

**Subject: A Vessel for the Master's Use**

**Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:19-21**

Every believer should have the driving ambition to be used by God in a way that honors and glorifies Him. It is important to see the flow of thought in 2 Timothy 2. We have a call to be strong in grace (vs. 1) and then to be a workman who is not ashamed but approved (vs. 15) and finally to be a vessel useful for the Master in every good work. If we take a more detailed look at the chapter we find a Christian described in these ways:

- ✓ A faithful steward (vs. 1-2)
- ✓ A faithful soldier (vs. 3-4)
- ✓ A faithful athlete (vs. 5)
- ✓ A faithful farmer (vs. 6-7)
- ✓ A faithful workman (vs. 15)
- ✓ A faithful vessel (vs. 19-21)

In other letters Paul uses the image of a vessel to describe Christians. **Romans 9:21** *Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? **2 Corinthians 4:7** But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. When Saul was converted and his name was changed to Paul, the Lord said that Paul was a chosen vessel. **Acts 9:15** *But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.**

**A VESSEL THAT BELONGS TO THE LORD**

Paul contrasts genuine believers to the false teachers and their teaching in verses 17-18. In verse 19 we find the identity of real Christians. Paul uses figurative language to illustrate the Christian life. First of all, Paul used the image of a house or building to describe the church as he did in his first letter to Timothy, **1 Timothy 3:15** *But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

God has put His seal, His mark of ownership and authenticity on all true believers. This seal is two-sided. On the divine side there is God's perfect knowledge of true believers. Paul could have had in mind the book of Numbers where some of the people rebelled against His chosen leaders, Moses and Aaron. **Numbers 16:5** *And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even to morrow the LORD will show who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. We don't know who the real Christians are, but God knows. **John 10:27** My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*

The human side of God's seal or mark of ownership is the believer's personal holiness: "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Again Paul may have in mind the people of Israel when they were told to separate themselves from the rebels, **Numbers 16:26** *And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins.*

**A VESSEL OF HONOR**

In a large house there are many kinds of vessels. Some are valuable and some are common.

The honorable vessels represent believers who are faithful and useful to the Lord. To “purge” means to cleanse thoroughly. “These” refers to the vessels of dishonor. This is a call for believers to separate themselves from fellowship with impure believers. Sin is contagious and association with sinful people is dangerous. We have many warnings:

**Proverbs 13:20** *He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.* **1 Corinthians 15:33** *Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners (bad company corrupts good morals).*

**1 Corinthians 5:9-11** <sup>9</sup> *I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: <sup>10</sup> Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. <sup>11</sup> But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.* We should not want to be around people whose lifestyle does not honor Christ.

### **A SANCTIFIED VESSEL**

A believer is to be sanctified, set apart, holy. Sanctification is a part of genuine salvation. We are set apart for Christ and we are set apart from sin. First there is positional sanctification the moment we are saved, **1 Corinthians 1:30** *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.* There is progressive sanctification, **1 Thessalonians 4:3** *For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.* Finally, there will be perfect sanctification when we get to heaven.

### **A USEFUL VESSEL**

A vessel is made to be used. The phrase “meet (fit) for the master’s use” means useful for the Master. The same word for useful (profitable) is found in **2 Timothy 4:11** *Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.* Master means owner or sovereign master. We are bought with a price. **1 Corinthians 6:20** *For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

Paul’s greatest desire was to be useful to the Master. His greatest fear was that he would become useless to the Master. **1 Corinthians 9:24-27** <sup>24</sup> *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. <sup>25</sup> And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. <sup>26</sup> I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: <sup>27</sup> But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway (be disqualified).*

### **A VESSEL FOR EVERY GOOD WORK**

To be prepared has the idea of being willing, eager, and ready. We are saved to serve. Scripture makes is clear that we are not saved by good works, but for good works. **Ephesians 2:8-10** <sup>8</sup> *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: <sup>9</sup> Not of works, lest any man should boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.* Paul states this again in **Titus 3:5-8**.