

BUT AS FOR YOU

I. [2 Timothy 3:1-17](#) [2 Timothy 4:1-5](#) [1 Corinthians 15:1-4a](#) [Psalm 31:14-16](#)

A. Here's a challenge for you: Ask a handful of people you know (or even some strangers) if they think we're living in the *end times* and see what they say. Today we'll learn we are and yet we aren't, depending on what we mean by end times...

B. Typically we read Scriptures regarding the *end times* through the narrow prism of self. We do this with disregard to history, thinking there's been no worse times than now. We also do this in light of merely our own nation, dismissing what's happening around the world. So what if you were a Christian during the bubonic plagues? Or a Christian in England during the Blitz or in Dresden, Germany when the fire storms swept thru? What if you're a believer in Eastern Ukraine and your children have been kidnapped by Russians? What if you're an exile from your oppressive country but no nation will let you in? What if you're a believer imprisoned in a North Korean concentration camp? Compare those scenarios with Christian millionaires in the USA hawking pillows and chicken sandwiches...

C. We surely must also consider our own personal eschatology--our own brevity in terms of how much time we have. *Tempus fugit!* So there's a danger looking at Scripture through the prism of self and there's a danger not doing so...

D. Three NT books comprise what we call the *Pastoral Letters*: 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus. Paul, writing pastorally to these younger pastors, is in essence writing to all pastors that've ever come down the pike. But he's writing to all believers as well. Our chore is dig out what applies to Timothy, to all pastors in general, and to all the greater body of Christ. Thus I've titled this message, "*But As For You.*"

E. Paul is writing his son-in-the-faith Timothy what really amounts to his last will and testament. He's in the Mamertine Prison in Rome facing execution. This time he's on death row. His immensely fruitful ministry, so fraught with suffering, is concluding. And yet the fledging church, still in its infancy, has a long way to go. It's being assaulted on multiple fronts. Jews as well as Romans hate the Christians. Satan hates the Christians even more. Judaizers, gnostics, pagan philosophers, rampant immorality, and all sorts of corrupted doctrines are being heaved at believers from every direction. Perhaps they thought, '*surely these must be the end times!*' And yet that was 2,000 years ago. Let's go to our text...

F. [2 Timothy 3:1-17](#) (ESV) from prisoner Paul to Pastor Timothy in Ephesus...

1) **V1:** *1 But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. (We live between the Advents. We live in the Messianic age. The final epic millenniums began with Jesus.)*

2) **V2-5:** *2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, 4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having the appearance of godliness, but denying its*

power. Avoid such people. (True for 20 centuries! True now in countless nations and cultures! So what are we to do?) (BUT AS FOR YOU) Avoid such people. (Did you know the Bible tells us people we're to avoid? Yep. Here's some examples...)

*** Avoid people who cause divisions. (Romans 16:17 and Titus 3:10-12) Avoid sexually immoral people who claim to be Christians. (1 Corinthians 5:9-11) Avoid idle (lazy) people who refuse to work. (2 Thessalonians 3:10-14) Avoid heretics, false teachers, corrupt leaders posing as Christians. (2 John 7-10)**

3) V6-8: 6 *For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, 7 always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. 8 Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. (Who are Jannes & Jambres? While the Bible doesn't tell us, Jewish tradition says these are the Egyptian magicians Pharaoh summoned before Moses to turn their staffs into snakes. But Aaron's staff, turned into a snake, ate their snakes. God's got better snakes!)*

4) V9: 9 *But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men. (Pray the evil follies of what's false and wrong to be made plain to all!)*

5) V10-16: 10 (BUT AS FOR YOU) *You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, 11 my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra--which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. 12 Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 13 while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14 But as for you, (BUT AS FOR YOU) continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, (Taught to him by his grandmother, Lois and mother, Eunice!) which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (On to Chapter 4)*

G. 2 Timothy 4:1-5 (ESV) Paul's exhortation continues:

1) V1-5: 1 *I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: (Sound like a wimpy suggestion or an authoritative, heaven-borne command?) 2* *preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. 3* *For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4* *and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. 5* *As for you, (BUT AS FOR YOU) always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*

H. Here's some takeaways that applied to Timothy, to all pastors, and to all of us: (1) Don't expect smooth sailing; (2) Expect severe challenges to living the Christian life as laid out in Scripture and demonstrated by faithful believers since the church was born; (3) Persecution is promised and should be expected. (And it may be worse than a negative post on social media.) (4) Rely on God's Word. It won't let you down. Trust

God's Word! Teach it to your children and grandchildren. Suffer for it if need be. Ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate it, put power on it, bring it to memory when needed, granting you wisdom to apply it in all areas of your life; (5) And keep preaching it no matter what and let the chips fall where they may!

I. On Wednesday nights we have a prayer meeting. If you come, there'll be no outside repercussions. You can attend with no fear of being arrested. In many countries where persecution runs rampant, people attend prayer meetings at great risk. Caught, they could face trial, public humiliation, imprisonment or worse! (*Did you hear about the 2 year old infant in North Korea sentenced to life imprisonment along with the parents because they were found possessing a Bible?*) And yet the church seems to grow and thrive where it's faced with persecution. Here we face little to none and the body of Christ is shrinking, not to mention fracturing...

J. I was in the Heath Goodwill on Wednesday and that old R.E.M. song came on, "*It's The End of the World as We Know It.*" I kinda smiled as this sermon was already in progress. Jesus' words about the end still resonate, "*No one knows the hour or the day except the Father...*" Reflecting upon Doug Lynn's words a week ago, *our times really are in His hands* both personally and corporately. I cringe every time I hear a campaign speech where some candidate declares, "*America's best days are before us!*" Why? Because I've read Daniel 5 where the *Big Hand* writes on that Babylonian wall the night the Persians invaded by surprise and conquered them. It was the end of the world as they knew it and they weren't feeling so fine the next day. Arrogance is arrogance! And pride still goeth before the fall! Empires of all stripes come and go but our greatest security is not trusting in horses and chariots but remembering the name of the LORD our God!

K. BUT AS FOR US, we will continue to gather to worship and fellowship. We will continue to gather to hear the preaching of the Word. We will continue praying for the needs at hand, for our Lord to intercede with mercy and power. We will gather by the Lake to baptize new believers. And we will gather to partake in the Lord's Supper like our fellow believers have for 20 centuries. Those who come after us may be doing the same for another 20 centuries. Then again, this could be the last time we share the Bread & Cup together. Our times are in His hands!

L. The Bread & Cup declare the Gospel to all who partake. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4a (NIV) reminds us: **1** Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. **2** By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. **3** For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, **4** that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...

* Pray & Officiate Communion...

* Psalm 31:14-16 (AMP) in the plural takes us home: **14** But as for us, we trust [confidently] in You and Your greatness, O LORD; we say, "You are our God." **15** Our times are in Your hands; rescue us from the hand of our enemies and from those who pursue and persecute us. **16** Make Your face shine upon Your servants; save us in Your lovingkindness.

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

2 Timothy 3:1-17 (ESV)

1 But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. **2** For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, **4** treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, **5** having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. **6** For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, **7** always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. **8** Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. **9** But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men. **10** You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, **11** my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra--which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. **12** Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, **13** while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. **14** But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it **15** and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. **16** All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, **17** that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 4:1-5 (ESV)

1 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: **2** preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. **3** For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, **4** and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. **5** As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4a (NIV)

1 Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. **2** By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. **3** For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, **4** that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...

Psalms 31:14-16 (AMP)

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Bonus Goodies

It Might Take Persecution - John Piper

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_IgJY8b0os

Infant Imprisoned for Life After Parents Found With A Bible

<https://www.foxnews.com/world/north-korea-infant-jailed-life-after-parents-found-bible-according-recent-report>

Washington Elementary School Board Settles Lawsuit Against Arizona Christian U.

<https://www.foxnews.com/media/school-board-settles-religious-discrimination-suit-against-christian-university-blasting-jesus-values>

More Verses, Quotes, Excerpts, & Extras

Matthew 24:36-44 (ESV)

36 But concerning that Day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. **37** For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. **38** For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, **39** and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. **40** Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. **41** Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. **42** Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. **43** But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. **44** Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Luke 17:26-37 (ESV)

26 Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. **27** They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. **28** Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot--they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, **29** but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all-- **30** so will it be on the Day when the Son of Man is revealed. **31** On that day, let the one who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house, not come down to take them away, and likewise let the one who is in the field not turn back. **32** Remember Lot's wife. **33** Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it. **34** I tell you, in that night there will

be two in one bed. One will be taken and the other left. **35** There will be two women grinding together. One will be taken and the other left.” **37** And they said to Him, “Where, Lord?” He said to them, “Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.”

Daniel 5:1-31 (ESV)

1 King Belshazzar made a great feast for a thousand of his lords and drank wine in front of the thousand. **2** Belshazzar, when he tasted the wine, commanded that the vessels of gold and of silver that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem be brought, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. **3** Then they brought in the golden vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. **4** They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone. **5** Immediately the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, opposite the lampstand. And the king saw the hand as it wrote. **6** Then the king's color changed, and his thoughts alarmed him; his limbs gave way, and his knees knocked together. **7** The king called loudly to bring in the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers. The king declared to the wise men of Babylon, “Whoever reads this writing, and shows me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.” **8** Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or make known to the king the interpretation. **9** Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, and his color changed, and his lords were perplexed. **10** The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banqueting hall, and the queen declared, “O king, live forever! Let not your thoughts alarm you or your color change. **11** There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. In the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him, and King Nebuchadnezzar, your father--your father the king--made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and astrologers, **12** because an excellent spirit, knowledge, and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Beltshazzar. Now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation.” **13** Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king answered and said to Daniel, “You are that Daniel, one of the exiles of Judah, whom the king my father brought from Judah. **14** I have heard of you that the spirit of the gods is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. **15** Now the wise men, the enchanters, have been brought in before me to read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not show the interpretation of the matter. **16** But I have heard that you can give interpretations and solve problems. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.” **17** Then Daniel answered and said before the king, “Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another. Nevertheless, I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation. **18** O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty. **19** And because of the greatness that He gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whom he would, he killed, and whom he would, he kept alive; whom he

would, he raised up, and whom he would, he humbled. **20** But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was brought down from his kingly throne, and his glory was taken from him. **21** He was driven from among the children of mankind, and his mind was made like that of a beast, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. He was fed grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom He will. **22** And you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this, **23** but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven. And the vessels of His house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored. **24** “Then from His presence the hand was sent, and this writing was inscribed. **25** And this is the writing that was inscribed: Mene, Mene, Tekel, and Parsin. **26** This is the interpretation of the matter: Mene, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; **27** Tekel, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; **28** Peres, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.” **29** Then Belshazzar gave the command, and Daniel was clothed with purple, a chain of gold was put around his neck, and a proclamation was made about him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. **30** That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed. **31** And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.

Micah 7:5-9 (ESV)

5 Put no trust in a neighbor; have no confidence in a friend; guard the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your arms; **6** for the son treats the father with contempt, the daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house. **7** But as for me, I will look to the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me. **8** Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD will be a light to me. **9** I will bear the indignation of the LORD because I have sinned against Him, until He pleads my cause and executes judgment for me. He will bring me out to the light; I shall look upon His vindication.

Matthew 10:16-33 (ESV)

16 “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. **17** Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, **18** and you will be dragged before governors and kings for My sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. **19** When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. **20** For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. **21** Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, **22** and you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. **23** When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son

of Man comes. **24** “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. **25** It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household. **26** “So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. **27** What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. **28** And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. **29** Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. **30** But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. **31** Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. **32** So everyone who acknowledges Me before men, I also will acknowledge before My Father who is in heaven, **33** but whoever denies Me before men, I also will deny before My Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 5:11-12 (NKJV)

11 Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. **12** Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Acts 12:1-3 (ESV)

1 About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. **2** He killed James the brother of John with the sword, **3** and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread.

Revelation 6:9-11 (NLT)

9 When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of all who had been martyred for the word of God and for being faithful in their testimony. **10** They shouted to the Lord and said, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before You judge the people who belong to this world and avenge our blood for what they have done to us?” **11** Then a white robe was given to each of them. And they were told to rest a little longer until the full number of their brothers and sisters--their fellow servants of Jesus who were to be martyred--had joined them.

Hath Thou No Scar?

By Amy Carmichael (1867 - 1951)

Hast thou no scar?
No hidden scar on foot, or side, or hand?
I hear thee sung as mighty in the land;
I hear them hail thy bright, ascendant star.
Hast thou no scar?

Hast thou no wound?
Yet I was wounded by the archers; spent,
Leaned Me against a tree to die; and rent

By ravening beasts that compassed Me, I swooned.
Hast thou no wound?

No wound? No scar?
Yet, as the Master shall the servant be,
And pierced are the feet that follow Me.
But thine are whole; can he have followed far
Who hast no wound or scar?

- Amy Carmichael was an Irish Christian who served the poor of Belfast and the abused of India. Her song lyrics and poems have inspired believers for decades. To read more, go to: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amy_Carmichael

Tacitus on Nero's Persecution of Christians

"Then, Nero, in order to avert this report from himself, caused those called Christians by the common people, to be accused and exceedingly tormented. The author of this name is Christ, who was publicly put to death under the reign of Tiberius, by Pontius Pilate, the governor. Those who confessed that they were Christians, were first apprehended, and afterwards by making it known themselves a great multitude were all condemned, not so much on account of the conflagration, as of the hatred in which they were held by mankind. The taking of their lives was accompanied with much mockery; they were covered with the skins of wild beasts, and then torn to pieces by dogs; or nailed on crosses; or placed at stakes and burned; serving also as torches for the spectators, when the day was over."

- *The Annals of P. Cornelius Tacitus*, Roman Senator & Historian, (Circa 14 AD - 68 AD).

When Emperor Valens Threatened Bishop Eusebius

When the Emperor Valens threatened Eusebius with confiscation of all his goods, torture, banishment, or even death, the courageous Christian replied, "*He needs not fear confiscation, who has nothing to lose; nor banishment, to whom heaven is his country; nor torments, when his body can be destroyed at one blow; nor death, which is the only way to set him at liberty from sin and sorrow.*"

- *The Evangelical Repository*, Volume 3, Anecdotes, p. 175, Circa 1844. To read more about Eusebius, go to: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eusebius_of_Samosata

Courage During The Boxer Rebellion - John MacArthur

During the Boxer Rebellion (1899–1900), extreme nationalist Chinese fomented a campaign of terror against officials of foreign governments, Christian missionaries, and even Chinese Christians. After they surrounded a certain mission station, they sealed all exits except one. They placed a cross in the dirt in front of the opened gate and told the missionaries and students that anyone who walked out and trampled the cross would be spared. According to reports, the first seven students who departed trampled the cross and were sent on their way. The eighth student, a young girl, approached the cross, knelt down, prayed for strength, carefully walked around the cross, and was immediately shot to death. The remaining 92 students, strengthened by that girl's courageous example, also walked around the cross to their deaths.

- John MacArthur, *2 Timothy*. Moody Press or Logos.

What Are The Pastoral Letters?

By S. Michael Houdmann

<https://www.gotquestions.org/pastoral-epistles.html>

Question: *What are the Pastoral Epistles?*

Answer: The Pastoral Epistles are three letters written by the apostle Paul. The Pastoral Epistles are 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus. All three are letters from an old man at the close of his ministry who is concerned for his successors in the pastorate. As such, the letters concern the things that would be crucial for the young pastors to understand—church organization and discipline, including such matters as the appointment of elders and deacons, the opposition of rebellious members or false teachers, and the maintenance of doctrinal purity.

Titus was written by Paul to encourage Titus, his brother in the faith, whom he had left in Crete to lead the church Paul had established there on one of his missionary journeys ([Titus 1:5](#)). Paul wrote 1 Timothy to Timothy to encourage him in his responsibility for overseeing the work of the Ephesian church and possibly the other churches in the province of Asia ([1 Timothy 1:3](#)). His second letter to Timothy was written in approximately AD 67, shortly before the apostle Paul was put to death. Imprisoned in Rome, Paul felt lonely and abandoned and recognized that his earthly life was likely coming to an end soon. The book of 2 Timothy is essentially Paul's "last words." Paul looked past his own circumstances to express concern for the churches and specifically for Timothy. Paul wanted to use this last opportunity to encourage Timothy, and all other believers, to persevere in faith ([2 Timothy 3:14](#)) and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ ([2 Timothy 4:2](#)).

As instructional letters to younger pastors, Paul's Pastoral Epistles are invaluable today. These letters are full of the heartfelt warnings and instructions that characterize Paul's ministry, revealing his pastor's heart in caring for the churches he founded. Whether he is speaking of church organization ([1 Timothy 3:1–13](#); [Titus 1:1–16](#)), addressing the role of women in ministry ([1 Timothy 2:12](#)), revealing Christ as the mediator between God and man ([1 Timothy 2:5](#)), encouraging believers to persevere in the faith ([2 Timothy 2:14](#)) and to remain firm in sound doctrine ([2 Timothy 1:1–2](#), [13–14](#)), verifying the inspiration of Scripture ([2 Timothy 3:16](#)), or warning against false and apostate teachers ([2 Timothy 3:1–17](#)), the Pastoral Epistles are the "how-to" manual for pastors in all places and for all time.

For Further Study: [Pastoral Epistles: Word Biblical Commentary by William Mounce](#)

- While he is not the author of every article on GotQuestions.org, for citation purposes, you may reference our CEO, S. Michael Houdmann.

Scriptures That Talk About Who We Are To Avoid

Romans 16:17 (NLT)

17 And now I make one more appeal, my dear brothers and sisters. Watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people's faith by teaching things contrary to what you have been taught. Stay away from them.

1 Corinthians 5:9-11 (NIV)

9 I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people-- **10** not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. **11** But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.

2 Thessalonians 3:10-14 (NIV)

10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." **11** We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. **12** Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat. **13** And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right. **14** If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 (ESV)

1 But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. **2** For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, **4** treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, **5** having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.

Titus 3:10-12 (NIV)

10 Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. **11** You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

2 John 7-10 (AMPC)

7 For many imposters (seducers, deceivers, and false leaders) have gone out into the world, men who will not acknowledge (confess, admit) the coming of Jesus Christ (the Messiah) in bodily form. Such a one is the imposter (the seducer, the deceiver, the false leader, the antagonist of Christ) and the antichrist. **8** Look to yourselves (take care) that you may not lose (throw away or destroy) all that we and you have labored for, but that you may [persevere until you] win and receive back a perfect reward [in full]. **9** Anyone who runs on ahead [of God] and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ [who is not content with what He taught] does not have God; but he who continues to live in the doctrine (teaching) of Christ [does have God], he has both the Father and the Son. **10** If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine [is disloyal to what Jesus Christ taught], do not receive him [do not accept him, do not welcome or admit him] into [your] house or bid him Godspeed or give him any encouragement.