We cannot skip that great AWANA verse in 2 Timothy. 2:15 says, *“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”* This is reminding us that we will present ourselves and our works to God in the future.

Then Paul warns of perilous times [KJV]. In 3:1-9 he lists traits an ungodly world that will happen in the last days. We love to take that section and compare our time to that time. We think that we have arrived there. But we must put this in perspective for Paul and Timothy. Paul was in Rome. We know about what Rome was like from the preserved city of Pompey. It did not have a house of prostitution on every corner – by archeologists’ count it had three of them per corner. Lasciviousness was in the homes of the poor and the rich. Timothy was in Ephesus where temple prostitutes were everywhere – an accepted life style of the people. Infanticide was common and legal. Fights to the death were the sport spectacle of the day and betting on them was the usual thing. There was department in Roman government just to fish the murdered out of the Tiber River in Rome - mostly to keep them from polluting the water. Slavery held at least a third of the people in the hands of another. Slaves had no rights what so ever. The owner had total control of them.

Life in their time was worse than life today – much worse. So when Paul warns of this perilous time, then it will be nothing like today or then. What will be the cause of this terrible time? 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7 talks of a restrainer who restrains until the end times when the man of lawlessness appears. The only ‘He’ who could restrain such things would be God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit indwells believers. Through the presence of an active and vibrant church the evil of this world and the evil one himself are restrained. Where the Christian presence in this world is thin, civil life of people is bad. Where it is prominent civil life prospers.

For unrestrained evil to occur, then the Holy Spirit must leave, and since He is our seal, then we must leave with Him. This is the Rapture of 1Thess. 4:13-18 and 1 Cor. 15:50-58. It is not until He and we are gone that the time of this tribulation shall happen. We will not see it.

But you should not think that we will lack persecution. Paul goes on to say in 2 Timothy 3:10-11a “Now you [Timothy] followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, *persecutions, and sufferings*…” Then he says in verse 12, “Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

We are different from the world. By our presence [and the Holy Spirit in us] we restrain the evil that the world naturally yearns for. We stand for the right. And we seek to change the world one soul at a time. The world will never like that. The world will resist that if it can. Here, that resistance is about to be the death of Paul and eventually the death of Timothy. Paul writes here at the end, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.” To all who love His appearing. By the Holy Spirit who lives in us – that is us too!

In Christ Pastor EA

Paul gives this just before three warnings. Avoid worldly, empty chatter because it leads to *further* ungodliness. This is not a warning about just random neutral topics. This is worldly in that it is ungodly and so the result of it is more ungodliness.

He also says to refuse to discuss foolish and ignorant speculations which create arguments. This is arguing about things we cannot resolve or prove. Arguing for the sake of arguing, or arguing to win. This only creates factions within the church over personal items for prideful reasons.