

**Ready! Set! Go!**  
**Remember This While Persevering**  
**2 Timothy 3:1-13**

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**Text Introduction:** We are going through this wonderful book called 2 Timothy which is actually a letter from Paul to Timothy. Paul writes from prison. He is preparing Timothy to take the mantle of leadership. His general theme is a call to perseverance. I am calling this series: Ready, Set, Go.

From a lot of different angles, Paul has hit on the theme of perseverance, so as such, we have as well as we have walked our way through this book. I hope that you can persevere a little more as we deal with the theme of perseverance. Today, we do so from the perspective of warning. Paul has already issued a warning about false teachers. Now, he takes that general idea of false teachers and moves it to another level so that we see some of the residual effects on a society that begins to fall into false teaching. In addition, we see some of the repercussions of a society dealing with the cumulative effects of sin.

**Text:** But know this: Difficult times will come in the last days. <sup>2</sup>For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, <sup>3</sup>unloving, irreconcilable, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, without love for what is good, <sup>4</sup>traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, <sup>5</sup>holding to the form of godliness but denying its power. Avoid these people!

<sup>6</sup>For among them are those who worm their way into households and capture idle women burdened down with sins, led along by a variety of passions, <sup>7</sup>always learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. <sup>8</sup>Just as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so these also resist the truth, men who are corrupt in mind, worthless in regard to the faith. <sup>9</sup>But they will not make further progress, for their lack of understanding will be clear to all, as theirs was also.

<sup>10</sup>But you have followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, and endurance, <sup>11</sup>along with the persecutions and sufferings that came to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. What persecutions I endured! Yet the Lord rescued me from them all. <sup>12</sup>In fact, all those who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. <sup>13</sup>Evil people and impostors will become worse, deceiving and being deceived.

**Introduction:** So, did Paul write these words in the first century? These words sound like something that could have been written last week, especially for us today. Such is the power of the living Word of God. Today, we find a warning that is nearly 2,000 years old but at the same time as current as this morning's newspaper.

This warning is a different way to view the Christian's need to persevere. I want you to see, in a very simple way, several things in this text. What are we to remember while we persevere? These things may be the very essence of our success in persevering.

## **Know This!**

There will be difficult days.

Paul is saying the same thing that Jesus said before His death. He told the disciples (as recorded in John 16:33) "You will have suffering or tribulation in this world, but be courageous, I have conquered the world." Difficult days should not surprise us. The NIV says, "terrible times." The NAS says, "difficult times." This word is only used one other time in the New Testament. It is used by Matthew to describe the violent nature of two men possessed by demons.

Do you not agree that we live in terrible, difficult, perilous times? Here is a warning: Because of this, we need a foundation.

What makes these days difficult? Let's just follow the text.

- We live in a world where sin is rampant.

The warning continues in verses 2-5. By my count there are 18 examples. I am not sure that there is any merit in going through all 18 of these things one by one. We get the idea that sin is rampant. If I could put one summary statement to the description, it might sound like this. There is described a love for the wrong things. We love the things that we should not love, and do not love the things that we should love.

- We live among religious people.

At first glance, that sounds like a strange statement to make. We might say that being religious ought to help things be better, not worse. But what was true in Paul's day is true in ours. Religion does not make things better, and often, it makes things worse, especially when as the text describes, by religion, we deny the true power of God. Religious people are the hardest to reach, because they think they are o.k.

- We often are led by various impulses.

We see this in verse 6.

- We live in a day of infinite information, but not Godly wisdom.

We have no shortage of information and knowledge in our world today, but we have a significant shortage on the truth of God's Word. We must know God's Word for ourselves, which leads us to the fifth reason for a strong foundation.

- We live among many evil imposters of truth.

Let me give you a not so earth shattering discovery. You cannot trust everybody who looks and sounds like they know what they are talking about. There are a lot of deceivers out there and will continue to be.

The deception will grow worse.

I hate to say it in such depressing terms, but it is going to get worse before it gets better. Almost wants to make you give up and some do and have. Is that what we are supposed to do? No, we have this whole book telling us “Don’t give up.”

**Avoid This!**

He did not tell us to know these things so that we would give in and give up; he told us these things so that we would avoid these things and persevere.

**Do This!**

Follow Godly Examples.

Follow God’s Word.

We remember these things so that we know that through Christ, we win. But, we remember these things so that we know the urgency of the hour. Remember Paul’s words in chapter 4!

I have been watching a little bit of the World Cup Soccer matches. I notice that at the end of the match (and you see this in all sports) that there is a different kind of intensity. Satan knows he is defeated, but as the days draw near to his final, ultimate defeat, there will be greater intensity to his attacks. We must match that intensity.