

# The Veneer Of Civilization

David Fremo

Recorded August 5, 2017

In a book I have been reading about war written by a veteran I greatly respect, a World War I veteran, it said that in war sometimes the veneer of civilization gets stripped away. So, today's title is

## The Veneer of Civilization

Veneer is a very thin layer that covers less quality things. I've been thinking about that since I read it, as I think it speaks volumes to our society today, not just in war but in everyday society. We live in a time when that veneer has become very thin indeed.

Some may not quite understand what I mean by veneer, so I think it's good to explain it. Veneer is very common in today's society. It is used greatly in the building of homes and of everything virtually you come in contact with as far as furnishings and things on that order. It used to be only in plywood. It was the most common usage. They take a log and put it on a spindle basically and a knife against it. They peel off layers. You have this long strand of what looked like cardboard basically. Anyway, they would put these various layers together crosswise and you get plywood. The inner layers it didn't matter what they looked like, but the outer layer was usually of a better quality wood and often much thinner. As such it looked pretty good for the most part like C or D sheeting plywood, which didn't look very good at all, but it held together and it did the job. Then they had A and B plywood which is used more where you wanted to see what it looked like. It seemed like over the years that outer layer got thinner and thinner. Nowadays they use an outer layer of material that may be wood, may be plastic. It can even be painted and it is very thin. It is put over what is called a laminate, but it's put over a particle board, which is basically sawdust and glue or chipboard, which is basically wood chips and glue. Anyway, this is used extensively in furniture manufacturing. It's been around for a long time. Even airplanes were made out of plywood.

One place that I work is a fourplex. One of the tenants is an old Special Forces veteran. He talks with us sometimes when we make ourselves available. He is really quite lonely. During one such conversation he paused and said that sometimes he just can't remember what he was going to say, because he was shot in the head with a thirty-eight. The bullet went in low and came out the top of his head. It was done by an enemy officer when they had been captured. He was thrown into a ditch with the dead, as they thought he was. When he came to, he crawled into the jungle. He laid there for a long time. He has no idea how long. He was in and out of consciousness. When he finally got a little bit stronger, he went back and rescued the rest of his men that were still alive. He then said something that made me walk away thinking of that veneer of

civilization. Thankfully, I was able to forget most of what he said. I wonder how many of those we live among would hesitate to do anything to anyone else if things got really bad.

This man and I were recently talking about what he calls the tipping point. Some also call it the point of no return. It is when you are beyond the point when you can go back, like an airplane that has so much fuel. When it's past the halfway point on its fuel, it cannot go back to where it came from. It must go on to wherever it's going or crash. I think we are past that point as a society, well past it in fact. All we need now is a little bit of a push or some little incident happening and we can go under or over. Like in World War I it only took one shot at one person and the whole world was at war. We may ask: Why is that? I think we can see a lot of the reasons in 2 Timothy 3, which I'd like you to turn to. It might be good to look at the word "civilized." It means *to bring out of a primitive or savage condition to a higher level of social organization and of culture and technological development*. Well, there is no doubt that we have attained a high level of technological development. Some of the other parts of the definition may be in question.

**2 Timothy 3:1.** *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. (KJV)*

The word rendered "perilous" is Strong's number 5467 *chalepos*, perhaps from number 5465 through the idea of *reducing the strength, difficult, that is dangerous or by implication furious*. It is rendered perilous here and fierce in Matthew 8:28 which says:

**Matthew 8:28.** *And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. (KJV)*

I think we can see from the two uses of this word that these times are difficult indeed. Notice the word "furious," which is used to describe God in Nahum 1:1-7.

**Nahum 1:1.** *The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite. (NKJV)*

Do you know there are a lot of shites in the Bible? It's a very famous last name.

*2) God is jealous, and the Lord avenges; the Lord avenges and is furious. The Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves wrath for His enemies; (NKJV)*

Lest we get the wrong idea of what is being talked about here let us read the rest of the section.

- 3) *The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked. The Lord has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet.*
- 4) *He rebukes the sea and makes it dry, and dries up all the rivers. Bashan and Carmel wither, and the flower of Lebanon wilts.*
- 5) *The mountains quake before Him, the hills melt, and the earth heaves at His presence, yes, the world and all who dwell in it.*
- 6) *Who can stand before His indignation? And who can endure the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by Him. (NKJV)*

We have what sounds like a very angry, very furious God, the One that is often thought of as the God of the Old Testament. Then it says in verse 7:

- 7) *The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him. (NKJV)*

The Lord is indeed good and knows all of His sheep all of the time and in all of the situations. We have no need to worry about things. We know He is there for us. I thought of something an old friend often said. He always would say. "Don't sweat the small stuff." You know we really don't have to. Nahum 1:2 is also rendered *the Lord is a jealous God filled with vengeance and wrath. He takes revenge on all who oppose Him and continues to rage against His enemies!* in the New Living Translation. But if you are his friend, you don't have anything to worry about.

The word "rage" means *heat, as in anger or poison from his fever.* It is also rendered *hot displeasure, anger, indignation and rage.*

Recently a news commentator said we're in a psychosis of what they call negative polarization where nobody likes their side, but they really hate the other side. We saw a lot of that in the recent election. Many people didn't vote for a candidate. They voted against a candidate. Times are perilous indeed when such a thin veneer of civilization is all that separates us from total anarchy. You notice I said total anarchy. Sometimes I think we are in a state of anarchy. Go back to 2 Timothy 3:2.

- 2 Timothy 3:2.** *For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, (KJV)*

We will look at each of these traits today to see what we can learn about the society in which we live.

### **The first trait is lovers of their own selves.**

This means fond of self or selfish. Many care little for anyone except themselves. Today it seems to be so very prevalent. There was recently a story of a young woman

who encouraged her “friend” to commit suicide. It was said that she wanted to play the grieving widow. Sad people feel sorry for her. She didn’t care what happened to the guy as long as she could have what she wanted.

Is there any doubt in our society that people are fond of themselves? Look at the candidates we had in the previous election. “Look at me, how great I am.” They seem to think far higher of themselves than of anyone else; so much so that they can’t seem to think that anyone wouldn’t see them as the perfect people that they are. They seem to think only an idiot would see they aren’t good and perfect.

Then I decided to do a little research in the local phone book. Our little book covers the mostly rural area of central Washington, including Moses Lake. How many beauty shops do you think I would find listed? Were there twenty, thirty? Would you believe sixty-three, which is more than the attorneys’ offices? There were also five more barber shops not included in the sixty-three which presumably were mostly for women. To be fair there were fourteen shops that catered to both men and women. How many worked in each shop and thus the total wasn’t told, but several hundred would be a reasonable guess. The barbers I go to are mostly semi-retired and much of their clientele are older men who just want to look presentable. I told my barber when I recently got a haircut that I thought I’d better come in before somebody started petting me. I rather doubt most of those who frequent beauty shops are there for the same reason. There were also ten tanning salons and who knows now many businesses to make a person look presumably better than there is any need for. How many of these are harmful to one’s health is a whole different subject that I’d better not tackle today. We had one next to the print shop that I had when I started in the tri-cities. The smell there was worse than the print shop by a whole heap. In fact it bothered us considerably. Those chemicals in my own print shop were the ones that nearly killed me later on, as that was the primary allergy that kind of developed all of the other allergies from what I understand.

I used to have a pickup truck when I was young and new in the church and I helped a lot of people move. It seemed almost every week someone was moving in the Fargo, North Dakota church. One time one of the people moving had a non-member friend “helping.” He was lazy and avoided doing any more than he absolutely had to. I picked up this mirror while unloading and handed it to him with the words you should be able to handle this. He took it and held it facing himself and said in complete sincerity “the most beautiful sight in the world.” I proceeded to quote a scripture, not all that much under my breath. Perhaps you wouldn’t be surprised which one. It’s found in Ecclesiastes 12:8.

***Ecclesiastes 12:8.*** *Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity. (KJV)*

**The second trait is covetousness and means fond of money, greedy for money.**

One doesn’t have to look very hard today to see that trait. Look at the newer tracts of homes and one from a half century ago; bigger with far more amenities is in. Most of

the older homes either had a single car garage or no garage at all. Most newer houses have two or more garages to store all of their toys that are so much a part of their lives. Then many have vacation homes in pleasant places or ones on wheels that they can take anywhere they want. It's the same with other vehicles, except with far more features. There is so much stuff now that wasn't even thought of fifty years ago, except possibly in far out science fiction, or the comics. Does anybody remember Dick Tracy's TV wristwatch? Does it remind you of a little gadget you carry? Indeed I heard there is such a TV wristwatch in existence, but it's not very popular because it's too small. For once we want things bigger again.

Once in high school a teacher asked us what success meant to us. I was the only one that didn't equate it with making a lot of money. Money and all of the things it will buy are nice, but it shouldn't be an end in itself.

How many times have you heard of rich people saying that they would trade it all for one happy marriage, or one true friend or some such thing? Let's turn to Ephesians 5:1-5

***Ephesians 5:1.*** *Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;*  
2) *And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for sweetsmelling savour.*  
3) *But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;*  
4) *Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.*  
5) *For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. (KJV)*

Being a part of God's kingdom, now that is a true measure of success.

**The third trait is boasters, which means a braggart.**

There used to be a prize fighter who often said, "I'm the greatest." Today it is obvious that a certain former presidential candidate thinks the same about himself. Indeed, he has said so, but then he is simply a product of his generation. Turn to Romans 12:3.

***Romans 12:3.*** *For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. (KJV)*

We are not some great ones. Indeed we are nothing apart from God.

## **The fourth trait is proud, which means appearing above others or haughty.**

This is so common today it is barely worth mentioning. I work for a lady that had grown up in the church and attended some when I knew her. She mentioned some neighbor ladies that were very haughty. She said they all talked about each other in a very demeaning way. I remember years ago people would say of such people that their noses were so high they scraped the ceiling. Turn to James 4:6-8.

**James 4:6.** *But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*

7) *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

8) *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. (KJV)*

We see here that this attitude doesn't cut it with God. Do you think that pride will be an asset when civilization deteriorates?

## **The fifth trait is blasphemers and means vulgarly abusive, slanderers against man and lack of reverence for God.**

Turn to Romans 3:10-18.

**Romans 3:10.** *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*

11) *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

12) *They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

13) *Their throat [speech] is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:*

14) *Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:*

15) *Their feet are swift to shed blood:*

16) *Destruction and misery are in their ways:*

17) *And the way of peace have they not known:*

18) *There is no fear of God before their eyes. (KJV)*

One can hardly listen to even the best entertainment today without hearing God's name being used frequently and in vain. So many use language that would have been unacceptable in most homes and work places very many years ago. Now even children often use language which would probably have gotten their mouth washed out with soap, at least as my mother said a number of times. Turn to Hosea 4:1-2.

**Hosea 4:1.** *Hear the word of the Lord, you children of Israel, for the Lord brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land: "There is no truth or mercy or knowledge of God in the land.*

2) *By swearing and lying, killing and stealing and committing adultery, They break all restraint, with bloodshed upon bloodshed." (NKJV)*

If this doesn't describe today's society, I don't know of anything that does. So much of society today thinks nothing of lying and stealing whatever they want. It is so common that so called law enforcement does nothing to stop it in many cases. I found out beyond a shadow of a doubt that at least some so called officers of the law; I know there are many that do a good job, but some only do their job when it is convenient and not dangerous. As at least one said to me, "We want to go home at night." That's understandable, but that means they will do nothing to jeopardize that, which means anything that may get the bad guy mad at them. The victim doesn't seem to matter. After all, who would expect to do their jobs of protecting the public? While my case is personal and familiar, one can barely hear any news today without hearing of some police officer being killed or killing an unarmed person. After all, an armed person might shoot back. Is it any wonder that police are becoming targets after so much abuse of power and dereliction of their duty to protect the public? It also makes this veneer I'm talking about even thinner.

**The sixth trait is disobedient to parents and means stubborn resistance to authority.**

While this was noted above, it all starts in the homes of the citizens. Being disobedient to parents is so common today that a polite, respectful child is such a rarity as almost to be thought abnormal. Today it is common to find children who order adults around and respect for an old person is rare at best. Yes indeed, what should be normal has become abnormal. Is it any wonder that the veneer of civilization is now so thin as to be almost nonexistent? Turn to Leviticus 19:32. Here is a verse that used to be read quite often. You know, I haven't heard it read for a very long time.

***Leviticus 19:32. You shall rise ... (NKJV)***

That means *give respect or honor.*

*32b) ... before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the Lord. (NKJV)*

We don't have that honor for old people anymore. Once in a while I see it in a store. I'm kind of flabbergasted when somebody gives way to me or shows me some respect. I'm not used to that. I'm not that old yet. Well, maybe I am. It's kind of hard to accept though you know.

**The seventh trait is unthankful and means thankless and ungrateful.**

We have so much abundance these days that we have come to take it for granted. We tend to forget that it all can and will disappear someday. Then we will be like the Israelites when they thought about the good food that they had in Egypt. Turn to Numbers 21:5.

**Numbers 21:5.** *And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." (NKJV)*

Continue in verse 7.

*7) Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you;" ... (NKJV)*

You see, when we grumble and complain, we're not grumbling and complaining to each other or whatever. We're grumbling and complaining to God. Like I have said in the past, we should be the most thankful people on earth and not just on Thanksgiving Day, but we are probably the least thankful of all people. Many Americans think they deserve all of these goodies. What makes us any better than the destitute Haitians, who are often devastated by yet another severe natural disaster? I wonder if Americans will change their tune when these things start happening to us. Given past experience, look at Matthew 11:20.

**Matthew 11:20.** *Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: (NKJV)*

Turn to Revelation 9:20.

**Revelation 9:20.** *But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands ... (NKJV)*

I think it is obvious that instead of repenting or instead of saying where have we done wrong they will shake their fists at God and curse Him.

### **The eighth trait is unholy and it means wicked.**

Are we any better than Sodom and Gomorrah today? Would God find any righteous in some cities? He would likely have to look really hard to find any truly righteous, and even the best often condone the depravity which is becoming so common place in society today. Turn to 2 Timothy 1:9

**1 Timothy 1:9.** *knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, (NKJV)*

Turn to Romans 2:11-15.

**Romans 2:11.** *For there is no partiality with God.*



- 12) *For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law*  
 13) *(for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified;*  
 14) *for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves,*  
 15) *who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness ... (NKJV)*

What this means is the only reason there is need for laws is for the unrighteous. The godly are a law unto themselves, as it says. If you love something, you actually do it. If you see God's way is right, you just naturally do it. You don't need somebody saying thou shalt do this, because you want to do it. Now go back to 2 Timothy 3:3. As if this wasn't enough, the list of sinful traits continues here.

**2 Timothy 3:3.** *Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, (KJV)*

**The ninth trait is without natural affection and it means to be hardhearted towards kindred or family, to not cherish them.**

Apparently it is natural to have affection to our families, but today that seems in short supply. Many seem to hate one another. Indeed it is not at all uncommon to kill one another. We live in an age when many expecting mothers even kill their own children. Even some so-called Christians show their true character by how they treat their families. We've all known people who pretend to be righteous, but abuse their mates or fail to care for their children when they have the means to do so. Some seem to derive great pleasure by doing all they can to make their mate or their children miserable and what's worse is they pretend that it is pleasing to God. Well, nothing could be further from the truth.

How much do we cherish brethren we don't know? Do we seek them out and show concern to them? Turn to Romans 1:18-20.

**Romans 1:18.** *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,*  
 19) *because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.*  
 20) *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, (NKJV)*

Since society is only as good as the family, which all too often consists of single parents, unmarried couples or perverts of varying types, and many of these on some form of drugs, it is a wonder we have a civilization at all.

### **The tenth trait is trucebreakers and it means not to be placated or failing to relent.**

Like in the history of our government with the Indians in which many truces or treaties were made with no intention of ever keeping them. The government thought the Indians should keep their part of the bargain, even when they had no intention of keeping theirs.

Do we keep our word no matter what? It is so easy to say we will do something or be somewhere at such and such a time, but often something comes up or we change our mind. Does that give us a right to opt out? You might want to turn to Psalms 15:1-4, which is a Psalm of David.

***Psalms 15:1.** Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?*

*2) He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.*

*3) He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.*

*4) In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; ... (KJV)*

This is the beginning of the word contemptible.

*4b) ...but he honoureth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. (KJV)*

The New Living Translation puts this verse:

*4b) ... and keep their promises even when it hurts. (NLT)*

What this is saying is that if we say we will do something and then it will be a problem for us, we should do it anyway, for this is walking uprightly and working righteousness. We should always speak the truth in our heart. That doesn't mean that we are infallible, that we never get it wrong, that we don't realize something else has to be done or whatever, but we should intend to do what we speak and especially when it hurts us to do so. This is so easy to say and so hard to do. What is a civilized society without a recognized standard of behavior?

### **The eleventh trait is false accusers, which is equated with devil or slanderers.**

An accuser is used thirty-four times as a title of Satan the devil; once of Judas, who in his opposition to God acted the part of the devil. Apart from John 6:70 men are never spoken of as devils. It is always to be distinguished from daimonion, a demon. It is

found three times of false accusers or slanderers. In 1 Timothy 3:11, speaking of deacons, it says:

**1 Timothy 3:11.** *Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. (NKJV)*

Turn to Titus 2:1-3.

**Titus 2:1.** *But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine:*  
2) *that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience;*  
3) *the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things — (NKJV)*

The older women, and I would presume the younger women as well, should be reverent and not slanderers. That doesn't mean that men can't be by the way. We see here that being a slanderer or a false accuser is a very serious matter. It is as if one is the devil himself and indeed it is to do his work.

### **The twelfth trait is incontinent and means powerless, that is without self-control.**

This is rather interesting, that without self-control and powerless is the same thing. I suppose it is like we are powerless to control our emotions. This is often seen in situations where a large group is talked into something by one who wants to further his own end. This is also known as the mob mentality. Today we also have a serious problem with gangs where a leader or an outside influence can have others do whatever they want done. In both gangs and mobs members will do many things as a group that they would never do by themselves. As a group they feel so much braver, as we see in Exodus 23:1-4.

**Exodus 23:1.** *You shall not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.*  
2) *You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice.*  
3) *You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute.*  
4) *If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. (NKJV)*

This is in answer to a question asked in a sermonette recently. Self-control is not just something others have neither a problem with, nor are mobs and gangs the only groups that are often lead down the wrong path. Anywhere people gather they can be lead astray or controlled by a charismatic leader, so the group becomes powerless to avoid being led astray. Notice 2 Peter 1:6.

**2 Peter 1:6.** *To knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, (NKJV)*

Do you notice the progression here? Self-control is associated with knowledge and perseverance, which leads to godliness.

**The thirteenth trait is fierce and it means savage.**

The New King James Version renders this “brutal” and the New Living Translation renders it “cruel.” I’ve heard things like children can be so cruel and indeed they often are to anyone different from them in any way. Of course, they aren’t born with these attributes. They just mirror the views of those they spend time with. These attributes are just more visible in children who don’t try to hide them. Savage, brutal and cruel are adjectives that describe a civilization that has ceased to be civil. It still may have many good things going for it, as in great technological marvels and even highly advanced social and cultural levels. When that social fabric starts to unravel and people begin to act more like animals which have no concept of right or wrong, and so act in ways contrary to society, that society’s veneer has become very thin indeed. I just said like animals, but that really was an error. Most animals have far more civil order than many humans today. This naturally leads us to the next trait.

**The fourteenth trait is despisers of those that are good.**

Today we live in a society that glorifies evil to the extent that evil is being looked upon as good and good as evil. Turn to Isaiah 5:13.

**Isaiah 5:13.** *Therefore my people have gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge; their honorable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst. (NKJV)*

Continue in verse 15.

*15) People shall be brought down, each man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled. (NKJV)*

Continue in verses 20-21.

*20) Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*

*21) Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! (NKJV)*

We see here that this is nothing new. This prophecy shows that the world will be completely turned inside out, so should it surprise us any when evil doers are

exonerated in our courts and innocent are convicted of crimes for doing nothing worse than loving and caring for their children? Yet, the list continues. Turn to 2 Timothy 3:4.

**2 Timothy 3:4.** *traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, (NKJV)*

**The fifteenth trait is called traitors, which is one who helps the enemy.**

Many have unknowingly helped the enemy by putting their own interest ahead of their country's or group's well-being. I have been reading a book about the Navy. From this I learned that the leaders who refuse to change when a better way is presented to them are in effect traitors. Their lack of action causes harm to those who they are supposed to serve.

There are many ways we can help the enemy, which in our case is Satan, who is called adversary, for that is what he is to us. Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of the Old and New Testament (hereafter Vine's) says *traitor occurs in a list of evil characters we are told is abounding in the last days. A characteristic is a character or distinctive trait. All of these traits are said to abound at the end time.* Since they do abound now, this must be the end time. How long the end time is is an open question, as it was thought to be in effect when the New Testament was written. For betray, Vine's says *to give over as used either in the sense of delivering a person or thing to be kept by another to deliver to prison or judgment, to deliver over treacherously by way of the betrayal.* This related word means to betray, as it was done to Jesus Christ. Mark says in the gospel that bears his name in Mark 14:18:

**Mark 14:18.** *Now as they sat and ate, Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me." (NKJV)*

This same word "betray" is used of those at the end time who turn against one another. Matthew says in Matthew 24:10:

**Matthew 24:10.** *And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. (NKJV)*

Again in Mark 13:12 it says:

**Mark 13:12.** *Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. (KJV)*

This is hard to comprehend in a civilized society, but as we are seeing, that society is rapidly becoming less civilized. So, we see that those who betray others are indeed traitors. They are working for the enemy who is called our adversary. Those who do

this are obviously also disobedient to parents, false accusers and without natural affection.

### **The sixteenth trait is heady.**

This is the only place heady is used. The Greek word is used only once more in Acts 19:36.

**Acts 19:36.** *Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. (KJV)*

“Rashly” means *to fail or fall*. It is *a falling forward, that is headlong*. The dictionary says or rashly *impetuous, rash, willful, tending to affect the senses, intoxicating as in heady wine*. Of course, none of us has ever done anything rash in speaking or doing something without thinking it through. I used to say that it seemed the only time I didn’t have my foot in my mouth was to take it out to put the other one in. I call this foot in mouth disease.

Then there is the meaning of “impetuous” which means *impulsive*. “Headstrong” and “reckless” are used by other translations. Arguments are great to generate this kind of behavior. I wonder sometimes when I see or think about behavior exhibited in crowds. Western movies often portray lynch mobs and indeed the incident referred to in Acts 19 was of the same sort. Let us review the incident in Acts 19:21-29.

**Acts 19:21.** *When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome."*

22) *So he sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time.*

23) *And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way.*

24) *For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen.*

25) *He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: "Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade. (NKJV)*

You see, it was all about money.

26) *Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands.*

27) *So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship."*

28) *Now when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"*

29) *So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions. (NKJV)*

Continue in verse 32.

32) *Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together. (NKJV)*

We see in both of these incidents that it often only takes one person to get them going and all of the rest act rashly without thinking. Indeed, it is said in that example that many didn't even know why they were there. They just went with the flow. This kind of behavior is so common today that one can barely look at news without seeing similar turmoil. There is such a thing as a peaceful assembly for your grievances, but more often than not agitators are out there to stir up the people into mobs who do evil. If we were in those crowds, what would be our action? Do we tend to go along with the crowd or do we think things through and act as a Christian should?

These are also great ways to show willfulness. Of course, we don't have any willful behavior in our society, do we? How about in our own lives? Must we always have our own way, even if proven wrong? We should be able to see some connection between willfulness and the continual splitting in the church.

Now let's look a little deeper at that veneer.

**The seventeen trait is high minded, haughty or puffed up with pride, as other translations render this.**

It means *to envelop with smoke*, like there's really nothing there, *to inflate with self-conceit*, also rendered *to be lifted up with pride, proud, that is by analogy blind physically or mentally*. Being high minded or proud is like being blind. We can't see our true condition. We think we are something when we are nothing.

Vine's says *properly means to wrap in smoke, metaphorically for conceit, puffed up or lifted up with pride*. The dictionary says *haughty, proud or arrogant*.

Now, this one we don't need to address, after all we don't see any pride or arrogance in the world today or in ourselves. If we don't, we are probably blind and therefore it. This society is so full of this condition, which is probably best explained in Revelation 3:14-17 from the New Living Translation.

**Revelation 3:14.** *"Write this letter to the angel of the church in Laodicea. This is the message from the one who is the Amen—the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's new creation:*

15) *"I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other!"*

16) *But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth!*

17) *You say, 'I am rich. I have everything I want. I don't need a thing!' And you don't realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked."* (NLT)

### **The eighteenth trait is lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.**

Now we have two phrases to examine. We will start at the beginning with "lovers of pleasure." Strong's number 5369 is only used here and it means *fond of pleasure, that is voluptuous, lovers of pleasure*. This isn't referring to pleasure derived from a beautiful sunset, flowers or such things. It refers to sensual pleasures of a sexual nature with so much of that being perverted in today's society. Indeed whole industries have grown up around it. These include much of the clothing industry, entertainment to a very large degree, pharmaceuticals and other parts of the so-called health care industry, law enforcement and even churches to name just a few.

Now for the second phrase "lovers of God", which means *fond of God, that is pious*. What these two phrases are saying is that people will be far more interested in sexual pleasures than of anything Godly. We see in Paul's first letter to Timothy that this was even a problem then. Turn to 1 Timothy 5:5-6.

**1 Timothy 5:5.** *Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day.*

**6) But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives.** (NKJV)

The word "pleasure" means essentially the same as the previous explanation and indicates a sinful sexual pleasure. Today we would probably say she is shacking up with someone.

### **The nineteenth trait is having a form of Godliness but denying the power thereof, from such turn away.**

Lastly we see that so many today have only a form or pretension of godliness. We may say they play church. The real test is if our behavior reflects God in all aspects of our lives, or as we heard before, do we have a church life and the rest of the time life? If we think we can have a Sabbath life where we have Sabbath clothes and another life like with regular clothes, we are fooling no one that matters. That veneer will be so thin that most everyone will see through it.

The word "form" means *appearance*. The only other place this word is used is Romans 2:20.



**Romans 2:20.** *an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. (NKJV)*

This appears to indicate there is one who has very little real understanding, even though they think they have a great deal.

Now we see that unless we keep His word, we do not know God. It's not a matter of earning salvation. It's simply a matter of understanding who and what God is. Today most religion is simply a thin veneer of what someone derives from his own mind. He or she has not sought understanding of what God wants people to know and of how to live. They have looked no deeper than their own desires or come up with some new or interesting thing. Many do it to gain a following, as is easily seen by the multitude of groups and the many pages of enlightened articles in independent church-type publications. You can find this to an ever greater degree on the internet.

If that weren't enough, how much of the violence in the world today is in the name of religion? Of course, most of this is a perverted view of the supposed religion, just as so much as what passes for truth in many of the churches that put God's name on their own views. Turn to Colossians 1:15-17 from the New Living Translation.

**Colossians 1:15.** *Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation,*  
*16) for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him.*  
*17) He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together. (NLT)*

In 2 Thessalonians 2:10-11 it says:

**2 Thessalonians 2:10.** *and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. (NKJV)*

Since God is true, He wants His family to be happy. Therefore, He won't force people into His family who don't love His way of life.

*11) And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, (NKJV)*

So many have believed the lie. The last phrase of this verse says to turn away from those who deny the power of God, but pretending they themselves are some great one. Of course, the reason for this is that those people will lead you astray given a chance and so many today are more than willing to give them all of the chances they need. In verse 9 it says:

*9) The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, (NKJV)*

This verse shows that it is going to get much worse before it gets better. If many of us can't resist even the mild influence of false teachers of our time, how are we going to have any chance if confronted with the wiles of Satan himself? His methods will be able to far exceed anything we have seen so far. This includes Isis and other terrorist groups out there. They seem to have no problem recruiting all of the help they need, as they are disciples of the adversary himself.

Today we have looked at many of the characteristics of a society whose veneer of civilization has become thinner by the day. While these characteristics apply to the society as a whole, they also apply to each of us individually and collectively. We must be a great deal more righteous than the society around us or we will find ourselves in that group to which Christ says I never knew you. So, it should be obvious that our only chance is to be loyal followers of the one true God. He and He alone can help us in the very troubled times we live in when that veneer of civilization has become very thin indeed.