



[2 Timothy 3:1-5](#)

(1) This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. (2) For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, (3) Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, (4) Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; (5) Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

King James Version

The apostle Paul writes that "evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" ([II Timothy 3:13](#)). People today are no different from when [Moses](#) wrote the Pentateuch or Paul his epistles, but the occasion to [sin](#), the incentive to do so and thus sin's frequency and intensity are at their highest levels since just before the Flood. In other words, the environment to commit sin more easily grows ever more amenable, and human nature is taking advantage of it. We have been born into—indeed have unwittingly contributed to creating—an environment in which it is exceedingly difficult to remain faithful.

We live in a world in which self-centeredness is being promoted to its greatest extent in human history. Appealing advertising hammers away at us to gratify ourselves: Why wait, why deny ourselves, why sacrifice, why not go along with everyone else? Constantly we hear, "Indulge yourself because you deserve it."

This world always appeals to moral and ethical standards lower than those of the great [God](#) and His way of life. In Technicolor with emotion-stirring music, Hollywood "sells" [adultery](#) and fornication as acceptable as long as the couple involved are attractive and somehow oppressed—thus "deserving" of a "better" relationship.

War, [murder](#), lying, stealing, [coveting](#), Sabbath-breaking, and [idolatry](#) are acts that almost everyone in [the world](#) would claim as being wrong, yet most unwittingly commit them to some degree and promote them in our culture. They justify their sin because

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everybody else is doing it, and they see no good reason why they should not just go along. If they try to swim against the tide, they think they will be taken advantage of.

Not too long ago, a person's word was his bond, and mere handshakes sealed major business agreements. Tales of [Abraham](#) Lincoln's honesty over pennies are an almost legendary part of our nation's history. Historians say that [faithfulness](#) was such a hallmark of the Roman Republic that not one divorce occurred in its first seven hundred years! But in the last fifty years this nation has seen a calamitous, family-destroying rise in the divorce rate that threatens the very stability of society.

Faithlessness is playing a major role in this destruction. People are without natural affection and traitors to their marital contract. Child abuse is becoming ever more prevalent. Athletes seem to break contracts almost at will. Manufacturers lie about the quality of their products, and workers fudge in the quality of their work.

Faithlessness is rising to its peak because self-centeredness, the father of irresponsibility, is being promoted to its utmost. It is the spirit of this age, but we have cause to resist it by what God has offered us in His revelation. God-centeredness in our lives is the answer to faithlessness and irresponsibility. But God-centeredness is not cheap, and few are willing to pay the price: their lives!

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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[The Fruit of the Spirit: Faithfulness](#)

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