

How to Survive in Perilous Times 2 Timothy 3

2 Timothy 3 Introduction

- What should we do to be prepared for survival in perilous times?
- What if we ask a survivalist?
- MD Creekmore is an emergency preparedness consultant who has written over 2000 articles on survival and self-reliance topics.
- Here are **“10 Things To Do Now!”** from his blog, thesurvivalistblog.net. It mostly reads like a grocery list.
 1. 20 lbs. of rice and 20 lbs. of pinto beans.
 2. 5 lbs mixed beans, 5 lbs of white sugar, 5 lbs of iodized salt, one gallon of olive oil, 5 lbs oats, 10 lbs each of flour and cornmeal.
 3. 20 cans of canned fruits and 20 cans of canned vegetables.
 4. 20 cans of various meats, salmon, stews, spam and tuna.
 5. Two 40-ounce jars of peanut butter.
 6. two 72 Ounce canisters of Tang Orange drink and six 19-Ounce Containers of Kool-Aid
 7. 400 tablets of “one a day” multivitamins.
 8. 4 five gallon water containers.
 9. 250 rounds of ammunition for your primary defensive weapon. More if you can, but this should be a good start.
 10. the best LED flashlight you can afford, extra batteries and bulb. Also matches and lighters.
- As we’ll see in 2 Timothy 3, the Bible’s definition of “perilous times” is somewhat different from that of the average survivalist.
- Consequently, the keys to survival will lie elsewhere as well.
- In this chapter, Paul prepares Timothy to face the perilous times ahead.

2 Timothy 3 Outline

We can think of these instruction to Timothy as: **Four Things To Do Now!**

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| I. | Know the Cause of the Peril | 3:1-5 |
| II. | Know How the Peril Expands | 3:6-9 |
| III. | Be Willing to Face the Peril | 3:10-13 |
| IV. | Be Well-Equipped for Survival | 3:14-17 |

Know the Cause of the Peril 3:1-5

- 3:1 **In the last days** Paul doesn’t just mean in some far off future time. We see the term beginning with the first coming of Jesus.
 - See **Hebrews 1:1-2**
- **perilous** “fierce, violent, savage” used only here and in Matt 8:28, where it describes the demon-possessed men of Gadara – the ones where the demons ended up sending the pigs down a cliff into the lake.

- 3:2-4 Various “loves” fill out the list.
 - **Lovers of self**
 - **Lovers of money**
 - **Unloving** *ástorgos* heartless, inhuman, hard hearted, “without natural affection”
 - **Despisers of good** “not loving the good”, hostile to virtue, opposed to both goodness and good people.
 - **Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God**
- 3:2-4 The things that we love or don’t love ultimately define our character.
- Think for a moment about what you love and don’t love.
- The greatest commandment, according to Jesus, is to love God first and love our neighbor as ourselves.
- Love of self is assumed by Jesus. When it becomes intentional, it ends up on this list.
- 3:5 A final word about these people is that they maintain an outward form of godliness.
- These are not obvious God-haters.
- They probably call themselves Christians and attend church regularly.
- These are “religious” people who reject or refuse God’s work in their lives.
- This is what makes the last days so perilous.

Know How the Peril Expands 3:6-9

- 3:6-7 This is an example that Paul and Timothy knew of personally.
- We may not fully understand it, but we can imagine how it worked.
- These deceivers took advantage of weak and gullible women.
- **Make captives** – the word is elsewhere used to describe prisoners of war.
- 3:8-9 **Jannes and Jambres** These names do not appear in the OT. From other literature we know that they are the magicians who opposed Moses in Egypt.
- By occult means they were able to duplicate, to a point, the miracles God did through Moses and Aaron.
- Just like Jannes and Jambres, false teachers will all be exposed eventually.
- As God’s people we must make it our concern not to fall for various forms of deception and false doctrine.
- Ignorant, weak and gullible Christians hasten the spread of false doctrine and in due course undermine the church.
- Well-taught, stable, discerning Christians hinder the spread of false doctrine and in the end make the church strong.

Be Willing to Face the Peril 3:10-13

- 3:10-11 Paul sets his own example before Timothy as something Timothy knew personally and could remember.
- The places mentioned in v.11 are from Timothy’s home territory. Timothy knew what Paul endured when he first came there preaching the gospel.
- 3:12 This is probably the least popular promise in the Bible, but there it is.

- 3:13 **grow worse and worse** Literally: “Making progress in the direction of the worse”.
 - “Having set the worst possible goal in front of them they will make good head-way towards it by means of deception.”
 - Donald Guthrie (1915-1992) of London Bible College
- 3:13 This verse explains why sincerity is a poor evidence for truth.
- Those who deceive the best are often deceived themselves.
- In other words, they believe their own lies.
- And these deceptions will grow worse and worse in the perilous times of the last days.

Be Well-Equipped for Survival 3:14-17

- 3:14-15 Timothy was already well-acquainted with the truth. He simply needed to continue down the path he was already on.
- In 1:5 Paul highlighted that Timothy’s faith was passed down to him from his mother and grandmother – who taught him the Scriptures.
- **Childhood** This word can literally be translated “infancy” as it is in the NIV.
- 3:16 **given by inspiration of God *theopneustos*** Literally, “God-breathed” as it is in the NIV.
 - “breathed out by God” (ESV)
 - **Doctrine** what is right
 - **Reproof** what is not right
 - **Correction** how to get right
 - **Righteousness** how to stay right
- 3:17 The Scriptures equip us for service.
- “The Christian minister has in his hands a God-given instrument designed to equip him completely for his work.” (Guthrie)
- “The man of God is before all the man of the Bible.”
 - Ceslas Spicq (1901-1993), French Bible Scholar
- 3:17 We need to allow the Bible to do all that it can do for us.
- When we indulge in it regularly, it will act as God’s chosen means to instruct us, correct us and train us in our awareness of God and His ways.
- It will not, however, make decisions for us or force us to act in ways we do not choose for ourselves.
- That will always be up to us, in reliance upon God’s power.
- God’s Spirit uses God’s Word to supernaturally instruct and correct us – to bring us into a more complete knowledge of God’s will.
- His Spirit also convicts us of sin and leads us into right thinking and right behavior.
- When we choose to think and act in accord with God’s will, the Holy Spirit then empowers us to follow through on these God-centered thoughts and actions.

2 Timothy 3

Conclusions

- How can we survive in perilous times?
- Paul has given us **“Four Things To Do Now!”** in order to be properly prepared.
- Contrary to the tenets of survivalism, none of them involve buying groceries, multivitamins, flashlights or ammunition.

Thing #1: Know the Cause of the Peril.

- The peril is caused by evil people, who hold to an outward form of religion, but never allow God to transform them in the way He desires.

Thing #2: Know How the Peril Expands.

- The peril expands when Christians are weak and gullible, falling for deceptive schemes and lying doctrines, concocted by false teachers who will one day be exposed.
- Be a well-taught, stable, discerning Christian.

Thing #3: Be Willing to Face the Peril.

- Don't be surprised when you encounter false teaching or false believers who intentionally oppose the truth.
- Deception comes naturally to them because many of them are seriously deceived themselves.

Thing #4: Be Well-Equipped for Survival.

- Buy whatever groceries you like, but be sure to spend time daily in God's Word, the Bible.
- Paul knew his Bible; Timothy knew his Bible.
- For that matter Jesus knew His Bible and used it when tested by the devil in the wilderness.
- It will equip you for “every good work.”