**Community Group Discussion Guide
2 Timothy 3:1-9**

*Read 2 Timothy 3:1-9*

*Set the Context…***Context:** Paul is writing his second letter of encouragement and instruction to Timothy. The issues of false doctrine continued to increase in Ephesus, resulting in many who turned away from the faith (1:15). In spite of this, Paul encourages Timothy to focus his energy and efforts on teaching the true doctrines of the faith, rather than debating and quarreling with false teachers (2:24-26). In this passage there is a warning about the deteriorating morality of people in the last days. Paul speaks of people who will grow more and more godless and how ministering will come with great difficulty.

**Commentary:** In closing the first part of his letter concerning faithful and unfaithful workers, Paul warns Timothy that he can expect difficulty and trouble in the last days. His use of “the last days” refers to the time after Christ’s ascension.[[1]](#footnote-1) This means that Christians throughout the church age, including today, are living in the “last days” and can expect troubling times personally and corporately. The first and primary descriptor of troubling people in these days are “***lovers of self***” (2 Tim. 3:2). Self-centeredness leads an individual to the majority of sins described in 2 Tim. 3:2-5, as the worship and elevation of one’s self leads to self-indulgence, self-gratification, pride, hurting others through words and actions, thanklessness, and disobedience. These individuals also act as gossips, are violent, and pursue sensuality and pleasure instead of God (3:3-4). Paul tells Timothy the most concerning and dangerous aspect of these individuals is that they appear spiritually mature and godly at a surface level, but their actions disprove this. “***Having the appearance of godliness, but denying it’s power***…” (2 Tim. 3:5), this is much like the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus’ day who were consistently rebuked by our Lord for cleaning up their outward appearance while the inside was full of death and hypocrisy. (Matt. 23:25-26) Paul tells Timothy that he should, in fact, avoid such people (3:5).
 The type of disobedient men Paul describes in the previous verses also engage in deceit and taking advantage of vulnerable women. In their wickedness, they sneak into “…***households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions***.” (3:5-6). Their victims are morally and spiritually struggling people. They are weighed down with sins, most likely amplified by the guilt of things they had done making them even more vulnerable to the twisted passions of these false teachers. The godless people of the last days, both men and women, are also described as having insatiable desires for “…***learning, but never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth, …*** (3:7). Jannes and Jambres are references to the names of two of Pharaoh’s magicians per extrabiblical sources, and Paul refers to them here because they, like the false teachers in Ephesus, resisted the truth.[[2]](#footnote-2) Ultimately, false teachers will be exposed as erroneous and unfaithful because their foolishness will become more and more clear to those around them over time (3:8-9). In this is the hope that, though evil seems to rage and godlessness deepens, Christ and his rulership will reign in the end.

*Share main truths of the passage along with verses that teach them* and discuss how to apply to our daily lives …

**Key Points:**

* Disobedient Men in the last days (2 Tim 3:1-5)
* Deceitful Men in the last days (2 Tim 3:6-9)

**Discussion/Application Questions:**

2 Timothy 3:1-5

1. What does a self-centered life look like? In a culture that embraces the pursuit of what makes you happiest, why is self-centeredness a bad thing? (c.f. Luke 10:25-28)
2. What can the believer do to avoid shifting from a God-centered life to a self-centered life?
3. What are the dangers of money and physical possessions? What leads to materialism and a materialistic life? (Prov 11:4; 1 Tim 6:17-19)
4. What are the dangers of slander and gossip to unity and growth in the body of Christ? What do you think is the root cause behind slander and gossip that we could avoid?
5. Do you identify and struggle with any of the sins mentioned in verse 2-5?
6. False teachers are marked by an appearance of morality, yet they deny the truth of Christ by living in sin. How does a believer avoid being outwardly religious yet inwardly immoral?
7. In your daily life, how does the gospel truth help you focus on inward change?

2 Timothy 3:6-9

1. Why is accountability important? Who do you look to for accountability?
2. If we believed the dangers of unchecked sin in the life of people, how differently would we approach community and confession?
3. How does sin hinder our ability to know and understand God’s word?
4. What are some various passions in our lives that could lead us astray? How can we grow godly passions in place of those?
5. What is the difference between an academic knowledge of God’s word and a saving knowledge of God’s word?
6. What does it mean to resist the truth? What does it look like and how does it take shape in a person’s life?
7. What is the promised end of false teachers? How is this an encouragement to those who faithfully teach the truth?

*Share a key take away or challenge for the week…*

*Pray together in light of 2 Timothy 3:1-9…*

**Prayer Guide:**

Pray for our church that members of Highview would live in humility. Pray that we would grow to love God and others more than ourselves. Pray that our lives would reflect the Savior rather than our self-centeredness. Pray that God would prepare our hearts for troubling and difficult times by pointing us to the word and His truth.

Pray for our city that vulnerable people would be protected by God’s mercy. Pray that godlessness would be held at bay by the sovereignty of God. Pray that even what evil people mean for evil in our city, that God would turn it for good and his glory.

Pray for our world that God would soften the hearts of those who oppose and resist the truth. Pray that God would expose false teaching, making the foolishness of false teachers clear and evident in what they do and how they speak. Pray that those being deceived by false teachers would come to a true knowledge of Christ.

1. Thomas D. Lea, *1, 2 Timothy*, The New American Commentary, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman), 133. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Lea, *1, 2 Timothy*, 228-29. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)