

2 Timothy

Chapter Two

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2Tim 2:1-2 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ²And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

The last chapter ended with Paul telling Timothy about the widespread defection among Christians in the Roman province of Asia. He then starts this section with a “therefore” as Timothy must stand firm for the Gospel and keep it pure. Paul tells him that he must overcome his natural shyness and be strong to refute false teachers and those who were against Paul. Timothy can do that because of the grace in Christ Jesus. Timothy is not told to just “suck it up” and be strong in himself but to be strong with the grace of Jesus. We are not given grace just for salvation but also for service in the ministry of the gospel. So first Timothy is told that what Paul has been teaching is his deposit from the Lord (1:12) and not some invention of men: *Gal 1:11-12 For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. ¹²For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.* Secondly he tells Timothy that he is passing this message to him as his deposit from Jesus Christ and that he has heard Paul teach these messages on many occasions when many witnesses have heard it. So this apostolic message is not some secret message known only to a few special people (as claimed by the Gnostics) but it was heard by many people who could then test the messages of Timothy. Thirdly Paul tells Timothy that he must entrust the message to others who can then teach others and make sure that the proper gospel message is heard in many lands. These other people would be trustworthy elders whose primary mission was to teach proper Christian doctrine as the Jewish elders were to do with the OT teachings in the synagogue.

Paul then gives four stages for passing on the truth: Christ to Paul, Paul to Timothy, Timothy to ‘faithful men’, and from these faithful men to ‘others also’. This is painting the picture of a true apostolic sequence as the pure gospel message is spread throughout the world. After some time the world then had the NT writings and, after the invention of the printing press, these writings were spread abroad. The entire Bible then gives Christians all that is needed to present their bodies a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1). Paul now is going to use six metaphors to illustrate the proper manner in which Timothy is to spread the truth and such applies to us today also. He is going to give us examples that will cause all Christians to stretch themselves so that the task of spreading the gospel message is done properly.

2Tim 2:3-4 Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

Paul first gives Timothy the metaphor of the life of the soldier in his service to his leaders. During two prison terms he had much opportunity to observe the life of faithful soldiers. Paul also suffered considerably during his apostolic service and he is telling Timothy to suffer also rather than deny the truth. A good soldier is dedicated to his service and would not hesitate to give his life to complete his mission. Christians should also be willing to die for our tasks as we serve our master, Jesus Christ. Good soldiers on active duty treat their orders as primary and do not hesitate to enter dangerous paths in serving their leaders and completing their tasks. Christians are also on active duty and should have serving the Lord Jesus Christ as the primary task in their life. If a Christian is true to the gospel message he will receive ridicule and opposition from the world. We have weapons and armor in our service (Eph 6:10; 1 Tim 1:18; 6:12; 2 Cor 6:7; 10:3-5; Rom 6:14, 14) and we are commanded to teach, disciple, and baptize: *Matt 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

The soldier on active duty does not let the affairs of the world engage him to the extent that such retards his ability to carry out his duties in an efficient and proper manner. The Christian is indeed on active service at all times but he cannot help but become involved in worldly affairs at home, at work, and in serving his community. However these other activities must not keep him from his primary task. There are different levels of Christian service just as there are various levels of service for good soldiers. Secular soldiers are not constantly on active duty but will have periods away from the front line to recuperate and to develop better strategies for warfare. Similarly Christians should always have service to Jesus Christ first in their minds but there will be times when they also are away from the front line. Pastors have more time on the front line than do other Christians. Christian teachers are also more involved in front-line work than those who do not teach. Those who are called to more front-line service should obtain their wages from that service: *1Cor 9:14 So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.* Paul accepted some assistance from churches and he would practice his tent-making profession although such work was exceptional as he did not want anyone to have a case against him of perhaps accepting pay for the wrong reasons:

1Cor 9:12 If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.

1Cor 9:18 What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may offer the gospel without charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

Although most Christians today are involved in secular work and in their roles in the family, it is imperative that they do not become entangled in worldly affairs so that their primary goal of serving their Lord Jesus Christ is impaired. As the soldier desires to please those who enlisted them as soldiers, the Christians should have a much greater desire to please the One who enlisted them into service.

2Tim 2:5 And also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.

Next Paul uses the metaphor of the athlete as an example for the Christian servant. The Greek games were followed closely in this era and many admired the attributes of the athletes who dedicated themselves to excellence in their sport. Every sport in the games had their rules both for the performance and for the preparation for the games. If the rules were not followed then there would be no prizes, which were evergreen wreaths and not gold, silver, or bronze medals. The Bible often uses athletic events as analogies to service to God:

1Cor 9:24-27 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. ⁵And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ⁶Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; ⁷but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

Heb 12:1-2 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Although the Christian does not receive salvation based upon obedience to the Law, it still is a standard for Christian behavior. Unfortunately there have been quite a few pastors and teachers who claim to be Christians but who live like the devil. Those not totally abiding by the rules of Christian behavior may still be regenerated but they will suffer loss:

1Cor 3:10-15 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it. ¹¹For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

We should all live as did Paul so that we can say with him:

2Tm 4:7-8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; ⁸in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

2Tim 2:6 The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops.

Next Paul uses the metaphor of the hard-working farmer and such was common knowledge in the area. The athlete must follow the rules and the farmer must work hard at his task. We can look at the countries without all the mechanisms available for farming to see the extremely hard work of the farmers to prepare the land, plant the crops, cultivate and protect the crops, and then harvest them. The soldier and the athlete at least have the excitement, respect, and admiration of others as they perform their duties. The farmer has no such environment but he is judged by the amount and quality of his crops. He must be a hard worker to be judged favorably. Otherwise:
Prov 10:5 He who gathers in summer is a son who acts wisely, But he who sleeps in harvest is a son who acts shamefully.

Prov 20:4 The sluggard does not plow after the autumn, So he begs during the harvest and has nothing.

Prov 24:30-31 I passed by the field of the sluggard, And by the vineyard of the man lacking sense; ³¹And behold, it was completely overgrown with thistles, Its surface was covered with nettles, And its stone wall was broken down.

Holiness is a harvest that each Christian should be cultivating daily:

Gal 6:7-8 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. ⁸For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Although God saves people, the efforts of the Christian in the process is also important:

Matt 9:37-38 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. ³⁸"Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

Some Christians will sow the seeds of the gospel and some will be included in the harvest:

John 4:35-38 "Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. ³⁶"Already he who reaps is receiving wages, and is gathering fruit for life eternal; that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. ³⁷"For in this case the saying is true, 'One sows, and another reaps.' ³⁸"I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

But it is God who causes the growth:

1Cor 3:6-7 I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. ⁷So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.

Paul praised those who worked hard for the gospel:

Rom 16:6 Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you.

Rom 16:12 Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, workers in the Lord. Greet Persis the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord.

Paul worked harder than all as he set the example for us to follow:

1Cor 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

We have then seen the dedication of the good soldier, the law-abiding preparation and performance of the athlete, and the hard labor of the good farmer. All are required for the Christian in his service to his Lord, Jesus Christ. All that is worthwhile requires hard work as most of us know in our secular lives and this is certainly true of spiritual matters.

2Tim 2:7 Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

There are two processes involved in this order to Timothy. He is to deeply reflect on all that Paul has to say and the Lord will then give him understanding in all that is needed for him to faithfully carry on the work of Paul. Both are required for any Christian to succeed. I can testify that both are required for, before I was regenerated I studied the Bible but understood very little. It was not until I was connected to the Lord that the understanding came. But as I began to understand more, I wanted to understand more completely and so I had to work to understand how to properly study the Word of God. Few Christians seem to be willing to undertake the effort required to properly study the Bible. Certainly Satan does not want us to make such efforts and, as we begin to have such a desire, he will make efforts to slow our progress. Most Christians will read a few verses daily and even take on the project to read through the Bible in a year and even pray that the Holy Spirit will reveal to them what it means. But we must do as the apostle says and “consider what I say”. Other Christians may diligently and properly study the Bible but forget to pray for guidance in their understanding. Both are required elements of proper study of God’s Word to us.

2Tim 2:8-10 Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel, ⁹for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned. ¹⁰For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.

Paul now gives a new paragraph (verses 8-13) before introducing three more metaphors of the Christian worker. Paul’s first command is to remember Jesus Christ and we wonder why he had to say that. How could Timothy possibly forget Jesus? It is easy for even regenerated people to forget Jesus as they become busy in theological debate, absorbed in purely humanitarian business (the social gospel), or bogged down in parochial business. They can even become so involved

with the details of managing missionary projects that they forget their leader. Jesus inaugurated a way for people to remember Him via the last supper commemorative meal. Paul gives three aspects of Jesus for Timothy to remember. He is risen from the dead, a descendant of David, and He is revealed in the presented gospel of Paul. Jesus is the gospel and if we ever forget that fact then we are wasting our time. His resurrection is paramount to the Christian message for if He is not risen from the dead then there is no Christian message:

1Cor 15:12-19 Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; ¹⁴and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. ¹⁵Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; ¹⁷and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

Saying that Jesus is descended from David proclaims the humanity of Jesus and His being raised from the dead emphasize His divinity. Jesus is then the gateway to life eternal and even the meaning of life here. Without Jesus our life is meaningless and eternity will be spent in awful regret of not having become His brother. Paul emphasizes that the gospel he has preached is the truth of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and is all the truth that is needed for anyone to live forever with Him.

Paul then says that such is the reason that he has suffered. He has suffered imprisonment as a common criminal for the sake of the elect that they may live with Christ. But he proclaims that even though he is in chains the Word of God is not so confined and will spread through the work of other Holy Spirit guided Christians.

So it is for the reasons stated above that Paul is willing to endure sufferings. I can personally say that I am overwhelmed with gratitude that Paul was willing to endure such awful sufferings so that I could obtain salvation of Christ Jesus and life in eternal glory. We should all take time at this moment to thank Paul and to give him proper recognition for his devotion to Jesus and his leaving behind any entanglements with the world that might have reduced his effectiveness in spreading the gospel message that led to its being recorded for us now.

2Tim 2:11-13 ¹¹It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; ¹²If we endure, we shall also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; ¹³If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.

Paul gives two pairs of statements here. The first two are for those who endure and the second two are for those who do not endure and therefore were never regenerated. He pronounces both of these pairs as trustworthy. The death is our death to self as we take up our cross daily to conform to the image of Christ. Only the truly regenerated person will consistently die to his sin nature and seek to purify himself in Christ. This life of enduring to our profession of faith marks the true Christian. The promises for these people are life forever with Him and a future of reigning with Him. The second two pairs are for those who were really never regenerated but maybe made a public profession of faith. Such people will deny Christ in the face of persecution and suffering and will not be faithful. The promise to such people is that Christ will deny them at the final judgment and He remains faithful despite their failures. The Son of God cannot deny Himself and His true representatives will also not deny him. We are reminded of our Lord's terrifying statement: *Matt 10:32-33 "Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. ³³"But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.*

Some have taught that the statement about Christ being faithful even if we are unfaithful is stating that He will remain true to us even if we fail Him. However that cannot be the meaning at all for the couplets consistently teach their meaning. The first two are for faithful people and the second are for those who are not faithful. Those who are not faithful reveal their true nature just as the generation of Israelites wandering the wilderness were judged unfaithful and destroyed: *Jude 1:5 Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe.* Jesus will be faithful to carry out His threats as well as His promises. If we deny or are unfaithful to Him then He will deny us and condemn us. God cannot deny His holiness by letting unholy people into His presence: *1Peter 1:16 because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."*

2Tim 2:14-15 Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless, and leads to the ruin of the hearers. ¹⁵Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.

Paul will now use three more metaphors: the workman who will not be ashamed, the vessel for noble use, and the Lord's servant. First he exhorts Timothy to remind the entire congregation at Ephesus and any others with whom he contacts. The "things" refers to what Paul has mentioned previously in this letter: to work diligently in the work of the Lord as a soldier, athlete, and farmer; to remember the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; to remind them of the preeminence of Jesus, the power of God's Word, and the purposes of the work of Jesus Christ. Timothy is also to solemnly charge them as though they were in the very presence of God (as they actually are) regarding some important issues. They are not to "wrangle about words" for such is useless. The false teachers and those speaking against the Word of God often try to impress people with their

use of words and to get people away from the main point of the gospel message. These people are *“always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth”* (2 Tim 3:7). Rather than using secular debate principles, they should just let the Word of God speak for itself. Having a debate with regenerate people over some doctrinal issues can be very profitable but with unbelievers will be futile and foolish. Over the first few centuries of church history there were several committee meetings among believers over issues such as circumcision (Acts 15) that led to clarification of important doctrinal issues. Paul states that arguments over words is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers. Obviously such arguing will not cause someone to lose their faith for it is a gift of God and is preserved by God. However it can cause Christians to be led into false doctrines that can considerably reduce their effectiveness for the gospel and weaken their confidence in their position before God. As an example, if someone argues strenuously that works are needed in addition to trusting in the work of Jesus they might even doubt their salvation.

First they are to be diligent in their discussions of the gospel to be understood as a workman approved to God. Such workmen are like gold that has been refined and pure. Handling the gospel message rightly means that they would not be ashamed when they come before the Lord in judgment. Handling accurately literally means to “cut straight” or to “plow a straight furrow”. People handling the Word of God in this manner would not take portions of the material out of context to misrepresent it and they would not use incorrect translations of words into their language. The word of truth is the apostolic faith Timothy has received from Paul to communicate to others exactly as he received it and not “massaged” into some meaning contra to that of the apostolic messages. He must not falsify it nor apply it in ways not appropriate to its meaning.

2 Tim 2:16-18 But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness,¹⁷ and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus,¹⁸ men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and thus they upset the faith of some.

Secondly Christians are to avoid the false teachers and godless philosophers who teach only worldly and empty chatter, which is just noise. Such talk only leads down a crooked path to an increase in ungodliness, which spreads like gangrene. I believe that excessive discussions about creation and the End Times fit such a category perfectly. We cannot properly understand either extreme condition and we have a perfectly clear command to pursue sanctification: *Phil 2:12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;*

Anything that interferes with our sanctification is to be avoided. Such talk also spreads through the community of believers like gangrene, which must be cut out and treated properly or it leads to total degradation of the one contaminated. This is so important that Paul repeats it in 14b, 17,

and 18b). The truth always honors God and edifies the hearers so we should always ask if the talk has both of these actions.

Hymenaeus was mentioned in Paul's previous letter to Timothy and had been a threat to the Ephesian church for some time and Paul had excommunicated him (1 Tim 1:20). Philetus evidently replaced Alexander (1 Tim 1:20) as a co-conspirator of Hymenaeus. These men were apostates, people who had pretended to be Christians, or even were self-deceived, and had turned against the church. They claimed that the resurrection had already occurred but Paul does not elaborate as to the details. They probably were involved in the seeds of the Gnostics who had their beliefs based upon Greek philosophy stating that the body and all material things are evil so it was abhorrent to them that this evil body would be restored in the afterlife. They probably believed that the only resurrection was the spiritual union with Christ in His death and resurrection (Rom 6:1-11). However, Paul stressed the absolute necessity of the resurrection of Christ and the bodily resurrection of believers later (1 Cor 15:13-15, 17). It is thus damnable to distort this doctrine.

2 Tim 2:19 Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness."

False teaching can upset the foundation of believers but the foundation of God is firm so that all who are truly regenerate will never be lost. The seal is two-fold. The first is divine in that the Lord sees the heart and so knows those who belong to Him and He will keep them forever. This quotation is probably from Num 16:5 involving an attempted overthrow of Moses and Aaron. God has chosen His people from the beginning and the chosen ones cannot be lost (2 Thess 2:13a, John 6:37-40, Eph 1:4, Rom 8:29-30). The second is humanly in that all who really have Jesus as their Lord will abstain from iniquity. Together they define the true foundation of God, the Church. Paul clearly taught that each believer is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19-20) and Peter also admonished believers to be holy in their actions (1 Peter 1:6). Paul had previously referred to the church as a foundation: *1Tim 3:15 but in case I am delayed, I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.* Jesus had also said that "the gates of Hades shall not overpower it" (Matt 16:18). The "gates" refers to the place of a city where men would gather to make deals so Jesus was saying that all the deliberations of the leaders of Hades cannot overpower the church. This church will be perfected: *Phil 1:6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*

2Tim 2:20 Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor.

Paul uses an example of different kinds of utensils in a large house since the people would be familiar with such usage even if most of them did not have a mansion. The vessels of gold and silver would have been saved for usage by the household and important guests and prominently displayed. The wood and earthenware vessels would be plain and unattractive and some would be used to hold the garbage and other waste of the house. To use the common vessels for guests would be a great dishonor. The large house is the visible church. But what are the vessels? In the context of this chapter he is continuing his discussion of false and true teachers within the church so the vessels are the teachers: *Acts 9:15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;* "Instrument" and "vessel" translate the same Greek word "skeuos". Paul used the same word in describing himself: *2Cor 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves;* The same Greek word is there translated as vessels but the context means that Paul's use of "earthen" is describing himself from his physical state and not that he is not useful for noble purposes of God. Paul carried the great treasure of the gospel as a fragile pottery lamp carries the light. Some teachers write that the vessels are the false and true members of the church but that would be out of context of the chapter.

Thus the large house is the visible church and the vessels are the teachers in the visible church. Thus there are true and false teachers in the visible church as Paul has been discussing. Paul has stated that Hymenaeus and Philetus were false teachers who denied some fundamental portion of the gospel (1 Tim 1:19, 20). The true teachers will honor God but the false teachers will dishonor God. God has used dishonorable vessels for His purposes as He used pagan Assyria to punish Israel in their disobedience and then He discarded them (Is 10:5). God also used the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar as "my servant" to judge His people and the Persian king Cyrus has his "shepherd" to redeem them (Jer 25:9; 27:6; 45:10; Is 44:28; 45:1). However these are exceptional cases and involve the use of a nation to punish and redeem a nation, not as teachers. God uses clean vessels such as Paul to teach His people. Timothy is now being commissioned by Paul to carry on the teaching of the gospel to people in his area.

2Tim 2:21-22 Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work. ²²Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

Paul now tells Timothy what he must do to be a clean vessel to be used by God to honor Him and to teach His people. "These things" are the teachings of the false teachers earlier discussed. A true teacher will not associate with the false teachers unless he is called upon to refute their teachings. Timothy and other true teachers are to know and teach a true gospel message and not mix the truth with falsehood even to make the message more palatable to the listeners. The

modern church is often guilty of such mixings so as to attract more members and to build its buildings bigger and better than other such buildings. As stated before, teachers and all members should concentrate on sanctification so that they will be useful to Jesus Christ as their Master for every good work prepared for them: *Eph 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

Timothy is told to flee youthful lusts, which refer to selfish ambition, arrogance, obstinacy, self-assertion, self-indulgence, as well as sexual lust. Rather he is told to pursue four essential attributes of a Christian: righteousness, faith, love, and peace. Those who work to flee from the negative and pursue the positive will be able to call upon the Lord with a pure heart. We need to always remember that salvation has three phases: regeneration, sanctification, and glorification. Regeneration and glorification are accomplished by God alone but sanctification is accomplished by the believer in concert with the Holy Spirit. We are to deny self by carrying the cross daily as our part in the wonderful work of the Lord in His chosen people: *Luke 14:27 "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.*

2Tim 2:23-26 But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels. ²⁴And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, ²⁵with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, ²⁶and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

We now reach metaphor six, the Lord's servant. The vessel becomes a servant in the household of God. Paul repeats his warning to refuse the false teachings that he has been discussing. The Greek word translated speculations can also mean controversies but perhaps here the meaning is a combination of both possibilities. Paul warned Titus to avoid four things all pertaining to the Law: *Titus 3:9 But shun foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law; for they are unprofitable and worthless.* Timothy is not being told to avoid all controversies for Christians are to contend as he states in verse 25. What he, and all Christians, should avoid is foolish and ignorant discussions that only produce quarrels and are of no honor to God or profit for God's people. Such speculations have done great damage to the visible church and continue to divide and cause quarrels among Christians. Again I will mention foolish and ignorant speculations about creation and End Times as examples of topics that I would include in this prohibition.

The true teacher must not be quarrelsome but be gentle. He must be kind to everyone and especially patient to those who wrong him. He must also have the gift of teaching both in a positive and a negative sense. Those teaching a false doctrine must be corrected but done so in a way not amplifying negative interactions. However there is a limit to continually engaging a

false teacher: *Titus 3:10 Reject a factious man after a first and second warning.* Some teachers are apostate and will not respond to correction so the true teacher must utilize his gift of discernment in such interactions. Some people who are contentious initially will be led by God to accept the truth and repent as they accept the truth so it is important to carefully refute the false teacher. Satan has lost true Christians from his kingdom but he will continue to fight to destroy the church even though he knows that “the gates of hell will not prevail against the church”. He can still do a lot of damage as we have observed over the millennia since the church was established. Many false teachers have been held captive by Satan to do his will but the truth can set them free also: *John 8:32 and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.* It is only God who can grant them repentance but He may work through the gentle, kind teaching of one of the vessels of the church. We should never assume anyone to be incapable of repentance and resulting salvation but we should be careful not to damage the conscience of a true child of God by being unkind. Our war is against spiritual foes: *Eph 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.* We must recognize the spiritual battle, teach with kindness, and depend upon the Lord to remove someone from being bound by Satan.

We see from this chapter that the minister of God must behave as a good soldier, a law-abiding athlete and a hard-working farmer. He must be an unashamed workman so as to be accurate and clear in all teachings. He must be as a noble vessel so to be righteous in character and conduct. He must be the Lord’s servant in a courteous and gentle manner. All is required of a true servant of the Lord as we labor and suffer for Him so it is not surprising that the chapter began with “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”.