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2 **Making your life count**

2 Timothy 2:20-26

3 **2 Timothy 2:20-21**

Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.

4 **2 Timothy 2:22-25a**

So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness.

5 **2 Timothy 2:25b-26**

God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

6 **Robert Murray McCheyne**

"Remember you are God's sword, His instrument—I trust, a chosen vessel unto Him to bear His name. In great measure, according to the purity and perfection of the instrument, will be the success. It is not great talents God blesses so much as likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God."

7 **The toilet, the trophy, and the trash bag**

8 **The toilet – vessel of dishonor**

9 **The trophy – vessel of honor**

- 3 words describe those who cleanse themselves to become 'vessels of honor':
 - "sanctified" = specially set apart by God for service and the fulfilling of His purposes
 - "useful for the Master" = useful to God; an *eucharist* or blessing
 - "prepared for any good work" = made ready by God to undertake anything He may call you to do

10 **The trash bag**

11 **You decide**

- Many wrongly interpret verses 20-21 to be an expression of God's sovereignty – that He makes some people vessels of honor and some to dishonor.
- But Paul teaches in verse 21 that if you cleanse yourself from dishonor, then you become a vessel of honor.
- YOU choose what kind of vessel you are.
- Become a "consecrated container."

12 **What to flee, pursue, and avoid to make your life count for God**

13 **What to flee (2:22)**

- Greek word for *flee* is φεῦγε (fuge) from which we get our word fugitive (one who is always on the run). We are to continually run from youthful passions.
- John MacArthur: *"These lusts involve much more than sinful sexual desire. They also include pride, craving for wealth and power, inordinate ambition, jealousy, envy, an argumentative and self-assertive spirit."*

14 **Why youthful passions?**

- Young people lack the perspective of a long life.
- They want recognition and freedom now
 - Emphasize rights over responsibilities
 - Emphasize gratification over service
- Immaturity is more willing to accept compromise to "fit in" or to get what they want."

15 **Immaturity**

It is human nature to want stuff and want it now; it is also a sign of immaturity. Being willing to delay pleasure for a greater result is a sign of maturity. However, our culture teaches us to live for the now. "I want it!" we scream, and we can get it if we are willing to go into debt. Debt is a means to obtain the "I want its" before we can afford them. – Dave Ramsey

16 **Dave Ramsey on compromise**

- *The story goes that if you drop a frog into boiling water, he will sense the pain and immediately jump out. However, if you put a frog in room-temperature water, he will swim around happily, and as you gradually turn the water up to boiling, the frog will not sense the change. The frog is lured to his death by gradual change.*

17 **Dave Ramsey on compromise (2)**

- *We can lose our health, our fitness, and our wealth gradually, one day at a time. It might be a cliché, but that's because it is true: The enemy of "the best" is not "the worst." The enemy of "the best" is "just fine."*
- — Dave Ramsey, *The Total Money Makeover: Classic Edition: A Proven Plan for Financial Fitness*

18 **What to pursue**

- Righteousness = godly character and living
- Faithfulness to Christ and the Gospel
- Love = a decision to put the needs and interests of others above your own
- Peace = harmonious relationships
 - Romans 12:18 -- *If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.*

19 **Colossians 3:12-14**

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

20 **Dave Ramsey on pursuit**

- *The weird thing is that the more efficient, on task, on goal you are with your time, the more*

energy you have. Working with no traction, or for that matter simply wasting a day, does not relax you, it drains you.

- *Strange as it may seem, when you work a daily plan in pursuit of your written goals that flow from your mission statement born of your vision for living your dreams, you are energized after a tough long day."*

- Dave Ramsey, *EntreLeadership: 20 Years of Practical Business Wisdom from the Trenches*

21 **What to avoid (2:23)**

- Avoid = Have nothing to do with, refuse, reject
- Foolish and ignorant disputes = arguing with others about things that are trivial or merely side-issues
 - Paul calls the opponents "uneducated"
- Why should you avoid these?
 - They produce quarrels and infighting

22 **Avoid foolish controversies**

- Paul warned Timothy not to become involved in discussions and debates that lead nowhere.
 - Arguing over minor points of doctrine so that it detracts from sharing the Gospel.
- This was evidently a serious problem for the early Church because Paul mentions it on five separate occasions (1 Tim. 1:3-4; 4:7; 6:4; 2 Tim. 2:23; Titus 3:9).

23 **Application**

- So plan to pursue God's best instead of your best and do that the best you can. (And you will discover that God's best is better than your best.)

24 **Character qualities needed for a successful life**

25 **Definition of success**

- *Success is obedience to the known, revealed will of God regardless of the consequences.*
- True success results in a life that counts for God, blesses others, and fulfills you in a way that no pursuit of fleshly pleasures ever can.

26 **Qualities of successful servants**

- A disdain for a quarrelsome spirit (2:23)
 - Proverbs 20:3 -- *It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife, but every fool will be quarreling.*
 - Proverbs 19:11 -- *Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.*
- A gentle spirit; kind, friendly, without the aggressive-assertive 'in-your-face' attitude.
 - Maturity seeks peaceful relationships.
 - Immaturity seeks independence.

27 **Qualities of successful servants (2)**

- 2:24
- Able to teach = Must know the word of God and be able to clearly communicate the truth of God's word (requires study)
- A patient and humble spirit (especially towards those who 'oppose' you or with whom you find it difficult to live)

28 **1 Peter 2:20-23**

For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

29 **Qualities of successful servants (3)**

- 2:25-26 -- A discerning and compassionate spirit that seeks for the spiritual restoration of Satan's captive dupes.
 - Humbly instruct those who oppose you and the Lord in hopes that by your gentle instruction they can be won over to the Lord's ways.

30 **Want to make your life count?**

1. Cleanse yourself from anything that defiles you and draws you away from the Lord.
2. Flee from youthful passions not only of body, but of spirit—including a prideful, argumentative, self-asserting spirit.
3. Pursue/run after righteousness, faithfulness, love and peace—things that build up Christ's church.

31 **Want to make your life count?**

4. Avoid foolish and ignorant disputes that lead to quarrels and breed infighting within the church.
5. Strive to cultivate those Christ-like character qualities that will fashion us into the kind of people God can use.