

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH LORTON

Deceptive Appearances

2 Timothy 3:1-5

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Believers in Jesus Christ are IN Christ, but we are also engaged in spiritual warfare and our enemy's primary weapon is deception. 2 Timothy 3:1-5 offers a warning to Christians that Satan is eager to drag the body of Christ into disunity, violence, anger, worldly wisdom, and worldly striving for power and control. We must understand the enemy's tactics so that we are not deceived.

Take heart, you are IN Christ, and He has overcome the world. But take heed, you live IN the world, and the world in the power of the evil one (cf. Colossians 1:13, 2:8; 1 John 4:4, 5:19).

Satan lies all the time; it is his nature (John 8:42-45; Revelation 12:9).

2 Timothy 3:1 – The last days will be fierce and terrible

2 Timothy 3:2-4

The bookends of the list: lovers of self and not lovers of God. Everything in the list fits that mold.

2 Timothy 3:5 – The summary of their deception:

- Potentially deceiving others by outward appearance.
- Likely deceiving themselves by trying to add Jesus to their own agenda.

There is a form of godliness that is man-centered because it's energized fully by human agendas, passions, and strength. We are called to true godliness that is empowered by God's strength and guided by His wisdom and His agenda.

Questions to Consider

1. Read 1 John 4:4 and 5:19. In your own words, what's the warning and what's the encouragement for believers in Jesus Christ?
2. What is some of the biblical evidence that lies and deception are chief weapons of Satan?
3. In what ways do you experience spiritual warfare?
4. How would you describe what Paul means by "the last days" in 2 Timothy 3:1?
5. What are some common ways that you experience temptation toward anger, hatred, or worldly wisdom?
6. In what way(s) does "lovers of self" and not "lovers of God" frame this list? How do those terms characterize all of Satan's efforts?
7. As you read through the list in verses 2 through 4, which one(s) are especially tempting for you? Is there a verse or two that you could meditate on that would speak to that temptation?
8. Read verse five. What does it seem to mean when it calls out "the appearance of godliness"? God equips us with power through His Spirit for what purposes? Think about your stewardship of God's power. How are you actively relying on it to accomplish His purposes?