

Perspective: Evil
2 Timothy 3:1-9 Discussion Questions

1. How would you respond to someone who says, “there is no such thing as evil”? How would you respond to someone who says, “there is too much evil for there to be a good God who is in control”?
2. In 2 Timothy 3:1, Paul tells Timothy that “in the last days there will come times of difficulty.” The context seems to indicate that the last days refers to the time between Christ’s first and second coming (also see 1 John 2:18). Is this how you normally think of “the last days?” Why would it be helpful to think correctly about the last days?
3. Paul goes on to list some of the characteristics of evil that will take place in the last days. First, he says people will be “lovers of self” (3:2). In what ways is this biblical teaching contrary to the message of the world? Are we supposed to hate ourselves? Explain.
4. We often think of evil associated with terrible tragedies or obviously dark events. What are some specific ways evil can be subtle? Why is it important to recognize that evil is often not obvious?
5. Why do people commonly think evil is an equally opposing force to good. How would you explain to someone that it is not?
6. One characteristic of evil times is people will be “lovers of money” (3:2). Why is this a problem? What are some of the biblical teachings about money?
7. Explain the characteristics of evil in the list in vv.2-4. Why is each of these a problem? Do any of these characteristics step on your toes more than the others? Explain why.
8. 2 Timothy 3:4 says people will be “lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.” Are we supposed to choose between pleasure and God? Is there pleasure in loving God?
9. Explain what Paul is saying in 2 Timothy 3:5. How would we know if someone was guilty of “having the appearance of godliness but denying its power?”
10. Is it possible 2 Timothy 3:5 could be true of you? Why or why not? How can we know?
11. At the end of verse 5, Paul tells Timothy to “avoid such people.” How should we reconcile this teaching with 2 Timothy 2:24-25?
12. Describe the problem Paul is addressing in vv.6-8. What are some ways this problem might manifest itself today? What are some ways a person can know if they are being taken advantage of in this way?
13. According to verse 7, why are these people so easily influenced? Have you ever been guilty of “always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth?” What is the solution to this problem?
14. The problem with the false teachers is that they are corrupted and disqualified (v.8) and “their folly will be plain to all” (v.9). Given these consequences, why don’t false teachers repent more often?
15. One day the Lord will return in judgment and evil will be completely ended and life will be good. What specific aspects do you look most forward to about this coming day?