

Warnings Against Wrangling Over Words

2 Timothy 2:14-18

March 26, 2023

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There is great danger for all concerned when the Word of God is not correctly understood and taught.

I. Timothy is to continually teach these truths to God's people. (v. 14a)

Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord at one time delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. (Jude 1:5)

So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things.

For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain. (2 Peter 1:12-18)

II. Timothy is to solemnly warn the people against wrangling over words lest such debate cause catastrophe. (v. 14b)

Ruins or brings ruin (Gr. katastrophe) only here

- 1) overthrow, destruction or demolition
- 2) metaphorically: of the extinction of a spirit of consecration

If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain. (1 Timothy 6:3-5)

III. Timothy is to strive to understand and teach God's Word straightforwardly and correctly. (v. 15)

Do your best (NIV), Make every effort (NET), Be diligent (NASB), Study (KJV)

(Gr. spoudazo, *spoo-dad'-zo*)

- 1) haste, with haste
- 2) to exert one's self, endeavor, give diligence, to labor

3) earnestness in accomplishing, promoting, or striving after anything

4) to give all diligence, interest one's self most earnestly

So, this word has both the connotations of urgency and effort.

For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends. (2 Corinthians 10:18)

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test (proven to be genuine), that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. (James 1:12)

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard...” (Matthew 20:1)

Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. (Philippians 3:17-19)

Correctly handles (NIV) accurately handles (NASB) rightly dividing (KJV)

(Gr. *orthotomeo*, *or-thot-om-eh'-o*) only her

1) to cut straight, to cut straight ways

2) to proceed on straight paths, hold a straight course, equivalent to doing right

3) to make straight and smooth, to handle aright, to teach the truth directly and correctly

Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;

in all your ways submit to him,

and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

IV. Timothy is to turn away from useless discussions that do not promote godly thinking lest spiritual rot set in. (v. 16-17a)

Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith. (1 Timothy 6:20-21)

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness... (Romans 1:18)

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God

and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you. (Titus 2:11-15)

V. Timothy is to bear in mind several examples of teachers who have missed the mark and harmed others. (v. 17b-18)

As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work—which is by faith. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm. (1 Timothy 1:3-6)

Timothy, my son, I am giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the battle well, holding on to faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and so have suffered shipwreck with regard to the faith. Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme. (1 Timothy 1:18-20)

When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject." (Acts 17:32)

Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee, descended from Pharisees. I stand on trial because of the hope of the resurrection of the dead." When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. (The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees believe all these things.) (Acts 23:6-8)

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4)

But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about

God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. (1 Corinthians 15:12-20)

Therefore, let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptism, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so. (Hebrews 6:1-3)