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In II Timothy 2:24-3:9, Paul instructed Timothy in how the Lord's servant should respond to two different types of opposition. A servant of the Lord was not to quarrel with either type, but he was not to deal with all opposition the same way.

In chapter 2:24-26 Paul wrote: "And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in meekness correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they will come to the full knowledge of the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will." To the first type of opposition, the Lord's servant was to gently, meekly offer correction in hopes of seeing God grant repentance and deliverance.

Then in the verses that follow, Paul begins to address the other type of opposition with these words: "But know this, in the last days perilous times will come: The type of opposition that would arise in the last days must not be dealt with in the same way as those addressed in the earlier verses. These ungodly opponents are described this way: "For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power." Paul's instruction for the Lord's servant when faced with this type of opposition is markedly different: "from such people turn away!" Leave them alone!

Paul knew that attempts to correct such people would be in vain. He goes on to characterize this type of opposition as being men like Jannes and Jambres who opposed Moses. Such men are opposed to the truth itself, whose minds have been corrupted, and have been disapproved concerning the faith. Paul reminded Timothy that such opponents folly would become evident to all. The Lord's servant must let such warped men alone and leave them to their own self destruction. Men who are opposed to the truth itself will not be corrected with truth. Sound doctrine will not fix those who have no use for it because it does not suit their own carnal desires. They will deliberately turn their ears away from everything sound and gather to themselves teachers who will reinforce their own lusts with the license of false freedom.

Attempting to correct those who refuse the love of the truth is "casting pearls before swine". God Himself sends such people a strong delusion rather than granting them repentance. It is better to discern the difference in the type of opposition we are facing than to make the mistake of correcting the wrong crowd and wind up trampled in the attempt. The Lord's servants are to gently and meekly correct some who oppose them, but when the opposition is of the nature of those in the last days, "from such turn away" will keep the Lord's servant out of harm's way.