

## 1 John 5:4 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup>For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

In **2 Timothy 3:1** The apostle Paul says, *“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come.”*

He then describes in **2 Timothy 3:2-5** what those perilous times will look like

- I believe this is the world in which we are now living

In this series, we will look at what the Bible says about being an overcomer in the midst of perilous times!

## 2 Timothy 3:1 (NKJV)

*But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:*

- Know – to know something, emphatically and with absolute certainty
- Something so urgent that it **MUST** be known **MUST** be recognized and **MUST** be acknowledged

The Holy Spirit is saying in this verse is that the following information should not be considered optional

- He wants us to fully grasp what He is saying
- He wants us to be prepared and not be taken off guard
- He is not saying this to scare us but to prepare us
- He wants us equipped for the last day's storm ahead

After Paul writes to the end times church to be emphatically aware of the times in which they are living, he lists the characteristics of a lost society that has run amuck

## 2 Timothy 3:2–9; 12-13 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup>For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, <sup>3</sup>unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, <sup>4</sup>traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, <sup>5</sup>having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! <sup>6</sup>For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, <sup>7</sup>always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. <sup>8</sup>Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; <sup>9</sup>but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.

<sup>12</sup>Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. <sup>13</sup>But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

- We touched on these signs of the times in the first segment of this series
- Now I would like to look at these characteristics in-depth

If we are unaware of what's going on, we will be sucked into the same lifestyle that the rest of the world is

We've talked about Lovers of Themselves, and Lovers of Money, Boastful, Proud, Blasphemous, and Disobedient to Parents, Unthankful, Unholy, Unloving (*without natural affection*), Unforgiving (*trucebreakers*), and Slanderers (*false accusers*), Incontinent (without self-control)

Now let's talk about Brutal (*fierce*) despisers of (*those that are good*), traitors, headstrong, haughty (*high-minded*), lovers of pleasure rather (*more*) than lovers of God

**Fierce** – *cruel, harsh, savage, un-civilized, vicious, violent*

Many of us would think of a society like the ancient Romans and their love for the cruel entertainment that was popular in the Colosseum and the time of the gladiators

- Victims would be felled by the weapon of a gladiator or torn to pieces by a starved vicious beast
- All the while the crowd would yell and applaud

In our own time we are more sophisticated but none the less brutal in some of our preferred entertainment

- We can view large doses of violence via the internet on phones, tv's or digital devices
- This generation is just as barbaric, or even more so, than previous generations

If we feast our eyes and emotions on large amounts of violence and bloodshed are we really more sophisticated?

## Consider the Facts

The escalation of violence in entertainment is now so widespread that by age 18, a child will have seen more than 200,000 acts of violence on television and witnessed more than 40,000 simulated murders.

- *Further studies reveal that the more frequently children practice fantasy acts of violence on video games, the more likely it becomes that they will carry out real acts of violence.*
- *These games are so similar to the programs used in real military training that one expert has stated, “We’re not just teaching kids to kill; we’re teaching them to like it.” Advertising boldly tells children, “Let the slaughter begin!” and awards them points for each person slaughtered during the game.*
- *Today’s music is filled with violence. All we have to do is listen to popular music or stroll down the aisle of almost any music or computer-game store to have this truth confirmed.*
- *The average teenager now listens to more than 10,500 hours of music during the years between the seventh and twelfth grades — much of which is violence-related.*

As a result of the widespread use of the Internet, youth are regularly exposed to violent words, violent music, violent images, and pornography. There are literally thousands of websites specifically dedicated to foster racial hate, bigotry, violence, and pornography to the younger generations. Research shows — beyond any shadow of doubt — that violence in the media has a direct link to youth violence. One expert stated it well: “To argue against it is like arguing against gravity.”

We are a society that all but turns a blind eye to violence against the most defenseless human beings

Abortion:

If you have had one or been part of a decision to have one, God loves you and there is forgiveness.

- As Christians we cannot ignore that facts

The most solid information shows that the worldwide number of abortions over the last 40 years (1980-2020) is estimated to be close to 2 billion.

- *To help you grasp that number, try to imagine this: If all the people were killed who are currently living in North America, Central America, and South America — plus all of Europe, Russia, and Australia! — the total number of deaths still would not amount to the number of babies who have been aborted worldwide in the last 40 years!*

- *Although these statistics are already mind-boggling, by the time you read this, they will be outdated, because 125,000 abortions are carried out every day worldwide.*

**Proverbs 31:8–9 (NKJV)**

<sup>8</sup> Open your mouth for the speechless, In the cause of all *who are appointed to die.* <sup>9</sup> Open your mouth, judge righteously, And plead the cause of the poor and needy.

- We need to take a stand for all who are poor and needy
- There are no more humans that need a voice than those children who are aborted by the millions

## Despisers of Those That Are Good

This is a very unusual word that Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit uses in the original language

- It describes a society that fights to defend the offenders, and even makes excuses for them
- While at the same time often leaving the rights of law-abiding citizens in jeopardy
- Perpetrators are often given “*sanctuary*” while victims are left with little sympathy and few rights
- It seems we have laws to protect lawbreakers
- Many times, even allowed to go free while innocent victims suffer
- Because this end-times society has become so violent we are “*morally confused*” as to what is right and wrong

### Proverbs 24:24–25 (NKJV)

<sup>24</sup> He who says to the wicked, “*You are righteous,*” Him the people will curse; Nations will abhor him. <sup>25</sup> But those who rebuke *the wicked* will have delight, and a good blessing will come upon them.

### Hosea 12:6 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup> So you, by *the help of your God*, return; Observe mercy and justice, and wait on your God continually.

- You and I are part of a chosen generation
- This is history’s greatest opportunity to share the Gospel

We must return to God with fasting and prayer and arm ourselves with His word and run our race with endurance all the way to the end!

## Traitors – Fair Weather Friends

*The original language denotes one who is a traitor of an oath, one who betrays or abandons a friend, a lack of commitment to oaths or relationships, one who is treacherous in the context of an oath or a relationship, a fair-weather friend*

Remember we are living in a society that puts self above all others

If they are faced with having to personally sacrifice something to keep their commitment to someone else, their response will tend towards breaking off the relationship that requires commitment

- We might call them fair-weathered friends

### Psalm 15 (NKJV)

<sup>1</sup> LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? <sup>2</sup> He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart; <sup>3</sup> He *who* does not backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend; <sup>4</sup> in whose eyes a vile person is despised, But he honors those who fear the LORD; ***He who swears to his own hurt and does not change;*** <sup>5</sup> He *who* does not put out his money at usury, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these *things* shall never be moved.

- Am I the type of friend that is fine as long as everything is smooth sailing?
- The moment there is a bump or a problem, I'm out?
- Do I only keep an oath if it benefits me personally?

The word used in the original language is one that describe a lack of commitment and the shallowness of relationships

- Most of us would agree that this characteristic is the case in our world today
- Commitment to a relationship is not what it was some years ago
- Many of us could not say that we have had five friends for more that five years

There are many factors for the state of shallow, short-lasting relationships

- People move more frequently that they used to
- Frequently change jobs
- Many people are not even committed to their church long enough to form strong, long-lasting relationships
- Many are even choosing to surf the internet and watch church on-line rather than attend in person
- Technology is great but it is contributing to a lack of longevity in relationships

If you have been personally disappointed and hurt in a relationship

- Ask the Holy Spirit to heal your heart
- God does not want you to live in broken heartedness the rest of your life
- He wants to lead you to other godly people who are seeking deep meaningful relationships

**Psalm 147:3 (NKJV)**

**<sup>3</sup> He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.**



## **Headstrong** or Emotional Intemperance

*This word depicts a people who are wholly given to violence, who enjoy violence, and who have become known for their violent, reckless, rash emotional intemperance*

- People who are so given to violence they are unable to control their temper
- Road rage, random shootings in public places, impulsive acts of rioting and madness
- Increased acts of crime in our cities

### **Proverbs 22:24 (NKJV)**

<sup>24</sup> Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go

The degenerative effect of violent words and images on children, teenagers, and adults is unfathomable

Take an honest look at your media cabinet or digital storage of movies, TV programs, songs and so forth

- Would Jesus watch or listen to them with you?
- Are you and your family tolerating violent scenes and soul-desensitizing messages into your life?
- Why not “*clean house*” of anything that would grieve the Holy spirit

### **Philippians 4:8 (NKJV)**

<sup>8</sup> Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

## Haughty or High-Minded

*Original language is a description of one who is puffed up and clouded by his own sense of self-importance*

- Root – is where we get our word typhoon or hurricane
- The closer the storm gets the darker the skies become
- The more violent the winds rage
- We must find shelter to escape

Paul is describing a society that arrogantly denies God and are self-inflated with pride

- We've certainly discussed the shifts in political and moral climates over the course of recent years
- We may even feel as if the shift isn't going to stop
- Like hurricanes and typhoons, they eventually pass
- The King of Kings will return to establish His millennial rule – **Revelation 19:11-20:6**

### **Revelation 20:6 (NKJV)**

<sup>6</sup>Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

- Regardless of how things may look in the world around us it is only temporary!
- This current culture is a temporary culture
- We can and will live in the culture of heaven
- We can raise our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord – **Ephesians 6:4**

### John 17:14–18 (NKJV)

<sup>14</sup> I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

<sup>15</sup> I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. <sup>18</sup> As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

- This passage may seem overwhelming when we read it and deeply understand it
- But the events we are facing will eventually pass
- And those who have taken shelter in Jesus will be safe!

### Psalms 91:2–10 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> I will say of the LORD, “*He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.*” <sup>3</sup> Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler *And* from the perilous pestilence. <sup>4</sup> He shall cover you with His feathers, *And* under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth *shall be your* shield and buckler. <sup>5</sup> You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, *Nor* of the arrow *that* flies by day, <sup>6</sup> *Nor* of the pestilence *that* walks in darkness, *Nor* of the destruction *that* lays waste at noonday. <sup>7</sup> A thousand may fall at your side, *And* ten thousand at your right hand; *But* it shall not come near you. <sup>8</sup> Only with your eyes shall you look, *And* see the reward of the wicked. <sup>9</sup> Because you have made the LORD, *who is my refuge, Even* the Most High, your dwelling place, <sup>10</sup> No evil shall befall you, *Nor* shall any plague come near your dwelling;

## Lovers of Pleasure Rather (*more*) Than Lovers of God

*The Apostle is describing a people who are completely preoccupied with their own self-gratification or people who make personal happiness their highest aspiration in life*

- Self-centered, self-consumed, self-focused, and self-obsessed

*He is also describing a people who rank loving God as less important than loving pleasure*

God's highest calling for you and I is not for us to be happy

His greatest will for your life is to truly love Him and be obedient to Him

- If you are wholeheartedly doing God's you will find joy in doing it – **Psalm 37:4**
- Every form of happiness is temporary
- It is an unreliable measuring stick for how pleasing we are to God or how well we are walking in obedience to Him

There has never been a generation in history with more material possessions and comfort than the one in which we live

In spite of all of this abundance of goods and an ongoing pursuit of pleasure, the worldwide happiness index is at its lowest point on record

- As believers we cannot let the errant doctrine that we are to be "*happy*" drive our lives
- Pleasing God and obeying His word must be our hearts cry

The attainment of happiness is an illusion and is part of the great deception of the last days

We see here that Paul is writing to Christians because he says they will love pleasure *more* than God

Although they claim to know Christ their devotion to pleasures will far surpass their devotion to Him and His church

- We must care deeply about those matters that mean most to God

We must do everything we can to guard our hearts against selfishness and greed so we can remain focused on His coming

- Soon everything in this world will pass away
- Only those things done in obedience will last for eternity
- We must examine our hearts to determine our true spiritual condition

### Luke 18:8 (NKJV)

<sup>8</sup> I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

### 2 Timothy 4:8 (NKJV)

<sup>8</sup> Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Ask yourself

**Have I considered how Jesus would feel about the movies I watch?**

- Can you imagine Him sitting next to you and watching with you?
- Remember He is always with you
- You are subjecting Him to whatever you are watching

**Have I allowed my children and grandchildren to watch images of violence that could possibly sear and desensitize their conscience?**

- The devil has clearly targeted children
- Even cartoons are filled with violence and disrespect
- Do you know what they are focused on?
- Would Jesus commend you for being a faithful guardian over your children?
- What they put into their eyes and minds will eventually produce a harvest

**Have my friendships with others become more shallow over time? Am I possibly viewed as a fair-weathered friend?**

- Have I experienced a sense of loss in this area?
- What kind of deficit has it created in my life?
- Who is my closest friend
- To whom do I turn to in time of need?
- Do I have a friend that I can open my heart up to without fear of condemnation or rejection
- Can someone else they can trust me as a confidant and friend?

## **Have I felt like the horizon in society before me is getting darker and darker?**

- This is an opportunity to shine!
- In what ways am I shining the light of the Gospel to those around me?
- Can the people in my life count on me to show them the way to Christ?
- Can they count on me to speak the truth to them in love?

## **Have I allowed the driving force in my life to become the pursuit of happiness, or is obedience to Christ my chief passion?**

- Look at your calendar, your checkbook, your service to the church
- Where is the majority of my time and money being spent?
- How often do I attend or volunteer in some way?
- How does it make you feel when I make the statement that it is not God's greatest desire for you to be happy?
- Can I honestly say that I am working on my spiritual life and making good progress?

### **Revelation 2:4 (NKJV)**

<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love.

### **Psalms 139:23–24 (NKJV)**

<sup>23</sup> Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; <sup>24</sup> And see if *there is any* wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.