

OVERCOMING SPIRITUAL DECEPTION
Part II: Staying With What We Credibly Learned And Proved
(2 Timothy 3:1, 14)

I. Introduction

- A. In 2 Timothy 3:1, 13, the Apostle Paul predicted that in the latter days, evil people and impostors would go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. Evidence abounds that this prediction is being fulfilled.
- B. We thus do a four-part study on overcoming spiritual deception, and in this second part, 2 Timothy 3:1, 14 directs us to stay with what we credibly learned and proved (as follows):

II. Staying With What We Credibly Learned And Proved, 2 Timothy 3:1, 14a,b.

- A. Where 2 Timothy 3:1, 13 with other passages reveal the rise of deceivers, their deceptions and the people who tend to be deceived, 2 Timothy 3:14-17 reveals how one gains spiritual victory over such deception.
- B. Significantly, where we learned in our first lesson that deceivers tend progressively to shift from truth into error, 2 Timothy 3:14 called Timothy to do the **opposite** – to **remain** in what he credibly learned and proved:
 - 1. The word “continue” in 2 Timothy 3:14a KJV translates the Greek verb *meno*, “remain” (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 736; Theol. Dict. of the N. T., v. IV, p. 574-576).
 - 2. What Timothy was to “remain” in was described in 2 Timothy 3:14a,b,c (as follows):
 - a. First, Timothy was to “remain” in the things he had “learned” (v. 14a, *manthano*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 491), and the context at 2 Timothy 3:14c reveals that Paul referred to the spiritual truths Timothy had learned from credible believers in Christ:
 - i. In Acts 16:1-3, one such instructor was the Apostle Paul who had discipled Timothy. (2 Tim. 1:2)
 - ii. In Acts 16:2, other godly believers who knew Timothy had recommended him to Paul, so Timothy was likely taught by some of these other believers in his area.
 - iii. 2 Timothy 1:5 reveals that Timothy’s mother Eunice and grandmother Lois had been believers with a sincere faith in Christ. Since infancy, then, he had been taught Scripture truths (cf. 2 Timothy 3:15a NIV), being grounded in God’s Word since early childhood.
 - iv. In summary, then, Timothy was responsible before the Lord to remain in the Biblical truths he had been taught by his grandmother, his mother, other godly believers in the churches at Antioch, Iconium, Derbe and Lystra, the Apostle Paul and likely also Paul’s missionary companions.
 - b. Second, Timothy was to “remain” in the things that he had been “assured of” (2 Timothy 3:14b KJV), what translates the aorist **passive** Greek verb *epistothēs* from *pistoo* that means “feel confidence, be convinced” (The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 161; *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 671). Accordingly, Timothy was to remain in the things that he had learned and had applied to his life to the extent that from **his own personal experience**, he had **become** (passive voice) **convinced** that those things were **true**:
 - i. In the previous context to 2 Timothy 3:14, at 2 Timothy 3:10-11, Paul reminded Timothy of the persecution Paul had faced at Antioch, Iconium and Lystra. Timothy would in particular remember Paul’s being stoned and left for dead by the people of Timothy’s area before Paul had miraculously risen up and gone into the city to keep on ministering, Acts 14:19-20 with 16:1-2. That event would have convinced Timothy that God equipped and condoned Paul in his ministry and teaching.
 - ii. Timothy recalled the commitment of the elders and Paul who had laid their hands on Timothy to ordain him to the ministry with a prophetic word about the spiritual gift he was to use, 1 Tim. 4:14.
 - iii. Also, Timothy had witnessed the godliness of his grandmother and mother in the sincerity of their faith in Christ, what would have impressed him to think that their beliefs were true, 2 Timothy 1:5.
 - c. Third, Timothy was to recall the **credibility** of the **people** who had taught him these truths – the credibility of Paul, Paul’s missionary companions, his mother, grandmother and other believers, 2 Timothy 3:14c:
 - i. Though even believers still have sin natures and thus can sin (cf. 1 John 1:8-10), the testimony of believers with long, godly lives and ministries adds weight to the credibility of what they teach.
 - ii. Thus, Timothy was to value the truths he was taught by those with credible, long-term godly lives.

Lesson: *To overcome deception, God directs that we remain with the Biblical truths we learned from reputable parties, what truths we then applied and through our own experience became convinced were God’s truths.*

Application: *May we overcome deception by sticking with what reputable parties have taught us and that we then also applied in our own lives and became convinced by our own experience that they were true.*