



Mentoring Hearts, Changing Lives

WEEK 8

—AN ATHLETE STUDY OF 2ND TIMOTHY



JUST 2-GAMES?

In February 2014, Baltimore running back, Ray Rice, was charged with assault for striking his fiancée. He hit her so hard she was knocked unconscious. TMZ released a video of Rice dragging his unconscious girlfriend from the elevator where the altercation took place. Instead of a fine or jail-time, Rice was accepted into an rehab program and the charges would be dropped after completing the yearlong program. Scan the QR code for the timeline of events.



The NFL doesn't fall under the same laws as the US legal system. Over the Summer, the league suspended Rice for two games with a \$58,000 fine. (If you think that's a lot of money, and it is, bear in mind that the NFL fined Marshawn Lynch \$50,000 that year for not talking to the media). A maelstrom of criticism fell on the NFL for such a light punishment for such a serious offense. After the outcry, the league updated the domestic violence policy stating a minimum 6-game suspension for a first offense and lifetime ban for a second offense. Then, the full video leaked...

The original video only showed Rice trying to drag his fiancée off the elevator. This video showed them enter the elevator, then Rice slapping his fiancée so hard her head bounced off the handrail as she fell unconscious. People were outraged. Rice was immediately fired. The NFL claimed no one had seen *that* video.

Our passage today suggests that in the "last days," this kind of thing is the norm.

2 TIMOTHY 3:1-9

¹ But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. ² For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, ⁴ treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. ⁶ For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, ⁷ always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. ⁸ Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. ⁹ But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

"Maybe that person has committed suicide, and what you're watching is the very brokenness that led them to believe that their life was so meaningless that they would rather die than live, and you're taking momentary pleasure in very real pain."

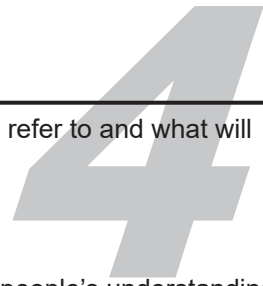
Watch this mindblowing interview with a former porn star from the *Becoming Something* podcast. He shines a light on the evils and brokenness of the porn industry.

**May not be suitable for younger audiences.*



DISCUSSION

What's the silliest argument you've ever had?



1. What time period does Paul refer to and what will it be like? (1)

2. What is missing from these people's understanding of Christianity? (5)

3. What group did these people target and what traits did they hold in common? (6)

4. How does the first descriptive phrase in verse 2a related to the other descriptions? (2-8)

5. Do you share any traits described in this passage and what would it take to change? If you do not see yourself, what must you keep doing to avoid joining this list?

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

It's only when we understand the depth of our sin that we truly appreciate the depth of God's grace. If you have questions or need help, talk to your Coach today!



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STUDY NOTES

\$97 BILLION

It's commonly reported that the porn industry makes and estimated \$97 billion a year globally. That's more than the MLB, NFL, NBA, NHL, and MLS *combined*.

Research suggests that most people are exposed to porn by age 13, with some exposed as young as 7. And, although clinicians often fight the term "addiction," too many people can attest that once you start, it's a lifetime battle to restrain yourself. And, it's not just a guys either. 1-in-3 viewers or pornography are women.

Last Week's passage encouraged believers to be kind, "*correcting opponents with gentleness.*" The passage ended with the hope that these people "*may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.*" Although there is a chapter break in our English Bible, Paul's thought continued, ***But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty.***

Paul has been encouraging Timothy from the *inside out*—with the trouble from within the Church. Now, Paul switches and starts dealing with the threats from the *outside in*. Pornography is a great example. Satan has taken something designed by God and corrupted it. God created sex and intimacy, and like a fire in a fireplace, it's wonderful and beneficial in its proper place—marriage. However, like the devastation of a fire leaving the fireplace, sexual sin devastates lives.

The primary challenge to the church isn't ever overt attacks. It's not protestors or even shooters. It's that ***people will be lovers of self.*** Everything else Paul lists rests on this foundation. You cannot love God first and others second and commit any of the following.

MENTORING HEARTS REQUIRES FACING REALITY

Let's be real. Every person reading this has done or will do some or all of the following. Nobody can cast a stone at anyone else. If you're seeking a mentor, these are things for which you need to seek accountability. If you're discipling someone, these will be their struggles. We may not struggle with all of these sins, but all of us struggle with some of these sins. So what does Paul say being a "lover of self" may look like?

Paul wrote that they will be, "***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.***"

Note a couple observations about this list. First, you can be very poor and love money more than a wealthy person. Second, "disobedient to parents" is listed in the same list with words like "abusive," "brutal," and "treacherous." To many of us, it may not feel like it fits. However, if a person has Jesus-loving, faithfully obedient parents, whom they respect and obey, it's unlikely they're going to pursue these sins to the degree of a disobedient child. Obedience is key. We could keep going, but we hope you see yourself here.

Paul said that as these kinds of people invade the Church, they will likely have ***the appearance of godliness, but denying its power.*** We could write a whole study on this sentence alone. This could be legalistic, rule-following, self-righteous "appearance" or a self-justifying, do whatever I want, "only God can judge me" attitude. Both are wrong. These kinds of people may even quote Scripture to defend themselves and their actions, however, they're missing the "power." God's power brings freedom. God's power delivers from shame. God's power brings true, lasting life-change.

Paul warns to ***avoid such people.*** Then terrifyingly, he shines a light on their secret sins, ***those who creep.*** Notice who they attack, they ***capture weak women.*** Paul isn't making a statement that women are weak. He's stating that these "creeps" are predators looking for a weakened prey. Reading the Bible cover to cover God ***repeatedly*** commands his people to care and protect the weak—widows and orphans. These "creeps" take advantage of those who cannot defend themselves.

BELIEVERS MUST FACE THE REALITY OF EVIL

At its core, sin is disagreeing with God about what is good. God calls sex inside of marriage, "good." He calls sex or sexual acts outside of marriage, "bad." Will you agree in word and action? He calls loving money and possessions, "bad." Will you agree? He calls an ungrateful heart, "bad." Will you agree?

Many of us who grew up around church can be described as ***always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.*** For example, in high school, I could articulate many Bible stories. I had deep theological discussions. Yet, I also got high, chased girls, and only gave a nod to The Big Guy once or twice a week. I wore a mask of the "appearance of godliness" to many. However, I mostly lived *disagreeing* with what God calls "good" in my heart and actions.

We must realize what we're doing isn't just wrong. It's evil. It isn't just a mistake. It's sin. It deserves Hell. And it cost Jesus his life so that we might not face the due penalty.

