

Facing Challenges with Confidence

2 Timothy 3:1-17

When faced with challenges, we need to understand that God has been preparing us for them all along.

1. “In the last days” (v1)
2. What the opposition is like (v2-5)
3. What the opposition does (v6-9)
4. Equipping (v10-17)
5. Application

FOR FURTHER THOUGHT:

1. Familiarize yourself with Acts 2:1-13, and read Acts 2:14-21. What was Peter's point about the things they were seeing happening around them? Now look at 2 Timothy 3:1. What does Paul's statement there say about the particular period of human history he was living in? Are we still in that period? What does that imply about how we should be living?
2. Who is Paul describing in verses 2-5? Does 2 Timothy 2:23-26 help you identify them? So who is it Paul is telling Timothy to avoid (v5)? What should be our stance toward people who don't know God? What about professing Christians who behave this way? See 1 Corinthians 5:9-13.
3. Look at the "bookends" of verses 2 and 4 ("lovers of self" and not "lovers of God"). How do those bookends cover all the descriptions Paul gives in between? Why does Paul keep coming back to character throughout the Pastoral Epistles? Who in your life can help you realistically assess your own character?
4. Speaking of false prophets, Jesus said, "You will recognize them by their fruits" (Mt 7:15-20). When you look at fruit hanging on a tree, what does it tell you? What fruits showed up in the lives of Timothy's opponents (v6-8)? What fruits did Paul's life produce (v10-11)? How's your own fruit?
5. Should we expect persecution, according to v12? Should we be concerned if we're not experiencing any? Should we interpret all pushback to our actions as persecution? How can we know the difference between persecution and correction?
6. What does it mean to you that all Scripture is breathed out by God? Think about the attributes of this God who breathes out His Word to us. What attributes of God are reflected in his inspired Word?
7. What are the four things Paul says Scripture is profitable for (v16)? How do the four relate to each other? What's the net effect for the person who orders his/her life according to God's Word (v17)? How does that help us when we're facing opposition like Timothy was?