

## ***The Marks of a godless culture***

### **2 Timothy 3:1-9**

***You should also know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. 2 For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. 3 They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control; they will be cruel and have no interest in what is good. 4 They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. 5 They will act as if they are religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. You must stay away from people like that. 6 They are the kind who work their way into people's homes and win the confidence of vulnerable women who are burdened with the guilt of sin and controlled by many desires. 7 Such women are forever following new teachings, but they never understand the truth. 8 And these teachers fight the truth just as Jannes and Jambres fought against Moses. Their minds are depraved, and their faith is counterfeit. 9 But they won't get away with this for long. Someday everyone will recognize what fools they are.. NLT***

Paul gives a vivid and accurate description of a godless culture living in the last days between Christ's first and second comings. It is the culture that we live in today. But, God wants us to be UNIQUE! Paul is very clear to Timothy and to us that:

Our \_\_\_\_\_ (effectiveness) as a Christian lies in avoiding the pitfalls of a godless culture. So the question today is,

“What are the marks of a godless culture?” Paul gives us a few characteristics.

The marks of a godless culture:

### **1. A MISPLACED \_\_\_\_\_ (LOVE) (vs. 1-4)**

One of the images that the Bible paints for us describing our relationship to God is that of a husband and wife. But, because of the sin in our lives, we have cheated on God and betrayed His.

In the Old Testament, Israel had scorned God and followed their culture. He was no longer their love. God uses a man by the name of Hosea to illustrate the pain, sadness and love that God has for Israel even though they have a misplaced love. God commands Hosea to marry a woman by the name of Gomer. She is a prostitute.

### **Hosea 1:2-3**

**"Go and marry a prostitute, so some of her children will be born to you from other men. This will illustrate the way my people have been untrue to me, openly committing adultery against the LORD.." 3 So Hosea married**

**Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, and she became pregnant and gave Hosea a son. NLT**

Hosea does what God tells him to do and marries a prostitute. "The Prince rescues his bride and they live happily ever after." WRONG! Her lifestyle doesn't change and she continues in her harlot ways. Most of us would give up at this point, but, not God. He instructs Hosea to go get her.

**Hosea 3:1**

**Then the LORD said to me, "Go and get your wife again. Bring her back to you and love her, even though she loves adultery. For the LORD still loves Israel even though the people have turned to other gods, offering them choice gifts." NLT**

But, doesn't today's verses say the opposite? Stay away from people like Gomer?

**2 Tim 3:5**

**5 They will act as if they are religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. You must stay away from people like that.**

Paul is warning Timothy against the false teachers and leaders that will come. Paul even wants Timothy to avoid those who claim to be "religious" but live like verses 2-4. A misplaced love avoids people like Gomer and attends churches that are not teaching God's Word.

**John 10:10**

**10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. NKJV**

Satan is stealing our Judea/Christian foundation in this country. In fact he has even deceived many Christians. Instead of going after those who are not following God, we sit and judge them, acting as if we are better than them!

"While we were still sinning, Christ died for us" Romans 5:8 says, but we won't. at times, extend that grace to others. There is a disdain for the unrighteous instead of a desire to develop a relationship with them. God made it clear to Hosea that is not acceptable. Quit judging her Hosea and just go love her!

But, here is the frightening part of our verses today. These people that Paul warn Timothy against that have turned their backs on God could be me at times.

*They love money. They are prideful, They disrespect people. They are unforgiving. They lie about others. They are cruel to people. They betray friendships. They go to church.*

## **2 Tim 3:5**

**5 They will act as if they are religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. You must stay away from people like that. NLT**

The second mark of a godless culture is:

## **2. A DEFORMED \_\_\_\_\_ (FAITH) (vs. 5)**

Paul warns;

2 Timothy 3:5 ***“They will act as if they are religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly.”***

Paul is more concerned with the people that appear religious than people that are not.

A deformed faith will always be powerless to the things of God. But, what is the power that people reject? Better yet, WHO is the power that people reject? The Holy Spirit.

## **Acts 1:8**

**8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you..NIV**

The Pharisees are a perfect example of a group that rejected the power of Jesus Christ.

## **Luke 11:39**

**39 Then the Lord said to him, "You Pharisees are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are still filthy — full of greed and wickedness! NLT**

## **John 5:39-40**

**39 You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me to have life. NIV**

Right now the Arizona State Fair is going on. Have you ever been to the fair and seen that distorted mirror. A deformed faith rejects the personal relationship that they can have with God and therefore misrepresent God. Be careful that people are not looking at a deformed faith when they are looking at you! A deformed faith has have fallen into the trap that Satan set in the very beginning.

## **Gen 3:5**

**5 "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”**

This person appears religious but quickly points out the good and evil in others. They will act all religious but reject the “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness” of

Jesus Christ's Holy Spirit. A DEFORMED FAITH often accepts the validity of all other faiths and denies that Christ is the only way to God. We must gracefully stand up for the truth.

### **John 14:6-7**

**6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."**

The third mark of a godless culture is:

### **3. A REJECTED \_\_\_\_\_ (TRUTH) (vs. 6-9)**

Statistics have shown that over 50% of Americans don't believe in absolute truth. There is no right and wrong. It's all situational. Paul described the godless culture in our key verses;

### **2 Timothy 3:7-8**

**..... forever following new teachings, but they never understand the truth. 8 And these teachers fight the truth just as Jannes and Jambres fought against Moses. Their minds are depraved, and their faith is counterfeit. NLT**

A godless culture rejects the truth about God and who He is and instead chooses to worship themselves, material items or false gods.

### **2 Peter 3:3-4**

**3 First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. 4 They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." NIV**

We live in a time when education is stressed as vitally important and rightly so but as Paul pointed out that the godless culture is "**..... forever following new teachings, but they never understand the truth.**" People really want to determine their own way. Most of the politicians will cry the phrase "we need more education" to solve the world's problems. They reject the truth of God and rely on their own wisdom. Many of us do the same when we find our lives in crisis.

In his book, "**The Pursuit of God**" A.W. Tozer describes the difference between *scribes* and *prophets*. He says that a ***scribe is one who studies and recites to others what he is reading.*** He may not understand it, acknowledge the truth of it or allow it to transform his life. ***A prophet on the other hand is telling others of his first hand encounter of experiencing God and being in His presence.*** It's life changing and leads others into that same experience and acknowledgement of the truth.

Today, people want to see God in us, not just hear about Him.

### **Conclusion**

The pitfalls of a godless society are hard to avoid and easy to fall into. If we are to be effective as Christians we must avoid them. Here are the marks of a godless culture:

1. A misplaced love.
2. A deformed faith.
3. A rejected truth.

.....we are going to sing...

### **Communion**

The bottom line in today's sermon is that God needs you! We can change the culture if we allow God to use us. He needs your body. When Moses was before Pharaoh, petitioning Pharaoh to let God's people leave Egypt, Pharaoh represented the culture. Moses represented God.

Listen to these word.

**Ex 7:1-3**

**7:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet. 2 You are to say everything I command you, and your brother Aaron is to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of his country.**

Remember that the juice represents the blood of Christ's and the bread represents the body of Christ given for us at the cross in order to be in us for our salvation.

We will have a word of prayer and then be served...