

How to Avoid Such People

Taylor Houser / Devotional

Good morning everyone and happy Friday. I hope the week has been kind to you all. Today I want to talk about a passage I read in 2 Timothy. Paul says in [2 Timothy 3:1-5](#) “But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.”

What a list of traits and peoples he warns us against! He says bluntly, “avoid such people.” Which is fair advice, we shouldn’t hangout with people who corrupt us rather than build us up. He isn’t saying you can’t be friends with someone who has a bosom sin or two, or a habitual sin he’s struggling with, but he is saying that we shouldn’t seek out friendships with people living such ungodly lives (evangelism notwithstanding, of course). So, we’ll just stay clear of them, problem solved, right? But I ask, what if you find that you can see yourself on that list at times? While I think I avoid being “treacherous” or “brutal,” there may be times where I have acted “unappeasable” or “proud.” And I would wager all of us can find ourselves somewhere on that list at some point in our lives. But it’s hard to follow Paul’s advice literally against yourself. Let’s go through what we can do about it today instead of trying to avoid ourselves.

Well, first we must acknowledge that we have faults or sin leanings. If we can’t admit they’re there, we can’t even start to work on them. One of the best ways to do this is with a prayer partner or a loved one, someone you trust and who can be open and truthful to you. Go through that list again and carefully consider each one. Can you (or your prayer partner or loved one) think of specific times you acted in such a manner? If so, explicitly repent of it and ask for forgiveness in prayer. We don’t have to wait until Sunday to confess our sins, and we shouldn’t wait to ask for mercy if we feel the guilt of sin on us. And then if applicable, you should apologize to and ask forgiveness from whoever you acted against. After that, take your issue to God in prayer. Tell Him that you’re

struggling with this or that, and that you need His help with it. Ask Him for the help of the Holy Spirit to soften and renew your heart. And when you're done with your prayer the next step is the hardest—stop acting like that. But of course, it often isn't as easy as flipping a switch. Changes in our hearts and our habits come slowly often. And this is where having someone to be accountable for really helps, as you want to see your occurrences start to wind down. Week over week, and month over month, you ought to find yourself slipping up less and less often. Perhaps going from five occurrences a week to only four. And then maybe to just two. Until eventually you're down to the very infrequent mistake as the habit is broken and fades. And of course, when we do slip back in that or this, repent and ask forgiveness again. Slipping up doesn't mean you've failed and should give up, on the contrary it means that there's still work left to do.

Lord God, we ask you to help us examine our hearts and lives today. Help us to see where we have failed, sometimes repeatedly, in your commandment to love You and our neighbors. Send to each of us the Holy Spirit for the amendment of our lives. Lord Jesus, be with us and guide to live holy and sanctifying lives unto You and your Kingdom.