

Scripture Guide- 2 Timothy 2:23-3:9

2:23-25 - Paul wants Timothy, as a church leader, to avoid wasting time and energy on disputes and arguments that don't help advance the cause of the gospel. Some common pitfalls of immaturity (personal and spiritual) are an argumentative spirit - needing to be "right" and a critical spirit - always looking for error in others and often blind to it in ourselves. Paul does want Timothy to contend for God's truth, but in gentleness and respect. Contrast this idea with much of the angry rhetoric that we see today on social media, talk radio, etc. What do you think it looks like to hold fast to truth in dialogue with others, but with gentleness and respect?

3:1 - Last days in the New Testament. "Last days" can refer to a specific time near the time of Christ's return. In a broader sense, the term "last days" can refer to the period of time between Jesus' ascension into heaven and His (future) return. It's this latter sense Paul is using here.

3:2-9 - Paul gives a list here of ungodly and un-virtuous qualities. Such lists were common in the philosophers of his day. The list is not meant to be exhaustive or a "check-list" of bad behavior, but descriptive of certain kinds of people. Note that these people were actually in the church, not "out there" and that they were attempting to exert influence and even leadership in churches that Timothy was giving leadership to. "Have nothing to do with such people"- meaning people who display this kind of ungodly character and yet who are vying for influence and leadership in the church. Timothy is to reject these people for leadership and deny them influence, or else they will bring harm to the church.

3:6 - "gullible women"- Paul is NOT saying that women are gullible by nature or weak-willed, but rather that there are certain kinds of people (could be men or women) who are more prone to being deceived or exploited by others - sometimes because of their own immaturity or susceptibility to temptation.

3:8 - Jannes and Jambres - these names are not found in Exodus, but in extra-biblical literature. They opposed Moses and may have been "magicians" in Pharaoh's employ. They were ultimately shown to be false teachers/leaders as God's truth and power were revealed through Moses.