



This week we continued our Sunday morning series in 2 Timothy as Paul describes something of what the world looks like when it chooses to walk out on God. We particularly thought about the importance of our hearts and what it is we love, as our loves drive our lives.

At the heart of the start of these verses we see wrong loves, which create wrong actions:

What do you love?

Paul outlines 3 'wrong loves' that top and tail these initial verses -

a) v2 self - ours is a culture of loving self - we naturally put 'me-first' and are encouraged to do so. People are increasingly choosing to live alone so we can do what we want, when we want to and on our own terms.

b) v2 money - again the love of money at both the individual and corporate level is huge. But we don't think we love money - we are usually blind to our greed.

c) v4 pleasure - Ephesus was just the kind of place you could enjoy yourself without shame - it was a cosmopolitan city of pleasure - whether money and comfort or sex or sport or culture.

These things are not in and of themselves wrong but the problems arise when these loves trump our love for God.

How far will you go to get these things?

If our love is skewed, then our lives will be too. When our loves are threatened. If we love self, money pleasure. If they are what drive our hearts and our lives then very soon our lives will be marked by the list in v2-4.

For eg if love of self is our drive then we will seek to promote ourselves and demote others (hence boastful and proud or without love and slanderous)

The surprise in these verses though are where they develop in v5-9. We see that the people who are like this, are within the church - they have a form of godliness but deny its power (meaning externally they look good, but internally they are charlatans). They're even busy visiting people! But that is a sham - seeking simply to manipulate and take advantage of people who are gullible, feel guilty and are never actually able to grasp the truth.

What's the answer?

The fuller answer to wrong loves comes next week but the ultimate answer is the gospel. It's only in and through the gospel that we can turn from self love to love of God (v4). And it's a once in a lifetime thing and a daily thing as our hearts so easily wander back to the loves of the world.

Here are just a few questions that might get things going, please adapt for your group:

Brainstorm all you can remember from 2 Timothy.

What have you been chewing over this last week from the letter?

Be honest with each other in this - it's such a key passage in dealing with and making progress in personal sanctification.

Which of the 3 false loves do you most struggle with? Why?

How does that work its way out into life?

Which 'symptoms' from v2-4 do you see from 'the wrong love disease'?

When do you see them? (perhaps ask the question of what situations make us especially angry (or indeed elated) - why? What does this show about our loves?)

How as a group can you make progress and growth in these areas?

What do you think it means to have a form of godliness but deny its power?

What 1 thing can you take away from these verses?