

## People Opposing Themselves

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2Timothy 2:25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

2Timothy 2:26 And *that* they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Contradictions in behavior appear quite often in the human race. Such contradictions seem to be diagnostic of mankind. Adam and Eve had everything they needed in the Garden of Eden, yet they opposed their best interests in favor of sampling some fruit. We imagine when we think of this incident that the fruit in Eve's hands must have had a huge spiritual skull and crossbones on the outer layer and across that skull and crossbones the word POISON must surely have been plainly visible. But, with such a message being at least strongly implied by God's warning, they ate anyway. It is most likely that this was the actual origin of mankind opposing himself in all future generations.

In our text we read of some types of people whom the apostle Paul noted would be opposing themselves. As we read of this, our minds must certainly think for awhile upon the implications of this self-opposition, and its ramifications. What is the root of this particular kind of opposition? What is the outcome of it? What is our role in regard to it? What may we expect as we act out our roles in regard to it? These are some things we want to consider today, and trust that God the Holy Spirit will provide us with some realistic and sobering thoughts about the nature of human self-contradiction.

### I. Where does this self-opposition come from?

- From the inherent attitude in humans that causes them to hate being wrong; to hate being reproved of depravity
  - > Joh 3:20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.
- From rebellion against instruction that may contradict what they believe
  - > Pro 12:1 Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof *is* brutish.
- From genetic rejection of the truth
  - > Rom 3:11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.  
Rom 3:12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.
- From being confronted with the unknown
  - > Humans have a survival element in their makeup that causes them to instinctively be defensive about things that are unfamiliar, unknown. Being confronted with the truth

from God's word and the doctrines surrounding grace, sin, condemnation, and righteousness, they shy away because the depraved nature finds this stuff alien and scary.

- Act 17:18 (In commenting on the spiritual message of Paul at Athens, the philosophers of the day had this to say about the doctrines of Christ): "...He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection."
- One would think that in a culture that encouraged and patronized a multitude of philosophical ideas and a myriad of gods that they would not find any new idea about religion and deities as strange...yet they did...why? Because human nature can embrace some really bizarre ideas, but the ideas embodied in the gospel of Christ are totally alien to them.
- So, when confronted with the truths of God, men oppose themselves as a kind of depraved natural response.

## **II. What is the nature of the self-opposition?**

- It opposes all that can possibly bring them eternal benefits
  - > Only the truths of God can bring eternal blessings
    - John 6:63 "...the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life."
    - All roads lead to Christ through whom all blessings flow
      - (When the disciples were confronted with the question from Jesus about whether they would go away like all those others who had just abandoned Him, Peter replied for the whole group in John 6:68) "...Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."
- It opposes all that would make their lives spiritually productive
- It opposes all that would make their lives count for something

## **III. How may we counter this self-opposition**

- By interacting in meekness
- By instructing, admonishing, pleading in humility and love
- By trusting in the Lord to make our efforts effectual to those self-opposers
- By praying for fruit

## **IV. What can we hope for when we approach this self-opposition in the appropriate spiritual frame?**

That because we have intervened, God might grant them repentance about their self-opposition and acknowledge the truth that we have brought.

That they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil