

Christ? Have you, yourself, become vicious, aggressive and haughty like those you are trying to reach? Have you, perhaps, even started using their foul language or perverted music to emphasize your presentation of the gospel? Or are you one of the devil's crafty lackeys seeking to stir up trouble within the gathering of Christ's people?

# PERILOUS TIMES

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(editing by Kathy Boynton)

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*“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, un-thankful, unholy, Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” (2 Timothy 2:24-3:5)*

This passage discusses the appropriate behavior of a saved “servant of the Lord,” toward unsaved people, who are opposing them. Those who love the Lord may be tempted to exhibit hostility and an attitude of disgust toward their unsaved opponents. Here we are reminded that the unsaved, who hate God and His redeemed people,

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are actually slaves of the devil. They act the way they do because the devil has snared them in his deadly trap. Thus, Christians are instructed to be gentle, meek, and patient with their unbelieving opponents. A Christian’s goal must be to lovingly seek God’s power to impart repentance to these often vicious opponents. If they fail to repent, these hostile lackeys of the devil will ultimately face God’s eternal judgment and wrath. No Christian should ever desire this for another human being.

Timothy then alerts his Christian hearers that perilous times are coming. Many of the unsaved will fail to repent in spite of the earnest, patient, and faithful efforts of faithful Christians. Their devilish energies will become violently aimed at these Christians. Some of these unsaved hearers of the gospel may even pretend to join with Christians. With this subterfuge, unbelievers continue opposing Christ’s gospel even among Christ’s people. True Christians are warned not to be deceived by these subtleties, but to “turn away” from such pretenders.

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