

2 Timothy Chapter 2 Continued

2 Timothy 2:13 "If we believe not, [yet] he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself."

“If we believe not”: This refers to a lack of saving faith, not to weak or struggling faith. Unbelievers will ultimately deny Christ because their faith was not genuine (James 2:14-26).

“He abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself”: As faithful as Jesus is to save those who believe in Him (John 3:16), He is equally faithful to judge those who do not (John 3:18). To act any other way would be inconsistent with His holy, unchangeable nature (Heb. 10:23).

Paul is saying here, if we choose not to believe, it does not make the gospel any the less the Truth. The gospel is Truth, whether we believe it or not.

Every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God is True. He will keep every promise He has ever made, whether we benefit from it or not. It is our choice to believe and receive the promises, or not believe and be rejected of Him.

Verses 14-15: The command to “put them in remembrance” means to remind them of these truths. The command to “study” means “give diligence and be zealous.” It involves a total effort of mind, emotion, and will. “Rightly dividing” [literally, “cutting straight”] “the word of truth.” The apostle appeals for effort to be made to properly interpret the Word of God.

2 Timothy 2:14 "Of these things put [them] in remembrance, charging [them] before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, [but] to the subverting of the hearers."

“Strive not about words”: Arguing with false teachers, i.e. deceivers who use human reason to subvert God’s Word, is not only foolish (Prov. 14:7), and futile (Matt. 7:6), but dangerous (verses 16-17; verse 23). This is the first of 3 warnings to avoid useless arguments (see notes on verses 16, 23; 1 Tim. 4:6-7; 6:3-5; 2 Peter 2:1-3).

“Subverting”: The Greek word means “over-turned,” or “overthrown.” It appears only one other time in the New Testament (2 Pet. 2:6), where it describes the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Because it replaces the truth with lies, false teaching brings spiritual catastrophe to those who heed it. The ruin can be eternal.

Paul is saying here; do not get caught up in petty doctrinal differences. Arguments over doctrinal differences are of no use to anyone, except the devil. Arguments divide the people. Really there are so few absolute things that must be conformed too, to be a Christian.

Of course, the main one is to believe that Jesus was God manifest in the flesh, that He died for our sins, and that He rose again. This is what I mean about basic. I can worship with those who believe these few things.

This is what Paul is speaking of. Stay doctrinally sound on the important things and don't argue about the rest. You would think Christians of different denominations were not of the same family of God, when you hear them argue about these petty things.

2 Timothy 2:15 "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

“Study”: This word denotes zealous persistence in accomplishing a goal. Timothy, like all who preach or teach the Word; was to give his maximum effort to impart God’s Word completely, accurately, and clearly to his hearers. This is crucial to counter the disastrous effects of false teaching (verses 14, 16-17).

“Rightly dividing”: Literally “cutting it straight”, a reference to the exactness demanded by such trades as carpentry, masonry, and Paul’s trade of leather working and tentmaking. Precision and accuracy are required in biblical interpretation, beyond all other enterprises, because the interpreter is handling God’s Word. Anything less is shameful.

“The word of truth”: All of Scripture in general (John 17:17), and the gospel message in particular (Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:5).

Just a handful of lessons on the Bible at any school are not enough to prepare you to minister. Paul told Timothy, stay in the Word of God. Continually study and learn more each day. The only way to rightly divide the Word of Truth, is to stay in the Bible studying every day, and let the Holy Spirit of God teach you the meaning of the Scriptures.

Learning Words will not help you. Learning the meaning of those Words will make you strong in the Lord. Learn what each Scripture means to you as an individual. Let God speak to your heart in His Word.

Principles of Interpretation: (2:15). As we study the Word of God, we should apply both the spiritual and literal principles of interpretation. The spiritual principles include prayer (Psalm 119:18), cleansing (1 John 1:9), and the illumination by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:12-16).

The principal of literally understanding Scripture is to interpret it according to:

- (1) The mind of the author;
- (2) Its historical background;
- (3) The context of the passage; and
- (4) The basic rules of grammar.

Joshua was promised success if he meditated on the law (Josh. 1:8), and he won that success when he conquered the kings of Canaan. As a disciple of Moses, and as one who had a personal relationship with God, he could interpret the law of God and understand God’s will for his life.

If we desire the will of God in our lives, we must regularly and systematically interpret God’s Word according to its proper meaning. Joshua 1:8; 2 Tim. 2:15; Acts 2:42.

Verses 16-21: "Shun profane and vain babblings" refers to useless disputes about genealogical histories and hair-splitting debates over the law. "Eat as doth a canker" ("like gangrene"): Useless bickering is a dangerous cancer that destroys the church. "Hymeneus" is the one who Paul delivered to Satan (1 Tim. 1:20), and "Philetus" is unknown apart from this mention.

Hymeneus and Philetus were false teachers who denied the literal "resurrection" of Christ. "The foundation of God standeth sure" refers to the permanence of the church, which is built on the foundation of the apostles. "This seal" guarantees the security of the body of "Christ."

2 Timothy 2:16 "But shun profane [and] vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness."

"Shun profane and vain babblings" (see notes on verse 14, 1 Tim. 6:20; Titus 3:9). Such destructive heresy leads only to "further ungodliness." Heresy can't save or sanctify. This is Paul's second such warning (verses 14, 23).

Some people cannot discuss the Bible without winding up in an argument. Run away from that type of argument.

Titus 3:9 "But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain."

This type of thing does not help anyone, and it definitely hurts the participants.

2 Timothy 2:17 "And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;"

"Canker": The word refers to a disease which spreads rapidly in a deadly manner. The metaphor emphasizes the insidious danger of false teaching. It attacks and consumes one's life.

"Hymeneus" (see note on 1 Tim. 1:20).

"Philetus": Alexander's replacement (1 Tim. 1:20), as Hymenaeus' accomplice.

"Canker", in this Scripture, means gangrene. The Word of God brings life. The word of man brings death. In this case, the death is a poison that spreads through the blood system. He is saying that the false words that Hymenaeus and Philetus said were very destructive.

These two were bringing heresy into the church (the body of Christ).

2 Timothy 2:18 "Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some."

“The resurrection is past already”: Like the false teachers who troubled the Corinthians (1 Cor. 15:12), Hymenaeus and Philetus denied the reality of believers’ bodily resurrection. They probably taught that believers’ spiritual identification with Christ’s death and resurrection (Rom. 6:4-5, 8), was the only resurrection they would experience and that had already happened.

Such heretical teaching reflects the contemporary Greek philosophical view that matter was evil and spirit was good.

“Overthrow the faith”: This speaks of those whose faith was not genuine (Matt. 24:24). Genuine saving faith cannot be finally and completely overthrown (see note on verse 12). False, non-saving faith is common (4:10; see notes on Matt. 7:21-28; 13:19-22; John 2:22-23; 6:64-66; 8:31; 1 John 2:19).

Now, we see what the error in the message they were bringing was. This reminds me so much of the people in our day, who say that the teachings in Revelation have already happened. I will just ask you one question pertaining to that. When was every human on the earth marked with a number in his right hand or in his forehead?

You see how silly some of these things are. This, in my opinion, is caused by not studying the Scriptures thoroughly. The terrible thing is that some other people believed this lie.

2 Timothy 2:19 "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

“The foundation of God standeth sure”: This is likely a reference to the church (1 Tim. 3:15), which cannot be overcome by the forces of hell (Matt. 16:18), and is made up of those who belong to Him.

“Seal”: A symbol of ownership and authenticity. Paul gives two characteristics of those with the divine seal of authenticity.

“The Lord knoweth them that are his”: This is likely a reference to Numbers 16:5. He “knows,” not in the sense of awareness, but as a husband knows his wife in the sense of intimate relationship (see notes on John 10:27-28; Gal. 4:9). God has known His own ever since He chose them before time began (see note on 1:9).

“Every one ... depart from iniquity”: This statement is likely adapted from (Num. 16:26), and reflects a second mark of God’s ownership of believers, which is their pursuit of holiness (1 Cor. 6:19-20; 1 Peter 1:15-16).

The foundation that the church is built upon is the Rock (Jesus Christ). Winds of false doctrine can come and go, but the church will not be moved from that foundation. We Christians, are the church. When we plant our feet on that solid Rock, we are secure in Him. Our name is written in the Lamb's book of life. When you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, you will not fall.

If you are a Christian, you are trying to become more Christ-like every day. The desire of our heart is to please Him. We have departed from iniquity, and we are travelling on the road that leads to heaven.

2 Timothy 2:20 "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor."

“Vessels”: The Greek word is very general and was used to describe various tools, utensils, and furniture found in the home. In this “large house” analogy, Paul contrasts two kinds of utensils or serving dishes.

“Some to honor”: Those made of “wood and of earthenware” were not for any honorable use, but rather those uses which were repulsive, disposing of garbage and the filthy waste of the household (see notes on 2 Cor. 4:7).

This probably is speaking of the different types of people who make up the church. Some of the people who profess Christianity do not have a very deep walk with God. In fact, some of them are like the wood spoken of here. Wood symbolizes the world. This means that they have not gotten the world out of their walk.

The earth is the same thing; their Christianity will not hold water. The silver means redemption. I would say the vessel of silver has experienced redemption. They would know Jesus as Savior. The vessel of Gold would be the one who had made Christ Lord of his life, as well as Savior.

They would be letting Christ live in them. Gold symbolizes God. Those who have not given up their worldly ways would be vessels of dishonor. The silver and the gold would be vessels of honor. These vessels of dishonor are like the lukewarm Christian, who has not allowed God to remove the world from their lives.

2 Timothy 2:21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, [and] prepared unto every good work.

“A man”: Whoever wants to be useful to the Lord for noble purposes. Even a common wood bucket or clay pot becomes useful when purged and made holy.

“Purge himself” (see note on verse 19). The Greek word means “to thoroughly clean out,” or “to completely purge.” For any waste bucket in the house to be used for a noble purpose, it would have had to be vigorously scoured, cleansed, and purged of all vestiges of its former filth.

“From these”: The vessels of dishonor (verse 20). Associating with anyone who teaches error and lives in sin is corrupting (Prov. 1:10-19; 13:20; 1 Cor. 5:6, 11; 15:33; Titus 1:16), all the more so when they are leaders in the church. This is clearly a call to separate from all who claim to serve God, but do so as filthy implements useful only for the most dishonorable duties.

This is speaking of what these earthly vessels of dishonor can do to become vessels of honor. Notice, that the individual must decide to get rid of this worldliness. Come to Jesus, and ask Him

to burn out the worldliness, and leave a vessel of honor. Gold and silver just become more pure as the heat is applied to them. The wood will burn up as heat is applied.

The trials (heat), just removes the worldliness. This is called, being tried in the fire. Fire purifies and makes holy. When God gets through refining us, we are holy in His sight. We are set aside for His purpose. Now, we can do good work that the Master has for us to do the way He would have us do it.

2 Timothy 2:22 "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

“Youthful lusts”: Not merely illicit sexual desires, but also such lusts as pride, desire for wealth and power, jealousy, self-assertiveness, and an argumentative spirit.

Youthful lusts are deep-seated desires that are particularly perilous to those who are youthful and inexperienced. “Follow” [literally, “pursue with intensity”] “righteousness,” those things that are consistent with the character of God. “Faith” is belief in God’s Word. “Charity” is volitional love, given regardless of its recipient’s worthiness.

We have spoken so much in these lessons about putting our flesh to death that our spirit might rule. The flesh and its lust are what cause us to sin. If we put our body under the control of our spirit, we will make the right decisions. Faith, charity, and peace are fruit of the Spirit. These are things that automatically come when we are in right standing with God.

2 Timothy 2:23 "But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes."

“Unlearned questions ... strifes”: Paul’s third warning to avoid useless arguments with false teachers (see notes on verses 14, 16).

This is what I said earlier. Most misunderstandings of the Word of God come from people who have not truly studied the Word of God. The worst thing a person can do is to pick one or two Scriptures out of the Bible and base what you believe on that. Another problem is to just read one writer in the Bible, and base what you believe on his writings.

To avoid strife, do not discuss the Bible with people that do either of these things. They are not well rounded in the Scriptures. A person must study the entire Bible thoroughly too truly understand its meaning.

The Holy Spirit must be your guide as you study the Word to open your understanding. You will never know all there is to know, but this will give you a working knowledge.

2 Timothy 2:24 "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all [men], apt to teach, patient,"

“Apt to teach”: This is one word in Greek meaning “skilled in teaching” (see note on 1 Tim. 3:2).

The servant of the Lord is speaking of those who preach, or minister in some capacity. They should not engage in arguments that go nowhere. They should be of a gentle nature. They should be willing to teach when needed and be patient while others are learning.

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

“Those that oppose themselves”: Primarily unbelievers captive to Satan (verse 26). But also could include believers deceived by the “foolish and ignorant” (verse 23). Speculation’s for the false teachers; and, possibly, the false teachers themselves.

“God peradventure will give them repentance” (Acts 11:18; see 2 Cor. 7:9-10). All true repentance is produced by God’s sovereign grace (Eph. 2:7), and without such grace, human effort to change is futile (Jer. 13:23).

“Acknowledging of the truth” (see notes on 3:7). When God, by grace, grants saving faith it includes the granting of repentance from sin. Neither is a human work.

“Repentance” (Greek metanoia, literally, “change of mind”), refers to the conviction that precedes genuine faith in Christ. The preaching of repentance clearly ought to accompany the proclamation of the gospel (Acts 20:21).

Those that oppose themselves are those who have not accepted Jesus as Savior. They would be their own worst enemy. Some men have never been taught the Word of God. This then, would be teaching someone who did not know the Word. To be able to get them to listen, it would be necessary to teach from meekness, not in a threatening manner. They would not listen to threats.

1 Corinthians 1:21 "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

If your preaching or teaching could cause the people to believe, they would be saved. The main thing is stay with the Truth. It is the Truth that sets them free.

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

“The snare of the devil”: Deception is Satan’s trap. He is an inveterate, scheming, clever, and subtle purveyor of lies (see notes on Gen. 3:4-6; John 8:44, 2 Cor. 11:13-15; Rev. 12:9).

It must be an act of the person's free will to believe and receive salvation. Until they believe, they are under the curse of sin and death. The devil has them snared. The Truth of the gospel will set them free. In Jesus, sin and death are defeated. Remember, it is an act of our own free will to get out of the snare of the devil by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Praise God! Jesus set us free.

2 Timothy Chapter 2 Continued Questions

1. What is Paul really saying in this?
2. What was Paul wanting them to put in remembrance?
3. What good do arguments of doctrine do?
4. The author says he can worship with you, if you believe what basic things?
5. What are some of the foolish doctrinal differences that split churches and should not?
6. Study to show thyself _____ unto God.
7. A workman that needeth not to be _____.
8. How are the only ways you can be qualified to rightly divide the Word of God?
9. Learning the Words of the Bible will not help you, what will help you?
10. Shun profane and vain _____.
11. What does the word "canker" mean in verse 17?
12. Who are the body of Christ?
13. What false statement had Hymenaeus and Philetus made?
14. What does the author believe causes people to believe an untruth about the Word of God?
15. Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from _____.
16. Who is the Rock the church is built upon?
17. What is the seal the Christian has?
18. Which are the vessels of honor?
19. Which are the vessels of dishonor?
20. What do these vessels symbolize?
21. What does wood symbolize?

22. What does silver symbolize?
23. What does gold symbolize?
24. What are the vessels of dishonor like?
25. What should a person do to become a vessel of honor?
26. Flee youthful _____.
27. What are some of the fruit of the Spirit that show up in your life when you flee youthful lust?
28. What kind of questions should we avoid?
29. What must the servant of the Lord be like?
30. What is meant by opposing themselves?
31. That they may recover themselves out of the _____ of the _____.