

“Characteristics of a culture in its last days”

2 Tim 3:1 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. (2) For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, (3) unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, (4) treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, (5) holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

(1) **Lovers of self** (self-esteem). The culture has an emphasis on self-esteem.

(2) **Lovers of money.** The culture is obsessed with gaining wealth

It is likely no accident that these two head the list and are to be seen in contrast to the final characteristic mentioned, which is, “**lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.**” In short, the culture has radically moved from its priorities of a love and devotion for God and Christ, and have fixed its needs on self-love and materialism instead.

(3) **Boastful** (*alazón* “a vagabond,”)

HELPS-Word-studies states: “properly, a wandering vagrant (vagabond), boasting to anyone who is foolish enough to take him seriously! This kind of person *claims many things he can't really do*, so he must always keep moving on to new, naive listeners.” So, he is one who claims to be better than he is. The emphasis of this word is not that he puts others down, but that he sees himself as great.

(4) **Arrogant** (a compound word, *huperphanos*, (*huper* = “over” or “above”; and *phanos* = “shines.” He thinks he “shines above others.”)

Whereas “boastful” speaks of an outward manifestation (being “boastful” before others), “arrogance” speaks of an inner disposition; the emphasis here is not what he says about himself, but what he thinks of himself. Thus outwardly “boastful” and inwardly “arrogant.” One who is “arrogant” as the prefix, *huper*, suggests, also implies that he thinks he is better than others. This word is the same word that is translated “proud” in James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5, “**God is opposed to the proud**”).

(5) **Revilers** ((*blasphamoi*, “blasphemers”)

The Greek word (*blasphamoi*, “blasphemers”), concerns one of “abusive speech” or “depreciating speech” against others. In general, we find it used in three different contexts:

- When used of God, the person wants to describe God as less or different than the way God really is. He may either attempt to bring God down to his perspective rather than accepting what God says of Himself, or he may ridicule God in mockery because he sees God as nothing.
- When he speaks of people, it refers to belittling people in order to stain their reputation. In Greek culture, this word was most often applied to family relationships, where abusive language was used against a father or mother.
- Thirdly, it is also used of ridiculing those who attempted to resist disorderly conduct. Thus, the person speaks down of those who desire “law and order,” because this person does not want “law and order” or orderly conduct.

(6) Disobedient to parents (*apeithés*, lit., “unwilling to be persuaded”; thus, he is “disobedient”)

The Scriptures strongly defend the authority of the parents over their children and for children to show great respect to their parents. The fifth commandment, “**honor thy father and thy mother,**” emphasizes the *respect* that children should have for their parents, but here Paul uses a word that indicates an unwillingness to be persuaded by their parents, thus referring to an unwillingness to accept instruction and obey them in doing what is right. One of the signs of a degenerate culture, is that youth are no longer influenced by their parents. They reject their standards and instructions, and will instead, do as they wish to do or do what others outside the home wish for them to do. Such conduct is not merely about rejecting their parent’s instruction, but it is as much about rejecting the moral standards of their parent’s generation. They are no longer persuaded by their parents because they are no longer persuaded that their parents are right. A degenerate culture is one which is marked by parents having less control over the moral foundation of their sons and daughters. No longer persuaded to live in a right way.

(7) Ungrateful (*acharistos*, *a* = “without”; *charistos*, from *charizomai*, = “to show favor”, “to give freely”)

This word applies two ways. It speaks of a person who does not show grace or favor to other people, in other words, he is not generous at all with his deeds; and

secondly, the expression came to be applied to a person who has been shown favor, but is ungrateful for the favor shown to him. Thus, he has an unappreciative attitude towards favors shown. Of course, this may be expressed towards his parents, not appreciating what they have done for him, or towards others in general. Instead of recognizing other people's kindness, he expects things to be given to him.

(8) Unholy (*anosios*, “without piety”; thus, without devotion to God)

These are people who have no regard for the true things of God. They are "irreligious," "not devoted to religious practices," "neglecting sacred obligations" (Kittles, V. 5, 489-592). They scoff at Christianity and regard Christian values with disdain. This marks a culture who therefore holds Christianity with contempt.

(9) Unloving (*astergo*; *a* = “without”, *stergo* = “natural familial affection”)

This is from the Greek word, *astergo*, (*a* = “without”; and *stergo* = “natural familial affection.” The word pertained to the natural bond of parents for their children, and for the children's bond to the parents. Titus 2:2-3 instructs that older women are to **“encourage the young women to love their husbands and to love their children [philoteknous, “to have a fond affection for their children”].”**

The current breakdown in the family and the practice of abortion reflect such a state of *astergo*, without parental affection. A father not taking the responsibility of providing for his family, or a couple that doesn't want kids, or regret they have kids—such attitudes reflects a pagan attitude.

In the context of charity of food and clothing, Paul writes:

1 Tim 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

In 1 Tim 5, Paul had just spoken of the need for children to make provisions for their widowed mothers. It is their responsibility to do so. But then Paul speaks in a more general way in verse 8, laying out the principle that a man is responsible to care for the members of his household. Indeed, the father especially has this obligation.

(10) Irreconcilable (*aspondos*, *a* = “without” *sondos* = “a libation sacrifice” that was offered when making a treaty”; KJV, **“trucebreakers”**)

Thus, *aspondos* indicates one who does not bind himself to a covenant or an agreement, or that he fails to keep one that he has actually made. So, this behavior shows itself by people who do not keep contracts that they have agreed to, or not wanting to make a contracts or agreements that would accord peace. Barnes writes of this word: “In either case, this marks a very corrupt condition of society. Nothing would be more indicative of the lowest state of degradation, than that in which all compacts and agreements were utterly disregarded.”

Therefore, contracts are broken, Marriage agreements tossed aside, oaths that were made are no longer kept. We see this with politicians, for example, who take the oath of office to uphold the Constitution, but who clearly have no intention of keeping it. In fact, the Democratic Party recently decided to take out of the oath, “so help me God.” No longer is God used in their oath. Why? Because #1, they don’t care about God, and #2, they don’t intend on keeping the oath anyway.

Or we see this in the marriage contract. Either couples no longer want to take an oath to marry, or if they do, they often disregard it. We can add to these, broken business transactions of many sorts, which, in these days backlog our courts.

(11) Malicious gossips (*diabolos*; adj. “slanderous”)

“One who is slanderous.” This refers to persons who slander others for the purpose of destroying their reputation. Thus, the aim of a slanderer is to destroy the person. Such slander is most often based on a lie or based on the misrepresentation of a fact by the slanderer’s false interpretation of an event or situation, in which the slanderer gives a false impression of the person’s motives or character.

In rare instances, a *diabolos* (an accusation) may be true, but it is sinful if the approach taken is one that desires condemnation rather than seeking a work of grace. At any rate, the purpose of the accuser is to slander and destroy the person.

Now this is not the same thing as when someone speaks about third party to someone else because of a sin that a third party has committed. In such cases, often the aim is not to destroy the reputation of the one spoken of, but to see something corrected. So that is not the same as *diabolos*, a “malicious gossip.” Nonetheless, it is sin for not having confronted that person privately first, before bringing the matter to another person. Yet in distinction from this, a slanderer’s purpose goes beyond this, for his motive is to stir up trouble for the one he wishes to destroy. The idea of stirring up trouble for the one being accused is also the motive behind the slanderer. I have not seen a person more slandered against than President

Trump has been since he took office. So I don't listen to CNN or MSNBC or many of these propagandist news outlets, because they are consumed by malicious gossip.

(12) Without self-control (*akratés*; *a* = “without”; *kratés* = “power”; antonym, *egkratés*; “in power” or “self-restraint,” or “self-control”)

Simply put, a person who has no power to restrain himself from following his passions in an unrestrained manner. Thus, the person is "self-indulgent"; "unrestrained," "uninhibited," "devoid of controlling his own drives and impulses."

(13) Brutal (*anémeros*, “untamed”; therefore, “savage”)

This word may be rendered, “untamed”; acting like vicious animals. It is taking the lack of self-control to an aggressive level. The opposite are persons who are peaceable and non-violent.

(14) Haters of good (*aphilágathos* “without love of good”)

They despise virtue! Hostile to the things of God.

(15) Treacherous (*prodotés*, “traitor”; “betrayed”)

This word actually means, “traitor” or “betrayed,” such as Judas in Luke 6:16 and of the Jews in Acts 7:52. This action can be committed against a friend or a country.

(16) Reckless (*propetes*; “to fall forward or headlong”)

Thus also “reckless” and “headstrong” as one who falls headfirst. The idea here is that the people who go recklessly forward, “headstrong and determined,” even though the way they are headed is destructive.

(17) Conceited (*tuphóō* from *tuphos* = “cloud” KJV, “puffed up”)

Only used three times in NT, it speaks of one whose “pride clouds his thinking.”

(18) Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God (*philédonos*; *philia* = “love” *hedone* = “pleasure”)

They have become fun-seekers rather than God-seekers; self-pleasers rather than God-pleasers!

What is so pathetic about this situation is that you not only find these people outside the church, but you find them in it.