

2 Timothy Lesson 7 Articles

If Jannes and Jambres were ministers of Satan's work, then Paul is our best example of a worker for the Lord. He hid nothing. See Acts 20:17ff. Paul names the cities in the area near Timothy's home, because Timothy would be familiar with them. Timothy knew Paul's doctrine (teaching); his manner of life (conduct); the purpose that motivated his life (see Acts 20:24; 2 Tim. 4:7); the faith that sustained him in trial; the long-suffering, love, and endurance that he showed, even when persecuted; and the wonderful way God took care of him through it all. Paul had been a divine object lesson to young Timothy, and we ought to be examples to others. Persecution is not something that Christians should deliberately encourage, but if they live godly lives, persecution will come automatically (see 1 Peter 4:12–19). "Yes, and all who desire to live godly" (NKJV) is the best translation of v. 12. When our will is dedicated to God, then Satan will attack us. You can be sure that during these last days, it will be more and more difficult to live for Christ. As never before, we need Christians who will, like Paul, live for Christ completely.¹

The sacred Scriptures of the early Christians were the books of the Old Testament. They were "inspired by God." They are God-breathed. God was involved in their authorship. Time and testing had proven them. They are "profitable" or useful (3:16). Paul contrasts the Scriptures with the teachings and writings that were not God-breathed, that were sources of error and ungodliness. They were circulating in considerable abundance in Timothy's world—the Apocrypha, writings of the so-called mystery religions of the day, the records of pagan philosophers, the views of certain schools of thought like the Gnostics, etc. In the midst of all this literature, Paul counsels Timothy to make the Scriptures his guide. Time has proven them. God inspired them. Later, in the midst of a massive outpouring of further written material of all kinds, the early churches became convinced that God had inspired numerous Christian writings—gospels, letters, and special accounts like Acts and Revelation. They now comprise our New Testament. They were proven by the tests of time and experience "so that the man who serves God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every kind of good work" (v. 17).²

There is a tendency in certain quarters of the church today to minimize the difference between life lived for Christ and the life lived in the world. The impression is given by some preachers that becoming a Christian need not entail any great change in life-style as long as one is prepared to give verbal assent to the Christian message. But Paul begins this section by saying to Timothy, 'You, however, know all about my teaching,' etc. He wants to emphasize the contrast between Timothy's ministry and the empty religion he has been describing in the previous paragraph. The Bible is quite explicit in teaching that the Christian has been called to a life of separation from the world—not in the sense of distancing ourselves from normal social interaction with people, but by resisting the pressures to conform to the world's values. Paul puts it plainly in his letter to the Roman Christians when he says, 'Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind' (Rom. 12:2). And there is no denying that the general 'pattern' of behavior in our society is one of total and utter godlessness. A truly born-again Christian therefore will find that not only is there a 'renewing of [the] mind' that takes place, but also a renewing of his or her pattern of behavior. But we must also ask why this tendency exists in today's church to dilute, or play down, the difference between the Christian way and modern society's way. Is it that we do not want to offend members of the congregation by making little or no mention of such things as sin, holiness, hell and judgment? Is there some idea that we will turn people off Christianity by stressing these things as essential elements in the gospel? The truth is we shall never win worldly men or women for Christ by trying to like them, but only by showing how different they can be. After all, if there is no difference, surely there is no point in a person becoming a Christian in the first place!³

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). *Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament* (p. 649). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

² Fields, W. C. (1972). 2 Timothy. In H. F. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs (Eds.), *The teacher's Bible commentary* (p. 768). Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers.

³ Williams, P. (2007). *Opening up 2 Timothy* (pp. 73–75). Leominster: Day One Publications.