For God!

Too many people look at God as just a big Buddy up in the sky.

#### D. This Love Is Defined By:

##### 1. Our Attitude. (He is Lord.)

Just who is God to you?

##### 2. Our Allegiance.

*Matthew 10:37-39—"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."*

##### 3. Our Actions. (Luke 6:46; John 14:15)

What we do in our lives with regard to obeying God shows who or what we love.  
(Matthew 6:33—"But seek ye first. . .")

*LOVE CAN BE MISDEFINED...*

#### II. LOVE CAN BE MISDIRECTED!

*"Thou shalt love **the LORD thy God**. . ."*

**Who or what is the object of your love?**

#### A. Misdirected Love Can Become Self-Seeking!

*John 12:25—"He that loveth his life shall lose it: and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."*

*1 John 2:15-17—"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth. . ."*

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*2 Timothy 4:10—“For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.”*

#### B. **Misdirected Love Can Become Self-Sufficient!**

Rich Young Ruler in Mark 10:17-22

Jesus told him “*go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me...And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.*”

*Luke 12:15—“Take heed and beware of covetousness, for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”*

#### C. **Misdirected Love Can Become Sin-Seeking!**

*Amos 5:14-15—“Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the LORD, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate:”*

### III. **LOVE CAN BE MISPLACED! (Revelation 2:1-5; Matthew 24:12)**

Our love for God may have been there at one time, but where is it now? Are we guilty of having left our first love?

Remember - i.e. Look back at what you left!

Repent - i.e. Turn away from where you are and back to where you were!

Repeat - Do the first works!

### IV. **LOVE CAN BE MISUNDERSTOOD OR MISINFORMED!**

*“Thou shalt love the LORD thy God **with all thy** . . .”*

**Heart, Soul, Mind, And Strength**—These are all tied together!

A **Heart**—the seat of the emotions. It is what guides us!  
(**Matthew 15:18-20; Luke 6:45**)

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*Proverbs 4:23—“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”*

Guard your heart! Be careful what you allow to fill your heart!

What is your heart full of today? What’s in our hearts determines how we walk.

Is your heart full of fear, immorality, jealousy or envy, anger or hatred?

Be careful because what is in your heart will eventually show up in your actions.

B. **Soul**—the deep innermost being. It is the real you!

C. **Mind**—the thought processes. It is what or who we think about!

God should be in all our thoughts! What is on your mind?

D. **Strength**—the physical body. It is what we do!

What are you doing for Jesus?

Ask yourself the question. “*Am I loving God with all of my heart, soul, mind, and strength?*” If the answer is “**No**,” then you’ve misunderstood what kind of love that the Lord is looking for. He’s not looking for a half-hearted effort.

### V. **LOVE CAN BE MISHANDLED. (John 3:16; Romans 5:8)**

Because we mishandle our love for the LORD, it can cause us to mishandle the love our Lord has for us!

#### A. **The Lost Mishandle God’s Love.**

##### 1. **The Lost Mishandle God’s Love By Ignoring It!**

This happens when folks have too much else to do to consider what He did for us.

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2. **The Lost Mishandle God's Love By Rejecting It.**  
This happens when they hear it, but say "*That's not for me.*"
3. **The Lost Mishandle God's Love By Delaying It.**  
This happens when they hear it, but have things they want to do before they commit to the Lord.  
It is saying, "*Someday I will, just not today.*"

The person who repeatedly delays it becomes a person who, in the end, ultimately rejects the Love of God!

#### **B. The Saved Mishandle God's Love By Hoarding It!**

This happens when we accept it but don't share it.

### Conclusion

Where is our love for God?

(Have we been guilty of misdefining it, misdirecting it, misplacing it, misunderstanding it?)

What about God's love for us? (Have you received it or mishandled it?)

Now is the time to get things right!