**CONTINUE IN WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED**

2 Timothy 3:1-17

Key Verse 14

“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it”

**Introduction**



In the previous passage, Paul told Timothy to do his best to be an approved Bible teacher who correctly handles the word of truth. In today’s passage, Paul explains the nature of the Holy Scripture and its usefulness. Paul also teaches us what to love the most in the last days. May God help us to understand the value of God’s word and strive to go back to the Bible.

1. Read verses 1-5. Why are the last days describe as ‘terrible times’? (1-5) What will happen to lovers of themselves and lovers of money? (2b) What is the outcome of people without God’s love? (3-4) What then should we do in the last days? (4b, 5)

1-1, Read verses 1-5.

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. **2** People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, **4** treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— **5** having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

1-2, Why are the last days describe as ‘terrible times’? (1-5)

***But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days.***

* The ‘terrible times’ were translated in other versions as perilous times(KJV), times of stress(RSV) or very difficult times(NLT).
* Paul address the last days as ‘terrible times’, for these are the times not only for physical sufferings but also for inner sufferings caused by people’s sinful nature.

***People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.***

* These tell the conditions of man’s heart without God. In this list, the word ‘lovers’ repeats 5 times and the word ‘love’ appears 1 time.
* People seem to have unsound love problems. Times are terrible when people love the wrong objects. If the object of love is wrong, then spiritual and moral chaos would occupy men’s heart.
* The first nature of these terrible times is that people will be lovers of themselves. Here, “lovers of themselves” means they love themselves more than they love God.
* NLT says “for people will love only themselves.” We are living in an ‘I, my, me’ generation. In others words, people become selfish and self-centered.
* The second one is lovers of money. A godless man puts money in God’s place because he thinks that money can bring him happiness and security.

1Timothy 6:10 says

“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.”

1-3, What will happen to lovers of themselves and lovers of money? (2b)

***boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy,***

1-4, What is the outcome of people without God’s love? (3-4)

***unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure***

Matthew 24:12 reads,

“Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold.”

* People will quickly become emotional and angered without self-control.
* People will seek pleasures that stimulate their sensual desires through indulging in/consuming excessive amounts of alcohol, immoral relationships, abusing drugs, being addicted to video games, watching violent movies, and so on.
* People’s life philosophy will be ‘let us eat and drink for we die tomorrow’(1Co 15:32).

1-5, What then should we do in the last days? (4b, 5)

***lovers of God—***

* “Lovers of God” is the right identity we should have and focus on.
* Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’.”(Mt 22:36-38)
* 2 Commandments that Jesus summarized all the Law and Prophets are ‘love’ commands. The object of love is God first and others second.
* So loving God is the most important command in the Bible. When we love God, we love his word.
* When we love God we love what God loves and we hate what God hates; sin. When we love God, God’s image is formed in our heart.
* Then God’s Spirit will dwell in us and bless our lives abundantly through the fruits of the Holy Spirit. May God help us to be lovers of God in the last days.

***5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.***

* Many so called Christians in church will practice religious life in the last days. But they will not believe in God’s power.
* They will not depend on God. They will not have God’s word in their hearts. They will not pray. Such people are practically godless even though they are inside the church.

2. Read verses 6-9. What did the false teachers do? (6a) Why were the women gullible? (6b-7) What did the false teachers do? (8) What will happen to them? (9)

2-1, Read verses 6-9.

They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over gullible women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, **7** always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. **8** Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these teachers oppose the truth. They are men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected.**9** But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone.

2-2, What did the false teachers do? (6a)

***6 They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over gullible women,***

* In Paul’s time, Gnosticism invaded the Ephesian church with false teachings. Women at that time used to invite teachers of new philosophies, arts, and new learning at home.
* Gnosticism tempted women through using this custom and poisoned their heart.

2-3, Why were the women gullible? (6b-7)

***who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, 7 always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth.***

* Those women were loaded down with sins and evil desires, always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth.

2-4, What did the false teachers do? (8)

***Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these teachers oppose the truth. They are men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected.***

* Paul compares the false teachers of Timothy’s time as Jannes and Jambres—Egyptian court magicians who counterfeited the truth against Moses.

2-5, What will happen to them? (9)

***But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone.***

* But their folly would be clear to everyone by God’s spirit of truth. We must turn away from such people, instead we must hold on the true gospel.

3. Read verses 10-13. What did Paul remind Timothy of? (10-11) What will be expected of those who want to live a godly life? (12) What will happen to evildoers and impostors? (13)

3-1, Read verses 10-13.

You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, **11** persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. **12** In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, **13** while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

3-2, What did Paul remind Timothy of? (10-11)

***You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, 11 persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured.***

* “You, however,” - Although people are without love in the last times, Timothy must be different. He must contend with his own day.
* “Know **all about my teaching**” - Paul did not merely teach Timothy, rather Paul showed him by example. He lived by his teaching, and he was ready to die for it.
* Paul reminded Timothy of his personal life of faith through his example. As Timothy joined Paul’s missionary journey team, he witnessed Paul’s struggle to love God, to love God’s flock, and to serve God’s mission with tears and tremendous sufferings.
* Paul had a clear **purpose** in his life. He did not go anywhere without direction. According to Jesus’ direction, he was willing to go places by obeying the Holy Spirit.
* At Antioch, where Paul was expelled from the city for preaching the gospel ([Acts 13:50](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Acts%2013.50)).
* At Iconium, where Paul was almost executed by stoning ([Acts 14:5](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Acts%2014.5)).
* At Lystra, where they actually did stone Paul and leave him for dead ([Acts 14:19](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Acts%2014.19)).
* But God saved him from all these troubled times. Timothy witnessed all these.
* Sufferings and persecutions are the marks of godly Christians. Timothy learned these things by carefully following Paul’s example.
* Especially Timothy who is shy and timid must have learned Paul’s personal faith, patience, love, and endurance.
* The best kind of Christianity is not only taught, it is also caught by seeing it lived out in other people.

***Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them.***

* Paul was in prison and waited for execution. He knew that God was completely able to deliver him again, or that He might not.
* Paul seemed at complete peace, leaving it in the Lord’s hands. Persecution was not going to stop Paul from following hard after Jesus Christ.

3-3, What will be expected of those who want to live a godly life? (12)

***In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,***

* Paul is not surprised at persecution. As a matter of fact, he admitted the fact that everyone who wants to live a godly life will be persecuted.
* This remark may remind us of what Jesus says. In all the other beatitudes, the word "blessed" is used once, but in this particular beatitude, Jesus used the word "blessed" twice to emphasize the generous blessing given by God to the persecuted.

Matthews 5:10-12 reads,

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **11** “Blessed are you when people insult you,persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. **12** Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

3-4, What will happen to evildoers and impostors? (13)

***while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.***

* Impostors refer to those who appear good, but they are actually destructive forces among Jesus’ followers. (KJV, seducers)
* Both evildoers and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. Paul gave us insight into how many people are effective deceivers among God’s people – they themselves are being deceived.
* Motives are important, but we can sometimes place too much importance on them.
* Much harm has been done by people who were sincerely deceived and who tried to do wrong things out of wonderful motives, for others look at their wonderful hearts, they accept their dangerous deceptions. We can’t always go only by motives in others; we must measure them also by the truth.

4. Read verses 14-17. What is Paul’s encouragement to Timothy? (14) How does the Holy Scripture help him? (15) How can we be thoroughly equipped for every good work? (16,17)

4-1, Read verses 14-17.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, **15** and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. **16** All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, **17** so that the servant of God[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Timothy+3#fen-NIV-29871a)] may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

4-2, What is Paul’s encouragement to Timothy? (14)

***14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of,***

* This is the key point. ‘But as for you.’ Regardless of how false teachers and godless people live, Paul exhorts Timothy to continue in what he has learned. Here ‘continue in’ means ‘remain faithful’.
* It was as if Paul wrote this: “Timothy, you learned these things. Right now you firmly believe them. Now, you have to continue in the things which you have learned. The important thing is to abide in them, to continue in them, to never let them go.”
* There will be dangerous times and dangerous men in the last days – you must continue in the things which you have learned.
* There will be hardship and sometimes persecution as you follow the Lord – but you must continue in the things which you have learned.
* This was all centered on God’s word. Have become convinced of - Timothy was once assured of, but perhaps now he wasn’t so sure. Perhaps he wavered from time to time, so Paul helped him again

***because you know those from whom you learned it,***

* Since Timothy learned it from infancy, probably, his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice taught him.
* How beautiful it is to see a mother who is reading the Bible to children! Then children will sing like this- “Tell me the story of Jesus” We are thankful to parents and BBF, CBF, JBF Bible teachers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Qu5ZA4jTnk>

* Later, Timothy learned the gospel faith from faithful servants of God- Paul and his coworkers like Barnabas, Silas, Priscilla and Aquila. We must also stick to the gospel truth that we have learned and become convinced of and live a life of campus mission and world mission.

4-3, How does the Holy Scripture help him? (15)

***and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.***

* The Bible is holy. It is separate from all other books. The Bible is holy because it is the word of our living God.
* The Bible gives us answers to our fundamental questions- where we came from, who we are, how we should live and where we are going. It tells us God’s plan of salvation.
* Through Bible study, we can know that we are sinners, and that God loves us, and that Jesus died for our sins and rose again to give us eternal life.

Roman 1:16 reads,

“the gospel is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.”

* The word of God enlightens us to have wisdom for salvation through faith in Jesus. Therefore, Bible study is the matter of life and death.

4-4, How can we be thoroughly equipped for every good work? (16,17)

***All Scripture is God-breathed***

* When God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being (Ge 2:7). Likewise, The God-breathed word is full of His Spirit and life in it.
* Hebrews 4:12 says “For the word of God is alive and active, Sharper than any double-edged sword.”
* The Bible was written by 40 different authors over a period of 1,600 years. Yet it has an unified theme- the kingdom of God through Jesus Christ.
* The Holy Spirit breathed on each writer so that each word and sentence has God’s inspiration in it.
* The one true God is really the divine Author of the Bible. Since the author of the Bible is God himself, the word of God is the infallible and authoritative word of God.
* God is invisible. But God himself speaks to us through the Bible. Through words, we communicate each other and develop relationships.
* Through words, we understand others and express our opinions. Without words, building up a healthy relationship would be impossible even among family members.
* So a man of few words is often misunderstood by others due to lack of communication.
* Likewise, God has communicated and has developed relationships with humans through his words.
* When we come to the God-breathed word, we personally come to know God deeper, our spirits are revived and we grow in an intimate relationship with God.

***and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,***

* All Scripture is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.
* The Bible not only leads people to salvation, but also transforms their lives. School education cannot change human beings. Only the work of the Holy Spirit through the word of God can transform man’s inner person.
* The Bible is useful for teaching: one to one, campus group Bible study, preparing 5minutes messages, preparing long messages like Sunday sermons and so on.
* The word of God convicts people of their sins through the work of the Holy Spirit and lets them repent of their sins and correct their wrong ways.
* But before trying to rebuke and correct others first, we ourselves must be rebuked and corrected by the word of God first. When the word of God grows in power within us, we are ready to train others in righteousness.

***17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.***

* As servants of God, how can we be thoroughly equipped for every good work? Ezra, a Jewish exile, had a deep sense of problem and broken heart for his time and people.

Ezra 7:10 says,

“Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.”

* When Ezra loved God’s word and studied with diligence, the gracious hand of God was upon him. He was filled with passion for God. He summoned the remnants of God in exile and took them to Jerusalem restoring the covenant community. He prayed and repented even pulling hair from his head and beard because of unfaithfulness of the Israelites through intermarriage (Ezra 9:3).
* This stirred the whole community making a decision to purge out their sins. Ezra’s preaching and teaching brought a national spiritual revival.
* Late Dr. Samuel C. Lee said that after 12 years of studying the Bible, he could grasp the chemistry of the Bible. He believed that the Bible is God’s dedication for and to us. As Dr. Samuel Lee loved the word of God, God equipped him for every good work. Then God used him so preciously to serve campus pioneering ministry by raising many young people as Jesus’ disciples.

**Conclusion**

We live in terrible times in the last days. It is very difficult for Christians to keep their faith. In such time, we need to be the lovers of God. All Scripture is God-breathed. What is our hope in our times? We need to go back to the Bible. We need to study the Bible with all our hearts. We must be lovers of the Bible. Then God would mold us as approved Bible teachers and qualified gospel workers. May God help us to love God and His word passionately. May He bless us to be useful servants of God.

**One word: Lovers of the Bible!**