

EQUIPPED FOR GOD'S WORK

2 Timothy 3.10-17

2 Timothy 3 begins with a list of 19 negative characteristics that can slip into a church's way of life. When this happens, it blunts the church's witness for Christ and hurts people.

In the second half of the chapter, Paul tells the church how to avoid these dangers.

Be disciplined by mature Christians (vv. 10-13)

In contrast to the false witnesses, Timothy is to follow Paul's way of life, even embracing hardship (2 Timothy 3.10). We see more clearly the contrast between the theology of man's glory and the theology of the cross.

Paul taught Timothy how to "do the truth". He taught him faith, patience, love, and steadfastness (2 Timothy 3.10).

What does Paul mean when he says "all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3.12)? While we are not being imprisoned for our faith, there are what we might call "soft persecutions", usually associated with a social cost.

What are our parameters on smart phones?

Do we play sports on Sunday mornings?

What kind of clothes do we wear?

How hard are family gatherings when there are non-believers?

Do we have different sexual boundaries?

If "anyone proposes to introduce into his life a loyalty which surpasses all earthly loyalties, then there are bound to be clashes and collisions" (W. Barclay).

It is better to suffer for Jesus in doing what is right than it is to prosper with men in doing wrong (1 Peter 3.17).

Trust Scripture as our guide (vv. 14-17)

2 Timothy features one of the great statements on Scripture. We can turn to the following four attributes that emerged from the Reformation.

Clarity – Timothy could understand the message of the Bible from childhood (2 Timothy 3.15). This does not mean that we understand every ancient Near Eastern cultural practice but rather that the plain truths of God and man can be understood. How great a tragedy when people think that they cannot understand the Bible.

It is this clarity that leads to convictions in the form of “firm beliefs” (2 Timothy 3.14). It is possible to read the Bible and not be converted. Scripture introduces us to Jesus, whom we are invited to receive.

Sufficiency - Scripture contains all we need to be right with God (2 Timothy 3.15). While there are many true things in the world that are not in Scripture (i.e. math equations or how to bake a cake), it is Scripture alone that directs us to salvation.

Scripture, at the time Paul wrote this, was what we now call the Old Testament. He says that this part of our Bibles is Christocentric (2 Timothy 3.15; cf. Acts 17.1-5). We remember Augustine’s remark that the New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed and the Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed.

Scripture shows us that we “may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3.17).

Authority - Scripture is “God-breathed”, meaning inspired (2 Timothy 3.16). This does not mean that God dictated words to the writers, but rather the human authors “spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1.21).

Teaching - In Scripture, we learn the truth about God and man.

Reproofing - Scripture acts as a mirror exposing my sin, leading to repentance.

Correcting - Scripture directs thought and conducts action. It is the standard by which we judge all activity.

Training - Scripture is the means by which I grow in my faith. Notice that this is for “righteousness”, showing us that our faith is to be lived out.

Necessity - Scripture is God’s self-disclosure. We know how to be in right relationship with the God of the universe because He has revealed it to us in His Word. Scripture is God’s special revelation.

Key Idea: Let the Word of God Dwell Richly

Application Questions:

How can we teach one another how to “do the truth” in the qualities listed in 2 Timothy 3.10?

What are the social costs of following Jesus in these times?

What does this passage teach us about the benefits of reading Scripture at every stage of our faith? Can you share any examples of being corrected or trained by Scripture?