

How to Thrive (Living near a Dumpster Fire)

FCBC 2 Timothy 3:1-5 11/5/23 Dave Gibson

READ: 2 Timothy 3:1-5

- **Glad you came today? You could have saved gas, stayed home, and watched the news to get this depressing content.**

PRAY.

LISTEN! Are we living in the end times?

- **2 Tim 3:1:** Realize this, in the last days difficult times will come.
- **Heb 1:2:** In these last days God has spoken to us in His Son.
- **1 Pet 1:20:** Jesus Christ was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but He has appeared in these last times for your sake.
- **1 Jn 2:18:** Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.
- **1 Cor 10:11:** Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.
- **Matt 24:36:** (Regarding the coming of the Son of Man) ...but of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

- Exp: In my personal understanding of the Word, I would say that we are already in “the end times.” I don’t personally see anything that needs to happen before Jesus returns for His Church.

- That said, I have no idea when it will be—of course! God does not consult with me on anything and that is perfectly brilliant on His part.
- In about 1987 a book was published entitled: *88 Reasons Why the Rapture will Happen in 1988*. By Edgar Whisenant.
- As you are aware, Jesus did not come back in 1988. He has also not come back on any of the other 80,000 dates predicted by certain people over the years.
- Jesus will return when the Father says.

Regarding the end times: “God put us on the preparation committee, not the planning committee.”

- The return of Jesus has plenty of implications for us as believers who live between the First Advent and the Second Advent. We will talk about some of those today. I will also ask you to reflect on some of those over the next month.
- **HOWEVER**, our issue as followers of Jesus is not planning His return but preparing for His return!
- The return of Jesus has great implications for us, whether it happens today or in 700 years. And, the Rangers won the world series so that may be the last piece of the puzzle!

Paul begins this section of 2 Timothy with this:

- **But realize this:** a New Testament “heads up/listen up/truth code.” Like: “Truly, Truly, I say to you...” “Let him who has ears to hear...” *Meaning, this is true and very important for you, the hearer, to understand and to act upon.* This is like when my dad was fed up and he would say, **“This is the last time I am going to tell you: take out the garbage!”**
- **The last days:** the Greek word from which we get our word “**eschatology**” or the study of last things. *Used here as the last of times—near the end of the world as we know it.* Near the time when Jesus will culminate existence as we know it and create the new heavens and the new earth. Jesus **created** by His word. He **sustains** everything by the word of His mouth. He will **culminate and recreate** by His word. I would think we are on the brink.
- **Difficult times will come:** the word “difficult” means “hard to bear, troublesome, dangerous, harsh, fierce, savage.”
 - **As you think about say the last 5 years has there been anything that is:**
 - ...hard to bear? How about wearing masks and arguing about masks?
 - ...troublesome? How about the absolute lunacy around human sexuality?
 - ...dangerous? How about the fentanyl influx and open borders?
 - ...harsh? How about the habitual calling people Nazi’s on social media?
 - ...fierce? How about people being murdered in the Middle East & Maine?
 - Now, this list of five traits could be seen in AD 70 or AD 700 or AD 1920...
 - *My point is not that these conditions have never existed before, but that they certainly exist now! If Paul said that difficult times will come in the last days, we can certainly qualify for that now.*

TRANS: Before we look at the way people will be in these end times let me say one more thing:

PLEASE BE CLEAR ABOUT THIS: The New Testament faith is not about merely surviving. It is about thriving.

- Our faith-walk of course has elements of labor and struggle and pain and grinding forward and enduring.
- But we are setting our sights too low if we only want to survive and not thrive.
- Jesus said He wants to give us **abundant life**.
- God says our lives can be characterized by **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control**.
- God says that our lives can be **full of courage**.
- *These are not “just barely surviving” kinds of things.*

Our current world feels like a dumpster fire behind an auto body shop is both ugly and toxic. Such a fire is burning trash, paint, body putty, chemicals, rubber, plastic, leather, and every manner of ugly material. It is hot, dangerous, and toxic. We live very near that fire. But we can thrive nonetheless! We have a Heavenly Father and the kinds of resources that are unheard of.

TRANS: So, Paul gives to us 21 traits of what people will be like in the end times. We will only look briefly at six of these. Then we will consider some of the ways that we can thrive in this kind of a world.

In “difficult times in the last days” people will be:

- **...lovers of self:** People will love themselves above others and, in general, will give their hearts to the love of the wrong things. Themselves, money, and pleasure in this passage. When you love yourself, above God and others, you have created the smallest possible universe. It is miniature. What did the genie say in Aladdin? **“Phenomenal Cosmic Powers, itty bitty living space!”**
 - To love myself above God and others is a self-imposed “itty bitty living space.”
 - It is boring and meaningless. It is foolish and dead-end. **It is pure misery in an itty-bitty space.**
 - **App:** To love God and love others opens up an expansive universe of meaning and purpose and joy.
 - **NB:** *If lovers of self is a sign of the last days, then we are there.*
- ...lovers of money:
- ...boastful:
- **...arrogant:** THE CORE ISSUE! Pride is a vile sin; it leads to all manner of other sin.
 - It began back with an angel named **Lucifer** who was the most beautiful of all the angels that God created. **In his arrogance** he decided to elevate himself to the place of God. *It did not work out.* He **became Satan** and was **cast out of heaven** and is heading for **eternal punishment and pain.** Isaiah 14:12-14.
 - It continued with Adam who willfully decided to disobey God.
 - **Psalm 10:4.** The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek God. All his thoughts are, “There is no God.”
 - **James 4:6:** God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble.
 - **Exp:** The levels of arrogance in our world are astounding. It extends through all levels of poverty and wealth. All levels of education and illiteracy. All levels of skill and inability. All levels of physical appearance. All levels of fame or anonymity.
 - **App:** All arrogant people will be humbled before the God of the universe.
 - **App:** My bigger issue is the work required of me to “humble myself under the mighty hand of God so that He will exalt me at the proper time.”
 - **NB:** *If arrogance is a sign of the last days, then we are there.*
- ...revilers:
- **...disobedient to parents:** Stable homes are a major building block of a stable society. One of the major contributors to the deterioration of our society and of all societies is the deterioration of the family. The main contributor to the deterioration of the family is the pride to walk away from God. The other contributing factors are legion. The outcomes of the deterioration of the family include:

- Divorce. Living together. Fatherless homes. Many forms of crime. Poverty. Gang activity. Single parents working two or three jobs. Latchkey kids. Addictions to alcohol, drugs, stealing, video games, and gambling. Kids arrested at 12 for carjacking!
- **NB:** *If disobedience to parents is a sign of the last days, then we are there.*
- ...ungrateful:
- ...unholy:
- ...unloving:

- **...irreconcilable:** unable to come to mutual agreement and unable to abstain from hostility. When one cannot be persuaded to reconcile a relationship or a fight.
 - Everything is black and white.
 - Everything is my way or the highway.
 - Every injustice and disagreement are remembered, amplified, and retaliated.
 - Any hint of hostility is enflamed into all-out hatred and attack.
 - Nothing is ever healed.
 - **Exp:** This stance of irreconcilability and hostility in our world can involve countries, political parties, individuals, philosophies, religions, and family.
 - **NB:** *If irreconcilable is a sign of the last days, then we are there.*
- ...malicious gossips:

- **...without self-control:** Self-control is one aspect of the fruit of the Spirit. In other words, if my life is in submission to the Holy Spirit of God then I will be self-controlled. I will be able to do what I should do.
 - **What is the current evidence of zero self-control in America?** Addictions of all kinds. Indulgences of unbelievable proportions. Bankruptcy in making personal life changes when it comes to relational style, personal fitness, substance abuse, habits, false beliefs, self-destructive behaviors, gambling,
 - **Proverbs 16:32:** He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.
 - **Prov 12:27:** The lazy man does not even roast his prey. But the precious possession of a man is diligence.
 - **NB:** *If without self-control is a sign of the last days, then we are there.*
- ...brutal:
- ...haters of good:
- ...treacherous:
- ...reckless:
- ...conceited:
- ...lovers of pleasure:

- **...haters of God:**
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- **NB:** *If haters of God is a sign of the last days, then we are there*
- ...holding to a form of godliness:
- ...denying the power of godliness:

Core Idea of 2 Tim 3:1-5: Be utterly separate from people who behave like this (except to influence them for Christ.)

31 Days of reflection on how to thrive when you live near a dumpster fire. Read one truth each day, find the truth in the Book, and apply it to yourself:

- 1. Be clear: God is sovereign, NOT the toxic fire.**
2. Be in love: with God.
- 3. Be dependent: God is willing and able.** Depend and strive, in that order!
- 4. Be connected: we need each other greatly.**
5. Be gracious: everyone is in a fight.
6. Be truthful: everyone faces falsehood.
7. Be separate: from the people of 2 Tim 3:2-5* (In behavior, not in evangelism/salt and light.)
- 8. Be holy and godly: it results in happiness.**
9. Be faithful: until He arrives.
10. Be ready: for His coming when we don't know.
11. Be evangelistic: say what is true about Jesus.
12. Be compassionate: people are in great pain.
13. Be looking: for the appearing of Jesus.
14. Be hiding: in God as your refuge.
- 15. Be prayerful: because God works.**
16. Be renewing your mind: through the Book.
17. Be courageous: in power, love, discipline.
18. Be selfless: it is the ticket to a fulfilled life.
- 19. Be clear that: life on earth is a mere breath.**
- 20. Be clear that: eternity is eternal and glorious.**
- 21. Be clear that: life is a gift to be enjoyed.**
22. Be clear that: no one knows the day or time.
23. Be clear that: we are created for another world.
24. Be clear that: everyone stands before God.
- 25. Be clear that: God deals with every injustice.**
26. Be clear that: If God gets worried, then I can.
27. Be clear that: we are destined for Christlikeness.
28. Be clear: hope is the sane stance, even near fire.
- 29. Be informed: but not obsessed.**
- 30. Be certain: You are designed and able to thrive!**
- 31. Be certain: We will see our Father, forever!!!**

App: Each day for the next 31 days **read** the single statement made for that day, **find** the passages in the Word that relate to the statement, **reflect** on it, and **apply** it for your life.

Take Away for Today: We have all the resources needed to thrive in a deteriorating world...but we must work to access them. These resources are fully available, but they do not fall into our laps like a winning lottery ticket that the wind blew into our car.

A tale of two men...during a 12-hour flight delay in a St Louis blizzard:

- One man was melting down.
- One man was thriving and helping.
- *Their situation was identical...the difference was in the men! Melting down is optional! Thriving is possible.*

Romans 15:13. “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

CHECK OUT TWO PAGES FROM Jim Dennison

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Faith Community Bible Church 2 Timothy 3:1-5 November 5, 2023 Dave Gibson

PRAY:

LISTEN!

A brief exposition of how people will be in the “difficult times in the last days.” vv 1-5:

The World’s last night cs Lewis

The Rise and Fall of the Modern Self.

TENSION: Major issue: How do we live in times like this? ...within eyeshot of the dumpster fire?

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Regarding the end times: “God put us on the preparation committee, not the planning committee.”

- **But realize this:**
- **The last days:**
- **Difficult times:**

In “difficult times in the last days” people will be:

- ...lovers of self:
- ...lovers of money:
- ...boastful:
- ...arrogant: THE CORE ISSUE!
- ...revilers:
- ...disobedient to parents:
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