



The Good News

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A Call for Doctrinal Integrity

By Michael McCleary

We live in a day and age in which “church organizations”, denominations, and “faiths” don’t really have static rules about what to believe. We’ve seen denominations decide to allow homosexual priests, to install female preachers, to allow priests to marry, and even to allow evolution to be taught in churches. This is happening all around us and it doesn’t take a rocket scientist to figure out that there’s not a lot of certainty in the realm of religion. In fact, this uncertainty works to further alienate those who have serious misgivings regarding “organized religion” because, after all, churches just make up their rules and change them as they see fit anyway, right? As we seek to be a congregation of the Lord’s true church, the issue of doctrinal integrity should be a major aspect of teaching those that are lost. God has laid down the rules. We do not have the power or authority to change or re-interpret those rules to suit our wants, or to suit the fickle tides of society. But the fact is none of this is new. Churches have been changing the rules to their own ends ever since Christianity was born, and even then, it wasn’t a new concept to attempt to “loop-hole” out of God’s rules. We find that Paul was fully aware of this reality and warned Timothy that it would get even worse in the “*last days*”. Let us briefly consider a few points from II Timothy 3 as Paul encouraged Timothy to uphold doctrinal integrity.

1. **II Tim. 3:1-4** – The character of man will continue to be ungodly – Paul describes in length how degraded the character of men will become as he describes men that are “*lovers of themselves*”, “*without self-control*”, and “*lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God*”.
2. **II Tim. 3:5-9** – Evil can have “*a form of godliness*” – To make matters worse, many of these men boast a form of godliness and cause people to be

led astray by their teachings. They “*resist the truth*” and make up their own truth.

3. Evil adapts as generations come and go – One lesson to be learned here is that Paul is not saying that his generation wasn’t evil, rather it’s the nature of future generations that will make trying to be a follower of God so dangerous. They will have evil, self-seeking characters but will cloak it in a form of godliness that will lead many astray in the name of Christ.
4. **II Tim. 3:10-17** – The doctrine of Christ is stable and sure and is, therefore, the means of staying strong despite a perverse generation – Paul praises Timothy for carefully following his teaching and example in the Gospel of Christ and encourages Timothy to continue in the doctrine that he has been taught. Paul warns him that these false holy men will “*wax worse and worse*”, but that the Scriptures are able to establish, correct, and instruct in righteousness.

We find that our society fits right in with the countless generations of societies that have passed since Paul wrote these words, describing a people that are so self-centered and resistant of the truth that they will change the truth of God’s word to suit their fancy. Two major lessons to take from this: 1) We must always be devoted to the integrity of God’s rules, always willing to study to make sure we have it right. 2) We must always keep our eyes open for those precious few who truly want to do right and think they are doing right but are being misled by these “imposters”. By maintaining these two principles, we can ensure our own salvation and have a positive impact on those around us who are truly seeking to do right in the doctrine of Christ.