

II Timothy Chapter 2 (Church Camp 2010)

¹You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Based on what is said in chapter 1 Paul gives Timothy more instructions.

First Note that he calls Timothy his son. Paul had a relationship with Timothy that was more than just a coworker. It was more than a more experienced minister to a less experienced one. Paul regarded Timothy as a son. And Paul appeals to that relationship to urge Timothy on.

Be strong in Grace.

Be strong is a command but it is a passive command in Greek. This means that the source for this strength is not one's self but from the Grace. In fact, another interpretation of this phrase could be "Be strong by the means of grace."

The grace Paul refers to isn't just some free floating virtue. Paul is specifically referring to the grace that is in Christ Jesus. He is talking about the grace that was seen when Christ lived, died, rose again, and lives to represent His children to His Father.

Romans told us how to be strong by means of this grace. We are to believe God's Word and trust His character. We are to cooperate and participate with the reign of grace over sin. The grace of Christ in our lives is very powerful. Any spiritual strength we have will be by means of that grace. It will not come from ourselves.

²And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

Put yourself in Paul's place. What would your concern be if you were going to die soon? Paul's concern was the furtherance of the gospel.

Timothy was told to spread the teaching that he heard **among many witnesses**. The text doesn't tell us why it should be the

things heard by many witnesses. We will assume for our study that the focus is on the things that Timothy heard from Paul, not when and where he heard them.

Martus is the word for witness and is the root word of martyr

A martus is a witness

1a) in a legal sense

1b) an historical sense

Commit- this is a command. It is a command to deposit something of great value for safe keeping. Timothy is to give these men this message like he would give them a precious gem. He is to give it to their trust in such a way that they recognize the great value and importance of what they have been given and what they should do with it.

Isn't the gospel a precious thing? Do we treat it that way? Do we treat it as the most important thing that we could give to anyone we know? Or do we push it aside for other things? How do we display the value of the Gospel? Is it always on our minds when we are around those who so desperately need it? Are we often looking to share it with others?

Faithful men- Faithful means proven spiritual character. These are not fresh upstarts. These are men that have proven that they will stick and they will persevere. They aren't shaky and fluctuating. They are solid.

Who will be able to teach-Timothy was to look for men who could understand what they were being taught and had the ability to turn around and communicate this truth. Just as Paul taught the Ephesians day after day, Timothy is to find men who he can teach so that they, in turn, can teach the same important truths that they have learned. A minister does well to teach others to minister. He can accomplish much more for the kingdom of God if he will teach others to do that which he is doing.

The teacher should teach the faithful men the vital truths, and they turn around and do the same. God could have chosen any number of ways to spread His word and grow His church, but this is the primary way He does it. Person to person is His method.

³You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

We need to be a little careful here. The primary application is to Timothy. I think it then applies directly to called ministers. And then indirectly there are principles that apply to us as believers.

Paul uses the analogies of a soldier, an athlete and a farmer to make some points to Timothy. He is to be like them in specific ways that Paul points out.

Must endure hardship- to suffer evil treatment or pain. To take one's share of rough treatment. The word for soldier is used for a common soldier... nothing special. This is the mark of a good soldier. He doesn't turn back because things get tough. He hangs in there with his comrades. And he does so because a war is being waged that must be won. The cause that a soldier is committed to is more important than his comfort or even his very life. So a soldier that is worth his salt is willing to suffer evil or pain as needed. A soldier who is not willing to suffer is not a soldier worth having.

Timothy was being mentored by a man on death's door. And I think Paul was making the point here that Timothy had to be willing to face this hardship just like Paul was. This is also true of all of us. We all must be willing to face persecution for Christ's sake and not give up.

⁴No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

This verse tells us that no one involved in a military campaign entwines himself with the affairs of this life. This word for life is most often referring to making a living. I think it is akin to saying a good soldier doesn't open a bakery too. The soldier has a job to do and he cannot be tied up in something that will steal him from the important work he is involved in.

This verse may particularly apply to called ministers. While all believers are told not to love the world, we are to provide for our families and for those in need. We are to work to provide livelihoods. But a soldier is a soldier 24 hours a day. His time is

to remain free to engage in the warfare whenever he is needed. And he cannot have this calling and another job.

Why, because he needs to please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. If the analogies are intended to be consistent the one who enlisted him is Christ.

To sum this analogy up, a minister, like a soldier must endure hardship in order to please the one who enlisted him for the battle.

⁵And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.

Now Paul picks a different analogy. An athlete.

Competes- to contest, contend, wrestle, to struggle with the determination to win.

Timothy is told that a minister must be like an athlete in that in his struggle he has to contend according to the rules or lawfully. The only other place that this is used is in I Tim 1:8. There we find that the law is good if we use it lawfully, correctly. So Paul is telling Timothy to minister according to his instructions, as opposed to how the false teachers are doing it.

Our desire in this struggle is to be crowned. We want to gain the approval of the judges and hear the "Well done my good and faithful servant".

So a minister, like the athlete must struggle or compete according to the rules, in order to obtain the crown.

⁶The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops. Now Paul uses his third example. The Farmer.

Hardworking- to work intensely. To sweat and strain to the point of exhaustion if necessary. This hard work is assumed in the life of a farmer and a minister of the gospel.

The farmer must get the crops. Now how is that true? A farmer lives off his crops. The only way he and his family will stay alive is if he takes the crops and lives off them. Now after

he has all he needs he may trade them or sell them, but first he partakes of the crop.

Paul is telling a called minister that the hard work he does will provide him with a living so he can continue doing the hard work. Paul was never apologetic about his right to live off the folks he ministered to. The minister's hard work provides a bunch of people who have received the benefit of the minister's work, and the minister is to be free to partake of what they provide financially. There should be that type of give and take for the minister doing his work. And Timothy must not be timid about this.

Now it is possible that Timothy might have been slow to grasp what Paul is saying based on what Paul says next.

⁷Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.

This gives us reason to believe that Timothy would not have grasped all the implications of what Paul is saying all at once. When I was in college I was tricked into buying some insurance that I didn't need. A while later I was talking to a good insurance agent and he made the point to me that everyone pays for an education. And I probably got a very cheap one for the big lesson that I had learned. I understood his words at the time, but only over time did I fully understand the wisdom of what he had told me. I think this is the kind of thing that Paul is telling Timothy. He is telling Timothy some things that had to grow on him. He told him to consider them.

Consider- to perceive clearly with the mind, to ponder and mull it all over. Paul is telling Timothy that if he will give this thought that the Lord would give him clarity about it over time. It would make more and more sense to him. Something stands out here that I really like. Look at how Paul trusted the Holy Spirit. When I was younger I thought I had to win someone to my point of view right away. As I get older I see that if the Holy Spirit is in someone, all we need to do is put out that content from scripture as much as we can when we have the opportunity. The Holy Spirit will work with that. Paul had a great trust in the Holy

Spirit's work in a person's life. Several times in scriptures he is confident that the Lord will make some things clear. There are some people who call themselves ministers that are so insecure that if the body members don't agree with any point, they feel they must immediately remedy this. Paul was this way about the core truths much of the time, but on things not essential to salvation he was content to tell the truth and leave it in God's hands. That is the kind of God that we have. We can trust Him to work in a believer's life.

⁸Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel,

Remember- active tense- Continue to remember. This is a command. It won't happen automatically. Timothy needs to fix his attention on this. And I am sure that this doesn't apply to just Timothy. I think that the word "remember" is the second most frequent command in scripture. We get all bummed out. We lose focus. We get depressed. We get bent out of shape. And much of the time it is because we don't remember. We don't make it a habit to orient to the truth of who Christ is and what He did. Since it is one of the things most commanded in scripture, it stands to reason it is one of the things we need most today. If your state of mind is not good this morning, ask yourself, what am I forgetting? What should I remember?

Timothy is to remember that Jesus Christ- the focus of this sentence is right here. It is on what happened to Jesus Christ. What happened is important. But who it happened to is more important.

Seed of David- There is some evidence that some of the error being taught by false teachers was Gnostic in nature. As such, the teaching probably had a slant that the material is not important. It doesn't matter that Christ really didn't come in a body like yours and mine. You've got to get into the spirit of the thing. The body is corrupt. The spirit is where it's at. Well Paul said- "Remember Jesus- the seed, the physical descendent, the person with the very DNA of David in his body. Both Mary and Joseph were descendents of David. So Paul emphasizes Christ's true birth in a real body. And then he says that Christ was raised

from the dead. This is a human body dead... and then no longer dead. This would go hard on the Gnostic fiction that some people were teaching as truth. These fables could not stand up to this truth. It blew a hole in all their theories. I think that is specifically why Paul mentions it.

And then he refers to the fact that it was according to MY gospel. Maybe he wanted to make sure that he was not misquoted. Paul may have added this emphasis because he wanted it clearly understood that he had no fellowship with those who would deny the bodily resurrection of Christ. Paul's gospel included it. If someone wanted to go that route, they didn't learn that from Paul.

⁹for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, *even* to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained.

The gospel is what Paul was suffering for. If it was a Gnostic tale it could have been added to so many of the other fables that were being spread. But that was not the gospel. The gospel made the claim that Christ lived, died and rose again. And the implications were anything but tame.

Now Paul was suffering trouble as if he were an evildoer, or as an evildoer would be treated. You don't often greet a dignitary by throwing him in your local jail. That is where you put your crooks. We can learn a couple of things from this. 1. We can learn from this that a believer cannot rely upon justice in a world system that is run by the devil. Sometimes you may receive justice. And that is a good thing. But don't be surprised when this world system stands against you without reason. That is what happened to Christ and that is what He promised would happen to his followers.

2. We cannot rely upon the world's opinion of a person to be God's opinion. In other words a Christian can have a wonderful character and a horrible reputation with the world at the same time. Some people think that we as believers should spend a great deal of effort concerning ourselves with how we are perceived. I believe the scriptural emphasis lies more on spending effort to be the kind of person we should be. Public

opinion will ebb and flow. We cannot control that. But we can control character.

Paul was treated as an evil doer. In fact his evil was regarded as being so bad that he needed to be chained for the protection of society. Think about that. Like Brad said, here is a person who would probably be willing to die to win any person to Christ, and he is being treated like the Charles Manson of the day. Eventually he is such a threat to the good of the population that it is determined he must be killed. That tells you what kind of world we live in and who is at the heart of the world system.

But we see something else here. The word of God is not chained. The Word of God has never relied upon the world's system for its protection or spread. It does not require man's cooperation. And in the end men will never be able to stamp it out, no matter what they do. God's word isn't dependent on having democracies spread throughout the world. It isn't dependent upon having republicans in the house and senate. Mankind cannot chain the Word of God. They cannot control it. They can't stamp it out. And they can't keep it from having life changing effects in all those who hear it and believe it. Paul knew that.

¹⁰Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Therefore- knowing the gospel and the power of the Word of God, Paul is willing to suffer what comes his way.... Why? For the sake of the elect. The elect is who God loves and the elect is who Paul loves. Now these elect being spoken of are the incognito elect. No one knows who they are and they look just like any other pagan. But Paul knows that Christ will keep his Word available for everyone who needs to hear it. Paul is saying that it is worth going to jail, being ridiculed, being whipped, being stoned, being shipwrecked, anything so that those who God has chosen can obtain the salvation they are destined for in Christ Jesus.

I want to point something out here. The word elect is a word used in understanding God's sovereignty in every person's

salvation. Now look at how Paul applies his knowledge of God's sovereignty. Some would say that "Elect means that God will save those that He chooses to save and this is an absolute certainty. If a person is elect he or she will be saved. Therefore I don't need to do anything. In fact, anything I do is a mistrust in what God says he will do." That is not at all how Paul applied sovereignty. Paul sees it differently. He thinks that because there are those out there that God will save it is worth anything that he must suffer in order to get the word of God to them. It compels Paul to face any peril in order to get the Gospel to them.

Any time we apply sovereignty in a way that removes the urgency of applying all effort in obeying Christ in evangelism, discipleship and personal sanctification, we are misapplying sovereignty. The correct belief in sovereignty has always moved people to greater urgency, greater action and greater effort. But the effort is not in fear that God will not accomplish what He wants to accomplish. The effort is due to the opportunity that we have to participate in the most important task in human existence. What effect does your belief in God's sovereignty have on you?

The following verses 11-13 were probably a hymn or a poem that was commonly known and recited among believers.

¹¹*This is a faithful saying:*

For if we died with *Him*,
We shall also live with *Him*.

In the context of this book the phrase "If we died with Him" could have at least 2 possibilities. First it could be like it is used in Romans referring to the fact that when Christ died, we died with Him. He represented us in death and it counted for us as well. The verb tense is Aorist, which is the same tense as is in Romans. So it would seem that this is the best meaning. It could also refer to martyrdom. A lot of commentaries say so.

But following the Romans line of reasoning, we have confidence that if we were in Christ at His death, if His death counted for us, we will live with Him.

¹² If we endure,
We shall also reign with *Him*.
If we deny *Him*,
He also will deny us.

Now what comes after you are In Christ and Christ is in you?
Then what? Well we endure.

The word for endure means
to remain

1a) to tarry behind 2) to remain, i.e. abide, not recede or flee

2a) to preserve: under misfortunes and trials to hold fast to
one's faith in Christ

2b) to endure, bear bravely and calmly: ill treatments

Well if we endure, if we remain here on this earth and stand for
Christ under trials, we will reign with Him. We will have
eternal life.

But what if we deny Him? What if we continue to live but sell out
so we don't need to face persecution or trial or hardship.

This is not talking about a Peter-like incident of failure when
he denied Christ to the servant girl but in reality was acting
hypocritically. This is more like the denial of Judas who, in
the end, hated what Christ stood for and wanted his own
personal advantage.

What happens if we deny Him? Well he will deny us. If we
are not His children, He will not pretend that we are.

¹³ If we are faithless,
He remains faithful;
He cannot deny Himself.

Faithless- This could be describing believers who refuse to walk
by faith. If it is that the denial is a temporary break in
fellowship, not in relationship.

This could also be describing unbelievers. If we do not have the
faith that God gives to all His true children, that does not
change God in any way. He does not need to panic or react.
Life is all going like He determined. He still is completely
faithful. His children can still depend upon Him to do exactly
as He has said He will do. A non believer may be able to

deny Him but it would be impossible for God to be untrue, even to Himself. Our world doesn't fall apart when those we thought were believers turn out to be false. God has remained the same.

¹⁴Remind *them* of these things, charging *them* before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers.

Remind- this is another command. Just as Timothy is commanded to remember, he is now commanded to remind others. The tense is the same- to remind and keep on reminding, to impress frequently.

Do you see how important what goes through our minds is?

Them- the Ephesians and/or the faithful men who are going to be spreading the gospel.

These things- Timothy is to remind them of the Gospel and the truths about spiritual ministry and spiritual life like Paul has just reminded Timothy. They should be reminded of the reward that comes with remaining faithful and the penalty of those who have no faith.

Charging them- To warn sternly.

Before the Lord- this essentially means with God as their witness. Do this reminding them that this is being done before God Himself.

Not to strive- to wrangle about words, waging a war with words.

To no profit- this activity does no good. It only does harm.

Ruin- this is the word from which we get catastrophe. It means to overthrow, to overturn. In scripture God condemned Sodom and Gomorrah to a catastrophe.

So we see here what Paul is talking about. Paul isn't talking about harmless frivolous communications. He isn't talking about sincere differences in interpretations regarding scriptures that could be taken two ways. As we go further we will see more evidence of what he is talking about. Paul is talking about those who wage war on words and ideas in scripture by concepts that don't come from scripture. This is an argument that allows

human reasoning or mystical perception to have more authority than the word itself. This is the type of war that a man's ego gets behind and he will try to win for the sake of his pride, if nothing else. And its effect is devastating. It will be a catastrophe if people believe it.

¹⁵Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Diligent- Zealous persistence to obtain a goal. Paul tells Timothy that what he needs is 1. To not be the kind of person he has just described. And 2. To be the kind of person who can refute this nonsense.

Approved to God- favorably passing careful scrutiny. We see here that the end goal is faithfulness to God, pleasing God, like the soldier pleasing the one that recruited him.

A worker- Didn't Timothy have a spiritual gift? Why not just rely on the gift? Why not just trust God to zap Timothy with everything he needed to know? What is this about work? Isn't that human effort? Isn't that unspiritual? Wouldn't it glorify God more if they completely trusted God to exert all the effort? Wouldn't they be able to trust it more that it was all from God and none from man? Oddly enough, that is not how God normally chooses to use people and that is not what He wants and that is not what glorifies Him.

Timothy needed to be proficient in his use of scripture. And how was he going to get proficient? Work! He was going to have to be a diligent worker, just like Paul was. There is no sense praying to be filled with knowledge of scripture if we aren't willing to do the diligent work involved. Paul is telling Timothy- do the work.

Who does not need to be ashamed- There are a lot of so called ministers that should be ashamed. The false teachers that need dealt with at Ephesus should be ashamed. The people that listen to them like guppies should be ashamed. But if Timothy does his

duty, he does not need to be ashamed. In fact the goal is to be competent. But competence will not come without diligence.

Rightly dividing- this means in Greek- cutting straight. This would have been a skill necessary in making saddles or tents, which Paul would do when needed. Paul would have needed to rightly divide the pieces of leather in order to put together his final product. Now Timothy is told to cut straight in scripture. He should find out what scripture means and what it does not mean. And he should use it in that context. It is very easy to use a concordance and proof text any number of bright ideas. But it takes a great deal of work to make sure what each passage means in its context.

Timothy will be dealing with people who absolutely will not cut straight in scripture. But he must be able to. We will see an example of this next.

¹⁶But shun profane *and* idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.

Shun- Same word as is used for Avoid Foolish Disputes in Titus.

It means to turn one's self about for the purpose of avoiding something

Profane- profane

2a) unhallowed, common, public place

2b) of men, ungodly

Idle Babbling-empty discussion, discussion of vain and useless matters

Paul tells Timothy here to turn around and avoid conversations that are common, not holy, vain discussion of useless matters. They are speculation or wives tales. They may be about the law (as is seen in I Timothy) or about the resurrection or about Greek spiritual ideas. But they are clearly counter to clear Biblical teaching. They don't find their basis in scripture. And the people who are speaking this stuff have an agenda and it is not like a minister's agenda.

It looks like even entering the discussion grants it some kind of validity. Entering the argument will help those who are trying

to spread this nonsense in some way. When we argue with those who do not agree on the authority of God's Word, especially with those claiming to be true believers, we do damage to the hearers by even entering the discussion. Paul tells Timothy to turn the other way when he comes upon them. In this instance the spreaders of this false doctrine were probably outside the church... ex members. In I Timothy some of them were kicked out of the church.

Why? Because these false messages will just result in a spread of ungodliness. We will soon see the alternative. Good ministry results in just the opposite. But this poison that Paul speaks of will just corrupt.

¹⁷And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort,

Their message- (logos- an idea expressed) the profane and idle babblings. Clearly Paul is addressing the content of a pseudo theology, a false teaching. These guys are dangerous. Their message is like cancer. Once you get it, it just gets worse and worse until it takes over and kills you. The Greeks used the same word for cancer as they did for gangrene. They both work a lot in the same ways. The nature of both cancer and gangrene is to spread. That's why doctors are so quick to cut it out to save the patient. It is too deadly to leave exist.

Hymenaeus and Philetus- I Timothy 1:19,20 says this about Hymenaeus- a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

We see that Paul had kicked Hymenaeus out of the church, along with Alexander. Bad company always attracts bad company so where Alexander left off Philetus took over. Remember that this was the apostle Paul dealing with these people. Yet he still had trouble with those who would get full of themselves and find a way to justify living an ungodly lifestyle. It is likely that Timothy is still dealing with the effects of these men, even though they have been kicked out of the church.

¹⁸who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.

Strayed- to deviate from, miss (the mark)

These guys knew the truth but the truth didn't lead where they wanted to go. So they probably used Biblical words as a springboard for something that was more pleasant to the flesh in some way.

What did they say? The resurrection is past! Paul doesn't tell us much about the error. Maybe he was saying that the resurrection of all believers is already past in an actual historical sense. That would mean that this world is all there is. Maybe he was saying that the only resurrection we will ever have was a spiritual one with Christ. This would be a Gnostic gospel that says that what we do in the flesh doesn't matter. All that matters is the spiritual. We don't know the exact nature of the error. Timothy would have known it well.

What is clear is that this teaching would undermine people's faith. Overthrow means to overthrow or subvert. It would look to all observers that the person had lost their salvation. I think that is why Paul says what he says next.

¹⁹Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

Even though some will appear to fall away from really being Christians, that isn't what the reality is. Even though that is what it looks like, nevertheless the solid foundation of God and of our salvation still stands. I think the solid foundation is talking about the church that God is building. It is possibly talking about the truths upon which the church is built. Either way the foundation has this seal.

A seal is a sign of ownership. And this is the seal-

1) The Lord knows those who are His. There are no mistakes in the sovereignty of God. The end result is that everyone that is Christ's are known and will not be lost.

Known- to learn to know, come to know, get a knowledge of perceive, feel, to become known. This is talking about being intimately relationally known. It is the same word used in scripture of a man knowing his wife sexually. The Lord knows those who are his in great detail. They aren't overlooked. There aren't any mistakes. And they aren't lost. They are known.

In fact this is what Romans 8:29 says:

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Do you know what foreknow means. It means to know, ginosko, ahead of time. This doesn't mean he knew what would happen. It means he was relationally committed to us before we were even born.

You see, no one can snatch a true believer from God's hand. It is impossible. We may not know who's are Christ's, but Christ does. So from where God sits, this is how it is. This is the sign of ownership.

But how about the view from where we sit? If we are known by Christ, what will that look like? How will the chosen respond to God's work in their life?

Paul says- Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity. False teachers can do a lot of babbling, but they aren't going to come up with this response. False teaching always comes up with a way to live with iniquity. It will appeal to something in our flesh. But Paul says that God's stamp is that believers will depart from iniquity. Note again that the application of God's Sovereignty is the diligent action of living a Godly life.

²⁰But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.

²¹Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

Cleanse- This is the Greek word from which we get our word catharsis. It means to clean out thoroughly. It is only used twice. The other use is when Paul tells the Corinthians to quit associating with believers who remain sexually impure.

The word for Prepared means willingness, readiness, eagerness.

Also the word for Master here is despot. This is the absolute boss we are talking about. Our job is to be useful for our Master. That is what we exist for.

There is some debate about what Paul is talking about here. And Paul didn't make it real easy to be sure about it. The most frequent interpretations are that the vessels are people or the vessels are two types of behavior. The problem with the first translation is what the end of verse 21 says. The question must be asked that how will removing myself from someone who is not living a faithful life produce these results- he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

That seems like a pretty long stretch. I wish it was that easy. No, to me it seems more like the second interpretation. Paul is simply using the illustration of the big house to point out the difference between things that have a noble use and those who have a dishonorable use. I think we should make the application that our behavior is like that. Those things that we do in faith, having our primary desire of serving and loving the Lord, those things are honorable. They are good. And they serve a useful purpose in God's kingdom. They minister grace to others and they show a selfless love like Christ has.

Those things that we do to serve our flesh that are not of faith, no matter how innocuous they may seem, these are dishonorable. They shame Christ and waste His time.

It makes perfect sense that if anyone cleanses (thoroughly) himself from the faithless living, from living for one's

self and one's pleasure), he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. We know from lots of other scripture that if we are to take off works of the flesh we must put on the fruit of the spirit. This job cannot be half done. So if we are thoroughly putting off the old man we are at the same time putting on the new. It is no wonder that this would be sanctifying us for God's further use. It is no wonder that we would be becoming more and more useful in His service. And that each step makes us a little more prepared to do the good work that Christ prepared for us before we were born.

Do you ever wonder, why doesn't God use me more? Do you ask, what can I do to be more involved in what God is doing on the planet? How can I escape a life centered around things that any human in our situation can have and do and begin doing the things that only the supernatural can explain? How can I be more involved in the life changing work of sharing the gospel with those that God may call? Well, I think verses like this give the answer. The answer is found in the day to day putting off the old and common and disgraceful and dishonorable and putting on the new and faithful and loving and true. It is done one minute at a time, one thought at a time, and one action at a time.

Really, don't we want to be more useful to Our Master? It is likely that we won't get to that place dramatically. It is likely that we will get there by this process that Paul explains.

²²Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

This verse fits right in with what Paul just said. Fleeing youthful lusts is part of the cleansing one's self from the dishonorable things. Paul can tell Timothy that those temptations you have when you are young, flee them. Run the other way. Shun these things. In fact this word is also used to mean "vanish". If that were our reactions with our strong desires, how much better off we would be. If when we are tempted we were to vanish, in essence, to somewhere safer, somewhere purer, somewhere more faithful, really who would regret such a habit?

How much happier we would be if we were to listen to Paul's command to Timothy.

And instead of the fleshly pursuits, Timothy should pour his energies into pursuing righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. This is what an honorable vessel would do. This is being useful for the Master. Timothy should be looking to do the right things, acting in trust and obedience toward God because He believes God, He should be loving God and God's people, and pursuing peace...

This peace is relational peace, serenity, harmonious relationships.

And with who? Not those practicing the dishonorable things, but with those in the pursuit of putting on the honorable ones. These aren't the ones stirring trouble and coming up with doctrines that will allow them to sin. These are the true church, the ones that are calling on the Lord and trusting the Lord and all of that is coming from a pure heart. These are true believers. Those are the ones that Timothy should be fellowshiping with and focusing on. He should not allow himself to be distracted by so called believers that are just stirring up trouble.

²³But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.

So again Paul gives this advice. It looks to me like this very well may have side tracked Timothy. Maybe his heart went out to them too much and he refused to act according to the evidence. But Paul is reigning Timothy in. Avoid these discussions, shun them, stay away from them. You might think you will do good by standing toe to toe with these people but in the end you will find that only harm is being done. Timothy's involvement in these disputes will generate trouble, strife.

Foolish means mentally dull and the Greek word is the word we get Moron from.

Ignorant is unlearned, untrained and undisciplined. Again we can see that these disputes don't come from believing scripture. They come from self and pride and ignorance and laziness. These

people will not do the hard work of cutting straight. They will cut however their imaginations wander. So stay away. If you don't, it will just start a war.

²⁴And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,

Quarrel- To war. If Timothy is to serve the Lord he is not to go to war with people.

He should be gentle to all.

And on top of that he should be able to teach. In this case it means highly skilled at teaching. On top of cutting straight the Word of God he must be able to convey that straight cutting to others.

And he must be patient or the better word may be forbearing. A minister is going to have to put up being evilly treated. The devil sure won't like him. Those spreading doctrines of demons won't like him. And those in the church who are temporarily sidetracked are highly likely to do him harm. This is just common ground for a servant of Christ. Look what happened to Christ himself.

²⁵in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,

Humility- power under willing control. Timothy should be a force to contend with, but he must be under the absolute control of His Master, doing His Master's work His Master's way. This, I think, is the opposite of youthful lusts referred to earlier.

Correcting those who are in opposition. Paul has emphasized that Timothy should not enter into a give and take discussion with these people on ignorant disputes or the items to be shunned. Now he tells him what he should do. Correct them.

Correct- to chastise

2a) to chastise or castigate with words, to correct

2a1) of those who are molding the character of others by reproof and admonition

Timothy is told to take them to the woodshed. There is no discussion from them allowed about their theories. He has a message to serve to them and that is how it will be. He must be gentle. He must be humble. And he must be firm. The people he is correcting may not use any of the above words to describe how they are treated but Timothy should know that all those things are true of his behavior.

And why should Timothy spend any time at all on these people? Who knows. Even though they were in the church but not of it, maybe this is the time when they will come around. Maybe God will grant repentance as a result of this ministry. Note too that this is the only way a person ever turns around. God must grant the change of heart. It is a supernatural miracle when a person headed to hell turns around and heads to heaven or a believer confesses a sin and turns from it. And that is what repentance is.

And that miracle must happen for anyone to come to the truth. It is not a matter of figuring truth out. It is a matter of being able to see it when one is blind. No one ever comes to the truth by themselves. It must be an act of God.

²⁶and *that* they may come to their senses *and* escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will.

Come to their senses- return to soberness. The world is drunk on sin. They have lost touch with reason regarding spiritual life and death. They are trapped in the snare of the devil. They can't help it and they like it. They are taken captive by the devil and they cannot possibly break free. They must do what their master the devil tells them to do. The fact that they may have spent a lot of time in church meant nothing. They are slaves.

But if King Jesus will call them they can return to soberness, truth and reason and come to Christ.

What a message of hope in this instruction to Timothy. Even those who are acting as the Gospel's worst enemies, like Paul himself once did, stand a chance of being rescued from their wickedness and get to put on the righteousness of Christ.