

This is easy to recognize when it is happening to us, but we often have a “reason – excuse” for why we do it to others. We justify our own behavior under the guise of “just trying to help them...” It's not all that difficult to cross the line from advice to abuse.

disobedient to parents – self-explanatory

This is happening at a younger and younger age. In fact, it is becoming easier for it to be “less of a problem” as modern parents are far less inclined to expect their children to obey them. More and more parents “negotiate” with their children rather than instruct them.

ungrateful – not thankful or appreciative

We are not thankful for the many, many blessings we enjoy every day. Rather, we feel free to complain when things aren't exactly to our liking. For example: it's too hot, it's too cold, the stores are too crowded, I had to wait – for anything. On and on this list could go. Grumbling and complaining has become a national – if not world-wide – pastime.

unholy – not hallowed or set apart for God, also wicked and immoral

This one encompasses the entire list. If we were truly holy, truly set apart, and living that way, nothing on this list would apply to us. This can't be done in our power, only by the power of the Holy Spirit is this possible. (1 John 4:4 *"You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world."*)

unloving – devoid of natural human affection, calloused, and inhumane.

It's easy to feel this one doesn't apply to us because the explanations are “out there.” But are there degrees of this that could apply? I have heard it said that the opposite of love isn't hate, it is indifference. It is easy to see/hear reports in the news of horrible things happening around the globe and tritely think, “That's bad!” and then go right on our merry way because it isn't happening to us. At the very least, couldn't we even stop for a moment to pray and mourn for them?

irreconcilable – one who will not adjust or submit to the truth

This means people that won't listen to the Gospel no matter what you say or do because they love their life and aren't interested in listening to anyone who dares to suggest it might be wrong. This also includes many people who regularly attend churches that teach social reform and other “church light” topics rather than focusing on the Word of God.

malicious gossips – one who tries to cut down others while making excuses for their own shortcomings (see treacherous).

without self-control - lacking the ability to cause oneself to do something undesirable even if that act benefits oneself or others, unrestrained, given to excess

This includes a whole host of issues prevalent today. We eat too much, drink too much, seek too much entertainment (and the wrong kind at that). We engage in immoral behavior and praise, encourage or at least excuse those who behave in a way that is contrary to God's Word.

brutal – savage, cruel, inhumane, ruthless, harsh

This has become such a norm in our society that there are whole “classes” about how to handle bullies. Bullies used to be somewhat limited to the school yard bully forcing someone to turn over their lunch money. But now we have cyber-bullies, social media bullies, late-night talk show hosts and “journalist” are bullies, politicians, even young girls are bullies! To make this even worse, bullying has become an art-form worthy of being call entertainment!

haters of good - not loving what God considers good

This is most often seen with the opposite being true where we love (enjoy) things that God considers evil like enjoying music, TV shows, movies, etc. about war, destruction, hatred, violence, murder, etc. rather than ones that promote kindness, generosity, compassion, etc. God alone decides what is good – and therein lies the problem. We want to decide what is good. Makes me think of a few scriptures that say – *Everyone did what was good in their own eyes.* On no occasion where this is said is it said in a favorable way.

treacherous – one who betrays the confidence of others

One of the most “popular” versions of this in the church today is under the guise of spreading the word so others can “pray” for an individual. We feel the need to share another person’s personal information, so we can all “pray properly” for them, as if God doesn’t know everything about them and their circumstances.

reckless – one who is careless of consequences

conceited – having an excessively favorable opinion of one’s abilities, appearance, etc.

Bragging can be done in a wide variety of ways – basically anything that draws unnecessary attention to oneself is a form of bragging and conceit.

lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God –

This is thinking MORE about what we can do to enjoy life (eating out and other forms of entertainment, buying more things/toys, more vacations, etc.) than what we can do to serve God, share the Gospel, and help those in need.

holding to a form of godliness [having a religion], although they have denied its power - for their conduct nullifies their claim of faith

So, you see, it is easy to think that none of the list pertains to “me” if I quickly skim over it. But if honesty prevails, at least some of it applies to each of us. **The question isn’t whether or not individual characteristics apply to everyone, the question is whether the list of characteristics is growing both in depth and in width in our society. I think it is easy to see that it is – and on an exponential scale.**

It seems to me a first instruction of “cure” might have included “Check thyself” to be sure we are not habitually engaging in these behaviors – remember even Believers can engage in sinful behavior. (Consider: 1 John 1:8-10 *If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.*)

Paul’s instruction to Timothy about what to do is two-fold and given immediately after the list:

1. Paul’s first instruction, it is a “what NOT to do” instruction: “Avoid such men as these.”

In our society today a significant amount of emphasis that says these traits are acceptable, and even encourages them is the use of various forms of social media and throughout the entertainment industry. *Avoiding such men as these* would, therefore, include getting off social media and avoiding the support and use of the entertainment and sports industries who encourage the evils shown in the list. Note what Paul also says, **13 But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.** Are you being deceived? Are you proceeding from bad to worse because of their influence on you?

2. The second instruction is a “what to do” instruction – to counter the influence of the evil:

*14 You, however, **continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of**, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings [that is, **the Scriptures**] which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in **Christ Jesus**. 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

The world and the Church could be quite different if only Believers swapped the time spent on social media and entertainment with time in the Word of God and in prayer. That says it all.