

- *Warning against the godlessness of the last days. What help is it to know that trouble is ahead? What changes does it bring to what we do now knowing this? Is it specific to the kinds of trouble Paul was writing to Timothy about? Is it still useful to be warned about the godlessness of **these** last days?*

What's it there for?

- Easy to get sucked straight into the detail here, but what is this passage here for?
 - what is it?
 - its not simply a description of the kinds of evil folk will get up to!
 - its not intended to make us feel better **because we are not like this...**
- **Its a warning**
 - we are to **mark** this - note, pay attention, take our bearings from - so we can navigate from the known mark...
 - Paul gives Timothy (and us) an assessment of these things - often, but not always, self-evident that these are bad characteristics!
 - partly the cumulative effect, impresisonistic
 - partly specific, the actual attitudes and details he touches on that are worth reflecting on
- The first paragraph seems to be a **general description** of the kinds of behaviour to be anticipated **including within the church**, and the second paragraph gives **specific examples**, both of that sin in Timothy's context, and of that sin in historical perspective

Warning Specifics

- People will be (do!):
 - **lovers of themselves** - before they love God
 - **lovers of money** - before they love God
 - **boastful** - in their own ability
 - **proud** - in their own ability
 - **abusive** - kind of arrogance, wanting to demonstrate their own power
 - **disobedient to their parents** - culturally, an over-developed sense of their own worth - like they are **"God's gift"**
 - **ungrateful** - self centred, not concerned with anyone beyond themselves
 - **unholy** - wide ranging, general term
 - **without love** - without that defining characteristic of who God is, love for the other
 - **unforgiving** - if we don't love, we will be rule bound and unforgiving
 - **slandrous** - quite happy to put others down, to speak ill of them
 - **without self-control** - without an anchor in God's righteousness, our relationship with Christ
 - **brutal** - he's on a roll now!
 - **not lovers of the good** - again, fairly wide and all-encompassing!
 - **treacherous** - will to take advantage of others for own benefit
 - **rash** - too quick to act; again connected to not having a firm anchor
 - **conceited** - thinking more of self than is merited
 - **lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God** - centre isn't right

Key summary:

- **"having a form of godliness but denying its power."**
- in other words, apparent insiders!
- this is a response to a church discipline situation, about folk pulling (from within) in a non-gospel direction
- The gospel is **grace**, unmerited acceptance by God into his family
 - here, though there seemed to be apparent **godliness**, outward conformity to God's standards, the heart relationship with God wasn't present, the power of sins forgiven, dealt with at the Cross, and acceptance on that basis only...

So what?

- *"Have nothing to do with them."*

- its a warning to a church leader about how to deal with people who are drawing others away from the grace of Jesus

- So:

- some people need dealt with, responded to, conversations had, perhaps sanctions imposed; its part of church life that stuff will happen...

- also, challenge/warning to each one of us to not be someone who needs that kind of conversation!

- ...we must be slow to assume we are free from this kind of taint - **A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.** (of thinking we don't need grace, the Lord's death, and slipping into believing we have merit to bring to the table)

- I find it in myself coming into some of these EMTG situations, judging applications, visiting projects and places... want to be open to being challenged about my pride, boastfulness, and not just when I'm off on business elsewhere, but also here in Fintry, in my day-to-day living...

- Historical perspective (Jannes/Jambres):

- apparently names of Pharaoh's magicians, though not named in the OT!

- would have been part of the common currency, like me referring to Shrek or Bond...

- point is they seemed able to draw on God's power, but were not truly connected to the source

- they were impersonators!

- and they were rejected, opposed by Moses, and ultimately unable to match what God was doing...

- Obvious application to situation I came across this week...!

- **what is our application?**

- be on our guard... especially as new folk who seem to have good Christian credentials come amongst us, and at key points like appointing leaders...

- personally, be on our guard as we reflect on this list - **"that's not me, is it...?"**