

Adult Sunday School Class

Objective: Increase understanding of the Christian fundamentals Paul is reviewing with Timothy.

Opening Prayer: Father, I thank you that you hear me. That you never leave me or forsake me and that you are an ever present help. I ask for your special anointing on this lesson plan and the time that we will spend together studying your word. Bless both speaker and listener. Open our hearts to receive a fresh revelation from your Spirit. I bind forces that would hinder and welcome you as our teacher today. In Jesus name!

Read: II Timothy 3 & 4:1-5

Q – Why did he begin this chapter with the word but? - It's a conjunction used to tie the closing thoughts of chapter 2 to the initial thoughts in chapter 3.

Q – What are his closing thoughts in chapter 2?

- 24) And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. 25) Those who oppose him (the Lord's servant) he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, 26) and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

Q – What is his initial statement in chapter 3?

- 1) But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. 2) People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3) without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4) treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— 5) having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

– Did he just say “gently instruct those who oppose you in the hope of their salvation but have nothing to do with those who display the set of behaviors he describes as the terrible times of the last days”? - He did.

Q – Are those two thoughts in conflict? - Perhaps to some but I believe Paul is saying don't waste your time and energies on people who have already made up their minds about spiritual matters and deny the power of God.

Q – Why would he instruct Timothy to avoid people who really need God?

- Because of the choices they have made.
- They have chosen a form of religious behaviors and may even be church members.
- Most will have a selective interpretation of the word, some want nothing to do with the regeneration power of God's Spirit and refuse to follow the leading of His Spirit.

Q – Can you describe these kinds of religious people in a few words?

- Some profess to know God but have never made Jesus the Lord of their life.
- They may know little or nothing of the power of the Holy Spirit.
- They may profess the love of Christ but quickly become rebellious when things don't go their way.

Q – How can we be sure they have made up their minds about God? - By the attitudes and behaviors displayed.

Q – How do you contrast these comments of Paul's with the scripture that says He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance?

- God is long suffering, not willing or desirous that any should perish.
- However, be not deceived, God is also not mocked.
- As we read in the “trustworthy statement” in chapter 2, if we disown Him he will also disown us.
- If we resist the leading of His Spirit He will allow us to go our own way.

- Q – How do many in our day deny the power of God and all the while display a form of godliness?
- Many in main-line denominations fall into this category and we can cite many examples of their doctrines and behaviors that deny God's power.
 - However some charismatics and their doctrines fit into this category as well. :-))

- Q - How do some who believe as we do limit the power and ability of God to their interpretation of scripture?
- “God can't heal some individuals because their confession isn't consistent with God's word.”
 - However, people can have real faith and still not comply with all the word gymnastics of some charismatic doctrines.
 - Some insist on forms of repentance for salvation while conveniently overlooking;
 - The thief on the cross who simply said “remember me when you come into your kingdom”.
 - Paul's response to the Philippian jailer of “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ” for salvation.
 - The simplicity of the “whosoever believes in Him” of John 3:16.
 - My own father's conversion involved coming forward in response to an invitation at a “street meeting” in Baltimore and shaking the hand of the evangelist.
 - By so doing, he publicly signified his acceptance of Jesus Christ as his savior.
 - God is omniscient, He knows the thoughts and intent of our hearts!
 - Without taking anything away from the scriptures that say “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” and “repent and be baptized” our admonishment is the whole council of God.
 - One very important element of God's nature is it's higher than human levels. “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord.
 - Let's allow God to be God!

Q – Paul speaks of the devil's trap, what are the objectives of the devil? - Kill, steal and destroy.

- Q – Why would he describe the devil's approach to his objectives as a trap?
- Because his primary approach is one of deception, deceit and lies.
 - His approach is often subtle and indirect.
 - Some of his greatest success comes in incremental steps.
 - Little lies.
 - Flirtatious beginnings and minor compromises that lead to sin and self destruction.

- Q – Can you give me current day examples of people, taken captive by Satan for the purpose of doing his will?
- People addicted to substance abuse.
 - The senseless violence of the recent mass murders and school shootings.
 - Those who get hooked on pornography.
 - Thank God it seems to be behind us now, but for years there was a serious rift between my sister and her daughter.
 - They would hardly speak and my sister was not allowed access to her grandchildren.
 - It took many years and a serious illness (Alzheimer's) to thaw their relationship.
 - God only knows the number of people that have been destroyed by the devils attack against the family in divorce.
 - There can be Godly reasons for divorce but our society has reached an epidemic of family breakups.

Q – What does the word kind or kindness mean? - A friendly, generous, gentle or warmhearted nature, showing sympathy or understanding, being charitable and/or considerate, etc.

Q – What was Paul's instruction to Timothy about kindness? - Must be kind to everyone.

Q – Were Paul's instruction on kindness directed exclusively to those in ministry or is that an instruction to all of us? - Yes :-)) and I must confess, at times, it's been a real challenge for me to comply with this instruction!

Q – What kind of things trigger unkindness?

- Lack of sympathy.
- Impatience.
- Selfishness.
- Intolerance.
- Dislike or lack of appreciation.

Q – When are we more likely to be unkind? - When we're tired, exhausted stressed out or in pain.

Q – Are the above good reasons to be unkind? - No.

Q – Are there any good reasons to be unkind? - None.

Q – Is behaving in an unkind manner a sin? - At times it can be.

Q – Does God approve of unkind behaviors? - No, the scriptures teach us to “be ye kind one to another”.

Q – Why do people become resentful? - Jealousy, they feel like they've been deceived, wronged, offended or violated in some way.

Q – What is one of the most common events that causes resentment in the days we're living in? - Divorce and family breakups.

Q – Is it OK to feel resentment if you've been violated or deeply hurt?

- There is a natural healing or recovery process that we all go through when we're deeply offended.
- Feelings of resentment may arise but they should not be courted as they hinder the healing process.
- Resentment actually delays and at times prevents a complete recovery.

Q – What is one of the best ways to overcome feelings of resentment?

- Pray for the one who offended you.
- Sincerely ask God to help that person come to a complete knowledge of His truth.

Q – How many of you know someone well enough, who is not a member of your immediate family, to be able to accurately describe their motives and objectives? - Most will believe they know someone that fits this category.

Q – Can you describe the person in general terms and tell us what you believe their primary motivations are? - I once knew a man in his late 40's whose objectives were money, power, material things, comfort and pleasures.

- He told us in his own words what was most important to him and what his objectives were.
- He felt entitled as a result of who he was, the skills he displayed and his hard work.
- Do you know someone who at least fits a part of that description?

Q – Do they also match the attributes Paul lists? - Allow me to re-read verses 2-5 and tell us if the person you are thinking about displays these attitudes.

- 2) People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3) without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4) treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— 5) having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.
- Most of the individuals we've identified will also match many of the attributes Paul mentions here.

Q – Are the number of individuals displaying these attributes increasing or decreasing?

- They've been on the increase since Paul's day with the exception of periods of significant crisis.
- Like war, 9/11 or a serious illness of a close and personal nature.

Q – How would you describe the times in which we live on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the last days as spoken of in scriptures?

- I believe we are much closer to the last days than we've ever been :-)) but one could make that statement and be accurate on a daily basis.
- My inclinations are we are in or near the area of 8 of 10.
- Even so come quickly Lord Jesus!

Q – Another way I like to ask people to assess our proximity to the last days is to ask them when they believe the Lord will return. Raise your hand if you believe;

- He will return in the next year?
- Ten years?.....20 years?
- In our life time?
- Jesus said “no one knows the day or the hour only my Father in heaven”.
- That doesn't preclude us from having an opinion.
- However we should state it with humility and defer specifics to our heavenly Father.

Q – How did Paul generally describe the last days? - As terrible times.

Q – Is Paul saying the terrible times of the last days will create the kinds of attitudes and behaviors he lists or will those attitudes and behaviors create terrible times? - Yes :-)),

- Jesus said the last days will be full of troubles.
- Some of those troubles will be caused by the ungodly attitudes and behaviors of the people involved.

Q – Are the attitudes and behaviors he lists unique to non-believers? - No

Q – Are these attributes unique to the ungodly?

- Yes, all who aspire to emulate God and walk according to His word will disdain and abhor those kinds of behaviors.
- It doesn't mean Christians don't at times fall or display some of these attitudes and behaviors but the Spirit of God, does not and never will, approve of those who habitually display them.

Q – How would you interpret the phrase “having a form of godliness but denying it's power”?

- People who go through the motions of a relationship with God but won't subject themselves to the changing power of the Holy Spirit.
- They want to continue to control their own lives and destiny but also want a heavenly home.

Q – What does the phrase “always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth” mean?

- People who love to “sit at the feet of Jesus” as it were, in various forms of spiritual education but who's lives are never really changed.
- They may have accepted salvation but refuse to allow the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit to be active in their lives.

Q – What scriptures was Paul referring to when he wrote verse 16? - Old Testament scriptures.

Q – Do you believe he envisioned that his words or those of Luke would also be canonized?

- I'm not sure but I doubt it.
- I believe Paul knew he was being used by God to provide instruction and correction.
- However he was not presumptuous and displayed a spirit of humility.

Q – How did Paul describe his motives and way of life? - Faith, patience, love and endurance

Q – All scripture is God breathed and useful for? - Teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.