

2 Timothy 2 - Grace: The Key to Endurance; 10 Illustrations of Endurance; Plasticware vs Silverware; Kindness Liberates Bondage

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2 Timothy 2

II. Illustrations of faithful endurance (2 Tim 2:1-26)

(1) Key to endurance (2:1)

1 You **therefore, myson, be strong in the grace** that is in Christ Jesus.

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

1 As for you, my child, be strong by the grace that is in the Messiah Jesus.

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

- This verse is the high point of the entire epistle: Paul discloses to Timothy the secret to his success in ministry and what Timothy can experience if he understands this secret.

— A proper understanding of this verse is the key to unpacking this chapter, and in fact, the key to unpacking this entire epistle. It's even the key to unpacking many of Paul's other epistles.

— "...therefore" - this is a conclusion to everything Paul taught Timothy in chapter 1: a calling to endure

— "...my son" - *teknon*, referring to Timothy as Paul's spiritual son. Timothy was obviously a believer in Christ. It would be impossible that Paul would install Timothy as pastor of the church in Ephesus if he wasn't a believer.

— "...be strong" - *endynamoō*, endue with strength; to increase in strength. The verb is in the present tense, imperative mood, meaning Paul is *commanding* (not recommending) that Timothy *continually* "be strong" in God's grace.

— The present tense means that this is something Timothy must do on a continual, on-going basis, not just once. It indicates the need for *continual* dependence on God, which is accomplished by walking in submission to the Spirit of God and in harmony with the will of God. The God can and will provide strength.

— Paul is telling Timothy that the reason why he is wavering in his ministry, faltering, and being tempted to not endure is because you have tapped into the grace of God (past tense), and you understand the grace of God (future tense), but you're not utilizing the grace of God in your daily life and ministry (present tense).

— Paul is not talking about the grace of God that comes to us in justification (Eph 2:8). He's talking about living in that grace in the second tense of our salvation.

— It is not simply believing in Jesus Christ so you can go to heaven one day (as important as that is), there was something else available to him because of the cross: God's grace for daily living.

— Many Christians look backward and forward in their lives to see the grace of God...they see God's grace in their justification, their initial faith in Christ. They also see God's grace in their future glorification, when they will spend eternity in fellowship with the Lord.

— But while Paul is telling Timothy that those are both great things, Timothy should focus on God's grace in his life today, not only God's past or future grace. God's unmerited favor

is not just a yesterday thing, not just a tomorrow thing, it's a today thing.

— It is only as Christians tap into that grace that is available through Christ right now in your life that you will be able to do the things God has called you to do.

- When you understand the present tense of what Paul is saying here, you begin to see this same teaching throughout the Bible. It's in the OT, Jesus taught it extensively in the Gospels, and it's covered throughout Paul's epistles. Here are some examples:

- Ministry effectiveness (1 Cor 15:10)
- Church growth (1 Cor 3:6)
- Preaching (1 Cor 2:4)
- Gifting (1 Cor 12:4,11)
- Living above the sin nature (Gal 5:16)
- Christ-like character (Gal 5:22-23)
- Overcoming fear (2 Tim 1:7)
- Suffering (2 Cor 12:9; 2 Tim 1:8)
- Paul's conclusion (Gal 3:3; 5:4)
- Zerubbabel (Zech 4:6)
- The vine and the branches (John 15:1-8)

- "...grace" - *charis*, God's unmerited favor has become available, and indeed is available to you, through Jesus Christ

(2) Illustrations of endurance (2:2-26)

In chapter one, Paul issued a general call to Timothy to faithfully endure in his ministry, in the face of his own timidity and fear, along with persecution. In this chapter, Paul gives Timothy ten metaphors or word pictures about what it looks like to endure.

(A) Teacher (2:2)

2 The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust **theseto faithful people** who will be able **to teach others also**.

2 The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

2 What you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well.

2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

- As a teacher, you are never truly sure whether the point of what you are teaching is really getting through to your audience, whether or not it's really taking hold in their minds and changing their lives

- Teachers often need to claim certain promises of God in order to stay motivated, such as "the Word of God does not return void." Sometimes God will bless through increased attendance and eagerness for the Word, other times He will not. So because a teacher never really knows the fruit of their teaching, they have to believe God by faith.
- It's somewhat like a farmer (v6)...a teacher plants seeds and hopes that God will bring forth fruit from that teaching
 - "...these" - the teachings that Paul has taught/entrusted to Timothy
 - "...to faithful people" - to "trustworthy" people; it is interesting that Paul tells Timothy to not just entrust truth to anyone, but to "trustworthy" people, to those people who are consistent in character, who have a demonstrated track record of faithfulness.
- This may seem arbitrary, but Jesus did the same thing. Jesus did give Himself away to all people in the sense that His sacrifice on the cross paid the sin debt of every person who has or will ever live. But in another sense, He only disclosed truth to those who were faithful.
- This is why Jesus often taught in parables. Parables are designed to simultaneously both conceal and reveal truth. Understanding a parable requires diligence to unlock the truth that is just below the surface, not obvious to the casual observer. It requires an interpretation. Thus, a diligent student who unpacks the hidden meaning of a parable is blessed with new knowledge, whereas the casual observer is left in the dark.
- "...to teach others also" - Paul saw the path of the gospel going from himself, to Timothy, to "faithful people," then to "others." What motivated Paul, maybe more than anything else, was to see the gospel being handed off from one generation to the next.

(B) Soldier (2:3-4)

- 3 Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.
- 3 Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.
- 3 Join me in suffering like a good soldier of the Messiah Jesus.
- 3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.
- Paul did not write this letter to Timothy from a place of comfort and leisure...he wrote it from prison, just before he would be executed by Nero (Cf. 1:8)
- Paul wanted Timothy to know that part of his calling was to suffer for the things of God. And Paul wanted Timothy to know that as he was writing this letter, he himself was suffering.
- God never promises to remove believers from suffering. Paul prayed three times for God to remove his "thorn in the flesh" but God said no, My grace (present tense) is sufficient for you and My power is perfected in weakness.
- God gives us plenty of promises of our problems being taken away, but those are promises for the next life (glorification), not for today. What God promises us today is that

His grace is available to sustain us through our problems.

- Paul analogizes the inevitable suffering of a believer to that of a soldier...
- Think of the suffering a soldier goes through, beginning with basic training. Then, while in combat, facing death in the face and seeing death all around them. Then after they return, the film of death and destruction playing over and over again in their memory.

4 No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted *him*.

4 No 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.

4 No one serving in the military gets mixed up in civilian matters, for his aim is to please his commanding officer.

4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

- Once a person enlists and becomes a soldier, they no longer have control over themselves, their career options just became limited, and they no longer have many of the rights they previously had.

— Because of the chain of command, a soldier exists to totally please their superior officer. If you have not pleased your superior officer, you have completely failed as a soldier. A soldier becomes successful by doing everything to please their commanding officer.

— Paul's point to Timothy is that he is a soldier and his commanding officer is Jesus Christ. Everything Timothy did in his ministry must please Him. Possibly sometimes his audience/church would not like this, but Timothy's job was not to please his congregation, it was to please Jesus Christ.

Obviously Paul did not mean that a minister should give all of his time to preaching and teaching, to the exclusion of any tent-making activities. He meant that Timothy should not let any other duties drain off his energies or interests, or divert him from his primary responsibilities as a Christian soldier. [Constable]

(C) Athlete (2:5)

5 And if someone likewise competes as an athlete, he is not crowned as *victor* unless he **competes according to the rules**.

5 Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.

5 Moreover, no one who is an athlete wins a prize unless he competes according to the rules.

5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

- It's likely that Paul was a sports fan, as he uses sports analogies often (Cf. 1 Cor 9:25)
- Think of all of the rigors that a top athlete goes through to maintain or increase their level of athleticism...controlling their diet, maintain proper sleep, coached, strength training, and cardio training.
- "...competes according to the rules" - think about all the training and rigor an athlete must go through in preparation to compete, but if they don't follow the rules they are disqualified.
 - Think of top athletes like Ben Johnson or Lance Armstrong, who were the best in the world (supposedly), but who didn't follow the rules and were disqualified.
 - In this race of discipleship in which all believers "compete" there are rules that God wants us to honor. But where are these rules? They are revealed in His Word.

(D) Farmer (2:6)

- 6 The hard-working farmer ought to **be the first to receive** his share of the crops.
- 6 The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops.
- 6 Furthermore, it is the hard working farmer who should have the first share of the crops.
- 6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.
- Farming requires diligence; farmers are always working. A farmer cannot just work when they want to, they don't have a flexible schedule. Farmers are constantly productive. If a farmer is not diligent in his work, working the soil, fertilizing, tilling, planting, watering, etc., there will be no reaping or harvest.
 - Paul uses the metaphor of a farmer to communicate to Timothy that being in the ministry is the same: in ministry, you are constantly planting spiritual seeds, watering those seeds, and harvesting.
 - Every believer is given at least one spiritual gift at the point of faith (1 Cor 12:7), therefore every Christian is "in the ministry." There is a call on every believer to be involved in ministry, whether or not you are a pastor or teacher.
 - Christians today have the idea that church is "free" meaning it doesn't cost anything. This concept is foreign to the NT. If church itself was free, Paul would not use the analogy of a hardworking farmer for ministry.
- Farming also requires faith. The example of sowing and reaping is used often in Scripture to describe ministry (Cf. John 4:34-38; 1 Cor 3:6-7).
 - A farmer has to have faith because they do not see an immediate return on investment after planting seed. Thus, planting the seed in itself is an act of faith. The farmer has to just plant that seed and believe, by faith, that the forces of nature will be at work growing that crop.
 - This is similar to ministry. In ministry, you sow the Word of God and in most instances you do not see an immediate return on your investment of time in study and preparation.

Many times you will teach a truth and wonder if the people who heard it actually understood it. And in most cases you'll never know for sure, you'll just have to believe God by faith because it's not my job to see a return, it's my job to plant the seed.

— Many Christians, especially in evangelism, will plant a seed and not see a return. They will begin to get frustrated and believe they did something wrong, that they aren't cut out for the job, or that they don't know enough or are not articulate enough to evangelize.

— When this occurs, we have lost sight of two things. One, that the planting of the seed and the harvest are two different events, often with a significant amount of time between them. Secondly, the farmer (minister) has no control over whether or not the harvest is meager or abundant...they must believe and trust by faith. It's God's job to cause the growth (1 Cor 3:6).

- "...be the first to receive" - Paul is telling Timothy that God is a Rewarder. God rewards faithfulness (Heb 11:6). All of the metaphors Paul uses in this chapter describe God rewards those who minister faithfully (Cf. 1 Cor 3:8; Rev 22:12).

(E) Christ (2:7-8)

(a) Christ's illumination (2:7)

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

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

7 Think about what I am saying. The Lord will help you to understand all these things.

7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

- "Consider" - *noēō*, imperative mood, a command; *noēō* where we get the English word "notion" or idea.

— Paul is telling Timothy that as you follow proper Bible study techniques and follow the basic laws of language, the right "ideas" will come into your mind, by the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit.

— "...the Lord will give you understanding" - the "perspicuity of Scripture"; the belief, initiated by the Reformers, that the basic message of the Bible is clear and lucid to any literate person to understand.

— "the Lord" - this understanding comes from the Lord. Jesus is in the business of removing the scales from people's eyes and helping them understand truth (Cf. Luke 24:45). The resource that Jesus uses today to reveal the Scriptures to us is the Holy Spirit (Cf. John 16:13; 1 John 2:27).

— What this does not mean is that the Holy Spirit gives private revelation to individuals today. God told you something but He didn't tell me. This is not what the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit does.

— In eternity past, God decided to record the revelation of His truth in written form. The moment God decided to record His truth in written form was the moment that He subjected

His revelation to the laws of language (i.e. grammar, syntax, context). Thus, you cannot interpret the Bible in any way you'd like if it is not supported by the linguistic, grammatical, contextual laws of language.

— So the Holy Spirit will illuminate God's Word to us, but He will not do so outside the normal basic laws of language. It is the Lord, through the Holy Spirit, through valid hermeneutics (Bible study methods), as we honor the laws of language, we can gain insight into "everything".

The Reformers had total confidence in what is called the perspicuity of Scripture. They maintained that the Bible is basically clear and lucid. It is simple enough for any literate person to understand its basic message....

What kind of God would reveal His love and redemption in terms so technical and concepts so profound that only an elite corps of professional scholars could understand them?

Biblical Christianity is not so esoteric a religion. Its content is not concealed in vague symbols that require some sort of special 'insight' to grasp. There is no special prowess or pneumatic gift that is necessary to understand the basic message of Scripture.... The Bible speaks of God in meaningful patterns of speech. Some of those patterns may be more difficult than others, but they are not meant to be non-sense statements that only a guru can fathom. [R.C. Sproul, Knowing Scripture]

(b) Christ's resurrection (2:8)

8 Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel,

8 Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel,

8 Meditate on Jesus, the Messiah, who was raised from the dead and is a descendant of David. This is the gospel I tell others.

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

- Jesus is an example for us in many things, but when you think of the cross, He is particularly our role model of endurance. He endured many horrors leading up to and including the cross, and He could've called the whole thing off at any time. This is how Christ is a profound example of endurance for us.

— Paul is telling Timothy that when he is thinking about quitting, Paul wants him to think about Jesus

— "Remember" - *mnēmoneuō*, to mentally recall, to call to mind. When Timothy is depressed, when he is considering throwing in the towel on ministry, Paul commanded

(*mnēmoneuō* is in the imperative mood) Timothy to call to mind Jesus Christ as your role model for endurance.

— The author of Hebrews is writing to a Jewish audience who was thinking about quitting as well. A parallel passage to v8 is Heb 12:2: looking only at Jesus, the originator and perfecter of the 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.

— Jesus was able to endure the horrors of the cross because He knew the result of Him doing so: the salvation of mankind

— God is accomplishing things through out present circumstances that we cannot even fathom. We need to have our eyes fixed on what God seeks to bring forth rather than on any momentary pain that we may be experiencing.

- "...risen from the dead" - differentiates the Jesus of the Bible from the other Jesus's held out by various cults or false religions. The cross was critical, obviously, but the cross means virtually nothing without His subsequent resurrection from the dead.

— The reason is that Jesus' bodily resurrection from the dead authenticated every teaching and word that He ever spoke because He predicated belief in Him upon His bodily resurrection from the dead.

— Jesus said that He would be killed, and that He would rise on the third day. If He hadn't done so, then we could have attributed His teachings to a mad man or someone else, other than God.

— If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, then there is no sense in preaching and teaching about Him, His life, and His teachings. He certainly didn't rise to the level of deity if He didn't rise from the dead, and believing in Him has no real significance either. It would be like believing in some ordinary person, who couldn't pull off what he said He could do, which is to secure mankind's eternity, which is what He promised.

— Christianity rises or falls with the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ (Cf. 1 Cor 15:14)

- "...descendant of David" - Paul is not only identifying which "Jesus" he is talking about, and identifying Him as the rightful heir to the Davidic Covenant (Cf. 2 Sam 7:11b-16)

- "...my gospel" - Paul is not saying that he had his own personal gospel, or that he had some type of ownership of the gospel, that it was in some way his. What he is saying is that the gospel was personally applicable to him.

— He is not saying that no one understood the gospel before him because Peter obviously understood it based on his sermon at Pentecost (Cf. Acts 2:13-41, esp v29-30). It's not a statement of exclusivity, it's a statement of personal intimacy.

— This is very important: Paul talks about Jesus in terms of a personal relationship, not simply knowing about Jesus. There's a huge difference between knowing about Jesus and knowing Jesus.

(F) Paul (2:9-10)

9 for which I **suffer hardship** even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned.

9 for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned.

9 Because of it I am experiencing trouble, even to the point of being chained like a criminal. However, God's word is not chained.

9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

- When Timothy was down, depressed, with no hope, ready to quit the ministry, first and foremost Paul wanted him to "remember" Jesus Christ and the cross. Secondly, he wanted him to remember Paul and what he went through for the sake of the gospel.

- "...suffer hardship" - if you think your life is hard, read about the hardships that Paul suffered (2 Cor 11:23-33)

- Paul notes that the authorities could put him in prison, but they couldn't lock up the Word of God. Paul wrote four NT epistles from a Roman prison (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon).

— Paul wrote in Phil 1:12-18 how he was chained to a Roman Praetorium guard, but the way Paul looked at it was that he wasn't chained to the guard, the guard was chained to him. And that guard eventually came to faith in Christ, along with all of the other guards.

— Paul also talks about how his imprisonment led others to be bold in their evangelism, and how it increased the spread of the gospel (Cf. Phil 1:14). Then he goes on to explain how other ministries were coming in to fill the void left by Paul's imprisonment, and how he probably should be upset about that, but he wasn't, because the gospel continued to be preached.

— Paul's point is that you can do whatever you want to the spokesmen of God...throw them in prison, persecute them, whatever...but that will not slow down the Word of God from being spread (Cf. Is 40:8; Matt 24:35)

[2 Tim 3:12]

10 **For this reason** I endure all things **for the sake of those who are chosen**, so that they also may obtain **the salvation** which is in Christ Jesus *and with it* eternal glory.

10 For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus *and with it* eternal glory.

10 For that reason, I endure everything for the sake of those who have been chosen so that they, too, may receive the salvation that is in the Messiah Jesus, along with eternal glory.

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

- "For this reason" - because the Word of God cannot be stopped, it cannot be imprisoned, it will continue on unencumbered
- "...for the sake of those who are chosen" - why did Paul endure through all the things that he went through? Because Paul knew and understood that God was strategically using him to bless other people. Because Paul had a confidence about this, he was willing to endure all things.
- "...the salvation" - *sōtēria*, justification, salvation from the penalty of sin

(G) Trustworthy saying (2:11-13)

(a) All believers will live with Christ (2:11)

11 The **statement is trustworthy**: For **if we died with Him, we** will also live with Him;

11 It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him;

11 This saying is trustworthy: In dying with the Messiah, true life we gain.

11 It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:

- "...statement is trustworthy" - Paul gives Timothy four "trustworthy statements": 1 Tim 1:15; 3:1; 4:7-9; 2 Tim 2:11-13; and one to Titus (Titus 3:5-8).
- The "trustworthy statement" here is actually four statements or "couplets" (two lines forming a single statement). These are similar to if/then statements in English.
- All four statements are first class conditions, which means that each statement is assumed to be true for the sake of argument. These are not hypotheticals, these are things that could materialize in Timothy's life depending upon his reaction to Paul's teaching and whether or not he would endure.
- "...if" - first class condition, assumed true. It could also be translated "since".
- "...we" [2x] - notice that Paul includes himself, along with Timothy, in this statement
- "...died with Him" - when a person comes to faith in Christ, they are "baptized" (identified) with Christ (Cf. Rom 6:3-5; Gal 2:20; Col 2:20; 3:3)

(b) Enduring believers will reign with Christ (2:12)

12 **If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He will also deny us;**

12 If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us;

12 Enduring, we with him will reign. Who him denies, he will disclaim.

12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

- "If" - first class condition, assumed to be true for the sake of argument
- "...we...we...we...us" - throughout this verse and each of these four couplets, Paul uses 2nd person pronouns that groups himself together with Timothy. What is true about

Timothy in these verses is also true about Paul. This is the answer to those who interpret this verse based on the fact that Timothy was not saved.

- "...endure" - enduring means to walk out our Christian life without falling into the temptation of retrogressing. It doesn't mean we become sinless, but that we sin less.
- It was obviously possible for Timothy to quit and not endure in his ministry, otherwise Paul wouldn't have needed to encourage him in this epistle
- "...we will also reign with Him" - the "then" clause of this trustworthy statement
- "reign" - often interpreted as salvation, but that cannot be the case because this would contradict everything that Paul preached (Cf. Eph 2:8-9). It would also mean that Paul installed Timothy as the pastor at the church of Ephesus as an unbeliever.
- Throughout this epistle, as well as 1 Timothy, Timothy's salvation is never in question (Cf. 1:2)
- What Paul is teaching Timothy here is not that he must endure in order to be saved, or to prove that he was actually ("truly") saved. Paul is telling him that he needed to endure because if he did, he would be rewarded at the Bema Seat judgment of Christ.
- All Christians will reign with Christ in the sense that we will all be with Him when He reigns, but the faithful will reign with Christ in a more active sense. [Constable]
- Enduring believers, who don't lapse backward like Timothy was thinking about doing, they will not only be rewarded at the Bema Seat of Christ, but they will reign alongside Christ under His delegated authority.
- Believers who do not endure does not somehow lose their salvation or go to hell because they were not "truly" saved, but they will not be rewarded at the Bema Seat judgment of Christ and the reigning with Christ that was available to them is limited or non-existent.
- "...If we deny Him" - this is what Timothy was thinking about doing...deserting his post, his ministry, because of the persecution that was coming his way.
- A prominent scholar, of "denying Christ" said: *Denial of Christ manifests itself in the life of a Christian in various ways in the NT. It consists of denying His name, or denying faith in Him. It can thus take the form of forsaking or repudiating the Christian faith or its truths, particularly the truths concerning Jesus. In doing so, one personally denies Christ and the Father. The denial can also manifest itself in the moral realm. Some may profess to know God, but their deeds deny Him.*
- Here are some real-world examples of how we deny Christ:
 - You're at a meal with extended family, and one of your unbelieving uncles launches into tirade about how Christians are narrow-minded bigots, and that he can't believe that anyone would pay any attention to the fables in the Bible. After listening to this, with the opportunity to speak for Christ right in front of you, and you don't say anything. You just denied Christ.

- The Holy Spirit prompts you to share your faith with that person next to you on the airplane, or your neighbor, or a family member. And you don't. You just denied Christ.
- You're at work and someone makes a sarcastic comment about someone else, or tells a filthy joke, and everyone laughs and participates. You realize that if you don't laugh, you may be called out, so you laugh. You just denied Christ.

— All of us, every day, are tempted to deny Christ and the things of God.

- It's likely that the "denial" that Paul speaks about here is permanent, not a one-time denial (as in the examples above) because the other conditions mentioned in these four couplets seem to be permanent as well.
- "...He will also deny us" - the "then" or outcome of us (permanently) denying Christ.

What actually will Jesus deny us?

- If you're a Calvinist, one of your defining beliefs is the perseverance of the saints through good works. If you don't persevere in good works, for example you "deny Christ" then in Calvinism you didn't lose your salvation, you never had it in the first place.
 - The problem with this is not only the rest of the Bible, but it is also the fact that a Calvinist spends his entire life wondering and hoping that he is saved. Calvinism offers no assurance of salvation whatsoever. A Calvinist, if they buy into the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, cannot know for sure that they are saved until they die.
 - By using the 2nd person pronouns "we" and "us" Paul is grouping himself together with Timothy. By doing this, he shoots down the Calvinist (and Arminian) arguments that Timothy was either not truly saved (Calvinist) or somehow lost his salvation (Arminian).
- If you're an Arminian, you interpret this verse that what Jesus will deny us is salvation. If we deny Christ, He will deny us salvation (remove it from us) and we will go to hell.
 - The problem with this view is the rest of the Bible, which contains very strong statements about the security of salvation (Cf. John 5:24; 10:27-29; Rom 8:31-39; Eph 4:30).
- If you believe the Bible, what Jesus will deny us (believers) if we deny Him is not salvation (as Calvinism and Arminianism suppose), but rather He will deny us rewards.
 - Non-abiding believers (those who deny Christ) will not have a favorable ruling at the Bema Seat judgment of Christ (Cf. 1 Cor 3:15; 1 John 2:28; 2 John 8).
 - *The idea that all Christians will remain faithful is neither true to revelation or to reality.* [Constable]

— The denial of future rewards for not enduring is not an idea that Timothy was thinking about at this time, which is why Paul brings it up. Timothy was only looking at his present

circumstances, not eternal things, when he thought out shrinking back from ministry. So Paul moves the denial of future reward and blessing to the forefront of Timothy's mind.

— All who will be rewarded are believers, but not all believers will be rewarded. While all believers will live with Christ (Cf. v11), only the enduring believer will be rewarded by reigning with Him.

— This is a very strong warning to Timothy of what he will be forfeiting if he follows through with quitting his ministry. None of this relates to Timothy's eternal security; all of it relates to the consequences, outside of salvation, for the decision that he is contemplating.

(c) God will not renege on his promise of eternal life to disobedient believers
(2:13)

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

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

13 Our faith may fail, his never wanes— That's who he is, he cannot change!

13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

- Another comforting reminder: if a believer is unfaithful to God, Christ will remain faithful to them

— "If" - first class condition, meaning the statement is true for the sake of argument

— "...we" - again, as in each of the other three couplets, Paul uses second person pronouns to include himself along with Timothy

— "...faithless" - *apisteō*, it can either mean to be unbelieving or to be without faith in daily life. In this context it means the latter. It is in the present tense, which doesn't refer to a one-time slip-up or excursion into sin, but rather a habitual pattern or lifestyle where a believer "pulls back" completely, whether in sin, in evangelism, in fellowship with God, not doing what God has called them to do, or general disobedience (Cf. Mark 16:11; Luke 24:41; Acts 28:24; Rom 3:3; 1 Peter 2:7).

— It's an *alphaprivative*, "alpha" = first letter in the Greek alphabet, followed by *pristis* = faith: so the "a" negates faith, meaning faithless or without faith (i.e. agnostic, asexual, etc.)

— Paul is addressing Timothy's faithlessness in daily life. Paul was not worried about Timothy reaching a point where he stops believing in Christ; he was referring to his faithlessness in daily actions and conduct, specifically his lack of faith to shrink back from ministry in the face of persecution.

— This interpretation is also evident because our "faithlessness" is contrasted with God's "faithfulness". Just as God demonstrates His faithfulness to us, we can demonstrate faithlessness in our daily lives. We can do this in many ways (see examples of denying Christ in v12)...

- "Faithless" would include people who at one point believed, then stopped believing (became faith-less). This thought is revolting to many Christians, who are conditioned into believing that they must maintain good works in order to remain saved.
- So what happens if a believer becomes "faithless" and pulls back completely?
 - Calvinism would say that this person never had salvation because they did not persevere. Only "true" believers go to heaven, and all of them persevere in faith and good works until the end.
 - Arminianism would say that person lost their salvation.
 - The Bible doesn't say anything in this verse happens to the believer who becomes "faithless" but instead Paul goes straight to the grace and faithfulness of God. If we are faithless, God remains faithful. We didn't remain faithful to God, but the promise is, even in that circumstance, that God will remain faithful to us. Consider Israel? Were they faithful to God? Rarely. But God, nonetheless, remains faithful to them.
- In the last of the four couplets, Paul tells Timothy that even if he does shrink back, throw in the towel and deny Christ, cease from ministry and what God had called him to...sure, he would forfeit rewards and in some sense his authority in reigning with Christ, but his salvation, nonetheless, was secure because unlike us, God is faithful.
- To many Christians today, it's impossible for them to comprehend that a person could simply believe in Christ, then live the rest of their life in mediocrity and faithlessness to God...how could that person be saved and go to heaven one day? Simple: because God is faithful.
- This is so troubling to us because we are used to obtaining everything on the basis of works. In order to be successful, I have to work hard. If I'm not successful enough, I need to work harder. In order to graduate, I need to work. In order to get food, I need to work. To have and keep nice things, I need to work. So it doesn't register with us that the most prized possession a person could have, salvation from the penalty of their sins, requires absolutely no work whatsoever.
- It's very difficult for us to understand that God does not deal with us on the basis of works...He deals with us on the basis of grace. Grace is favor (good things, blessings) that come into my life, by the hand of God, that I did nothing to deserve. Until we dump religion and works righteousness in favor of grace, we won't be able to understand how it is possible for a Christian to be faithless in daily life, yet still saved. In fact, if you don't understand grace, the very concept will be abhorrent to you.
- A salvation that we did not obtain by works cannot be lost by works.
- Once you trust in Christ and you're in the double grip of grace (Cf. John 10:27-29), there is absolutely nothing that can remove you, even if you turn your back on the Lord and stop believing.

— His amazing faithfulness to us, even when we're so unfaithful to Him, should motivate us to remain faithful to Him and enhance our worship (Cf. Luke 22:31-32; John 21:15-22)

- A couple of other interesting passages speak to the reality that a Christian may struggle with their faith:

- In Luke 22:31-32, Jesus tells Peter (and all the disciples) that Satan has "demanded" to "sift them like wheat." Then Jesus said that He prayed for them, that their faith would not fail. Why would Jesus pray that their faith would not fail in the midst of temptation if their faith couldn't fail in the midst of temptation?
- The very fact that Jesus prayed that Peter's faith wouldn't fail implies that his faith could've failed. But Jesus doesn't say that if His prayer wasn't answered, and his faith indeed failed, that He would stop loving him, forsake him, or that he somehow lost his salvation.
- Jesus said this during the Last Supper. Hours later, Peter's faith would fail as he would deny Jesus three times, once to a teenage girl who questioned him.
- In fact, later in the verse, Jesus implied that Peter's faith would fail when He said "and you, when you have turned back (repented), strengthen your brothers." In v31, Satan's request was directed at all the disciples, but Jesus prayed directly for Peter ("you" in v32 is singular, referring only to Peter). Jesus prayer here was not answered.
- In James 1:5-8, James (writing to believers) says that when we go through a trial, we should ask God for wisdom through it, "without doubting."
- The fact that James' instruction is to ask God without doubting implies that we could ask God *with* doubting. And James goes on to say (v7) that the person who does ask with doubting should not expect an answer from the Lord. God will ignore his request for wisdom.
- So without doubting, God will "give to all generously and without reproach" but if we ask with doubting, God will not give us the wisdom we ask for in the midst of our trials.

- To believe that a Christian who struggles in their faith and at some point in their life stops believing will not go to heaven when they die is to believe that unbelief is the one sin that Jesus' death on the cross doesn't cover.

— Ask a Calvinist: Can a Christian be stuck in gambling and go to heaven? Yes. Can a Christian be a spousal abuser and go to heaven? Yes. Can a Christian be mired in pornography and go to heaven? Yes. Can a Christian commit rape or murder and go to heaven? Yes. Can a Christian struggle in their faith, and at some point stop believing, and still go to heaven? Nope!

— This is what you have to believe if you believe that unbelief somehow negates your salvation. You also have to reconcile this belief with Titus 2:14: *who gave Himself for us to*

redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, eager for good deeds.

— "every lawless deed" here cannot mean "every" if you're a Calvinist because unbelief would not be included. There is no way to reconcile the idea that an unbelieving Christian is somehow not or never was a Christian if they struggle in their faith and fall into unbelief with what the Bible says.

Look at the context...it's not talking about loss of salvation. It's talking about denying a Christian the maximum authority that Christ wants to give them in the earthly kingdom. The wider context in Paul's letter to Timothy is to choose to not lapse back in fear, but boldly move forward and fulfill his calling. If Timothy chose to not boldly fulfill his calling, he would still go to heaven and participate in the kingdom, but not to the degree of authority that he could've wielded (Cf. Luke 19, some inheriting 10 cities, 5 cities, etc. dependent upon how we cooperate with the Holy Spirit in this life, during the preparation process).

(H) Workman (2:14-18)

(a) Avoid trivial arguments leading to false doctrine (2:14)

14 Remind *them* of **these things**, and **solemnly exhort them in the presence of God** not to **dispute about words**, which is **useless and leads to the ruin of the listeners**.

14 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.

14 Remind others about these things, and warn them before God not to argue over words. Arguing does not do any good but only destroys those who are listening.

14 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

- As Paul shifts now to his eighth of ten examples of endurance, he talks about a "workman". In v14 he tells Timothy what *not* to do, and in v15 he tells him what *to* do.

- "...these things" - the whole concept of rewards that Paul talks about in v12

- "...solemnly exhort *them* in the presence of God" - when Paul says this, he's calling Timothy's (and our) attention to what he is about to say; he's getting serious now

— Paul also said this in 4:2 when he is exhorting Timothy to "preach the Word!"

- "...dispute about words" - Paul is reminding Timothy to remind his audience (the church at Ephesus) to not "wrangle" or dispute about words. Paul says this many times in his writings (Cf. 1 Tim 1:4,7; 6:4-5).

— Paul is urging Timothy to not get into hair-splitting controversies on topics that the Bible does not speak on authoritatively. For example, how many angels can dance on the head of a pin? Who knows, and frankly, who cares. There's no use spending any energy discussing this because the Bible does not speak authoritatively on the subject.

— People today love to bring attention on themselves, especially on social media and YouTube, by discussing topics that the Bible doesn't address, or bringing things out of the Bible that may be interesting, but provide no instruction for our daily walk with the Lord. They are mindless, empty speculations that do nothing other than cause divisions within the church.

— Paul also talks about useless and pointless disputes in Titus 3:9-10:

9 But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are useless and worthless.

10 Reject a **divisive** person after a first and second warning,

— "divisive" in v10 is *hairetikos*, where we get the English word "heretic." A heretic is someone who brings division into the church by arguing about some speculative matter that Scripture never directly addresses.

— Most of the time what is happening in these types of disputes is pride masquerading as attempting to get to the truth. The person arguing seeks to pursue victory rather than truth. The problem is, there is no real desire on the part of the "heretic" to get to the truth. It's pride masquerading as spirituality.

— The problem is, the truth is often not at stake in these disputes because the Bible does not comment on the subject.

- "...useless" - *oudeis*, when you get into theological discussions in the church (or small group) that the Bible does not speak about authoritatively, Paul says you're basically wasting your time. Nothing good will come from that discussion. It is a useless waste of time.

— Useless is the opposite of "profitable" as Paul uses it in 3:16: All Scripture is inspired by God and **beneficial** [profitable] for teaching, for rebuke, for correction, for training in righteousness;

- "...ruin of the listeners" - the purpose for Paul's exhortation to Timothy was for those who may hear such a dispute. If the person hearing was saved, it may stunt their growth in Christ. If the person was unsaved and heard this, it may turn them away from Christ.

— Jesus said in John 13:35: **By this all people will know that you are My disciples: if you have love for one another.**" "This" refers to our love for each other. It's love for one another that gives evidence we're a disciple, not your ability to outwit or out-debate an opponent.

— What gravitates an unsaved person to Jesus Christ is the love that believers have for one another. What encourages a believer to continue to walk in fellowship with the Lord is the love that we demonstrate for one another.

— "ruin" - *katastrophē*, where we get the English word catastrophe. These useless disputes have catastrophic results for those who witness them, both saved and unsaved.

— The Greek word *katastrophē* is used 2x in the NT: here, and in 2 Peter 2:6, where it's translated "destruction" in reference to God's judgment on Sodom & Gomorrah.

In the end, disputing about words seeks not the victory of truth but the victory of the speaker.

(b) Embrace true doctrine (2:15)

15 **Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a worker who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.**

15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

15 Do your best to present yourself to God as an approved worker who has nothing to be ashamed of, handling the word of truth with precision.

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

- Now Paul tells us what to focus on...rather than disputes about matters that the Bible does not speak on, Paul says

— Some use v14 to argue that God does not want us to discuss or debate theological issues or questions. Far from it! Paul says here that theological controversies and debate is appropriate if truth is at stake.

- "Be diligent" - *spoudazō*, to do something with intent, effort, and motivation; to work hard to do one's best. This verb is in the imperative mood, meaning it's a command, not a suggestion.

— It's interesting that when the Word of God is mentioned in the Word of God, there is always some sort of injunction to how we should approach it:

- Deut 6:6-7: These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. And you shall **repeat them diligently** to your sons and speak of them when you sit in your house, when you walk on the road, when you lie down, and when you get up.
- Joshua 1:8: This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall **meditate on it day and night**, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will achieve success.
- Job 23:12: "I have not failed the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth **more than my necessary food**.
- 1 Peter 2:2: and like newborn babies, **long for the pure milk of the word**, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,
- "...present" - *seautou*,
- "...approved" - *dokimos*,
- "...to God" - our diligence is not to know more than the next person. It's so that we may present ourselves to God for approval. What Paul is getting at here with Timothy is to

remind him that God is his judge. You are not studying and preaching for an audience in your church, you're doing it for an audience of One.

— In 1 Cor 4:3, Paul said that it was "an insignificant matter" that he would be examined by the Corinthians, and that he didn't even examine himself. He left all judgment about his ministry solely to God.

- "...as a worker" - *ergatēs*, a worker is the illustration of endurance that Paul is trying to get across to Timothy in these verses (v14-18)

— A "workman" (*ergatēs*) stresses the laborious nature of the task rather than the skill needed to perform it. Paul is not referring to the skill (spiritual gifts) that Timothy needed to perform the task. Paul addressed Timothy's spiritual gifts earlier (1:6). Paul says it is a laborious task to major on the things that God majors in, not in speculative things, but on things that God has revealed in His Word.

— Paul tells Timothy that as he labors in this way, he is doing the work of a workman. As he dives into God's Word through study, he is gaining a doctrinal knowledge of the Bible rather than a devotion knowledge (Cf. Ezra 7:10).

— In 1 Tim 5:17 Paul says that elders who lead well are worthy of double honor, especially those who "work hard" at preaching and teaching. Paul has already told Timothy that preaching and teaching is "hard work".

- "...does not need to be ashamed" - a good example of this shame is being asked a question that you should know the answer to, but you don't. If your qualifications state that you should know something, but when asked a question you don't know the answer, you are embarrassed.

— Timothy would never be embarrassed if he was diligent in studying God's Word. It's likely that the vast majority of Christians will be embarrassed by our lack of biblical knowledge before God at His return. The greatest gift we have outside of salvation and perhaps the Holy Spirit is God's Word. Yet few Christians can answer a simple Bible question.

— Many Christians will be embarrassed by their lack of Bible knowledge because they did not heed Paul's advice here...they were not diligent in their reading and study of God's Word. 1 John 2:28 says: Now, little children, remain in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not **draw back from Him in shame** at His coming.

- "...accurately handling" - *orthotomeō*, "rightly dividing" [KJV]; a compound word in Greek: *ortho* = correct; *tomeō* = to cut. Although the compound word *orthotomeō* is only used here in the NT, the verb *tomeō* [noun: *tomos*] is used in Heb 4:12, translated as "sharper". So *orthotomeō* literally means "to cut straight" or "to cut a straight path."

— Often (and accurately) interpreted as "dividing" between Israel and the Church, Law and grace, justification and sanctification, and other doctrines that are often confused or conflated. But it means so much more than this.

"Accurately handling" (lit. cutting straight) is a figure that paints a picture of "a worker" who is careful and accurate in his work. The Greek word (orthotomounta) elsewhere describes a tentmaker who makes straight rather than wavy cuts in his material. It also pictures a builder who lays bricks in straight rows, a roadmaker who constructs a straight road, and a farmer who plows a straight furrow. As the priests of Israel had to cut up the sacrifices and offer them exactly as God decreed, so the gospel herald must handle the Scriptures carefully and "accurately." The way a minister of the gospel presents "the word of God" was of primary importance to Paul, and it should be to us.

[Constable]

- When Paul is commanding Timothy to "accurately handle" God's Word, he's commanding him to "cut it straight." Basically, follow the fundamentals, teach it accurately. This is what the whole metaphor of a workman refers to...working to study the Word of God is hard work, it's time consuming, it requires diligence, and Timothy, Paul says, I want you to do it because it's critical that you "accurately handle" God's Word because this is your calling.
- It's interesting that nowhere here does Paul mention the notion of gifting. Nothing about being a wordsmith or a gifted teacher. What Paul is focused on here is the hard work of handling the Word of God, and the need to "cut it straight," not in arbitrary or wavy patterns. Teach it fully, teach it accurately, teach it as unto the Lord.
- "...word of truth" - the reason why Paul stressed to Timothy the need to work hard and diligently in his study and teaching, to "cut it straight," is because this is the only book in human history that will give you the absolute truth. It gives us the truth about where we came from, where we're going, and how to live in the interim. It tells me why I'm guilty, who I'm accountable to, and how I can resolve that guilt.
- Because you are dealing with the very words of God, the Bible must be approached with the utmost skill, intensity, and care. If you can't approach the Bible in this way, if you're a pastor, you should find something else to do.

[John 17:17]

(c) Avoid trivial arguments leading to false doctrine (2:16-18)

- 16 **But avoid worldly and empty chatter**, for it will lead to **further ungodliness**,
- 16 But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness,
- 16 However, avoid pointless discussions. For people will become more and more ungodly,
- 16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.
- "But" - a contrastive; Paul just told Timothy to do something (v15, focus on teaching God's Word accurately), and now Paul is going to tell him something to avoid
- "...avoid" - *periistēmi*, to shun or turn away from; the verb is in the imperative mood, meaning it is a command

- "...worldly and empty chatter" - means "foolish and empty talk" or "Godless and empty talk"; it refers to talking the way fools talk. Talking about things that have no real validity.
- This may seem like a throw-away, specific command that Paul is giving Timothy, but this is actually something that is persistently on Paul's mind. He gives numerous similar commands about this throughout the pastoral epistles:
 - 1 Tim 1:4: nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to useless speculation rather than *advance* the plan of God, which is by faith, so *I urge you now*.
 - 1 Tim 4:7: But stay away from worthless stories that are typical of old women. Rather, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;
 - 1 Tim 6:4-5: he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a sick craving for controversial questions and disputes about words, from which come envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between people of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.
 - 1 Tim 6:20: Timothy, protect what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly, empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called "knowledge"—
 - Titus 3:9-10: But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are useless and worthless. Reject a divisive person after a first and second warning,
- "Worldly and empty chatter" is people analyzing life from the human viewpoint. Having an opinion about life from the perspective of man, not the perspective of God, and venting that opinion over and over again.
- Think of Job's wife in Job 2:9-10:
 - 9 Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold firm your integrity? Curse God and die!"
 - 10 But he said to her, "You are speaking as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we actually accept good from God but not accept adversity?" Despite all this, Job did not sin with his lips.
- Job's wife looked at life from a human viewpoint; Job continued to look at life from a divine viewpoint.
- The opportunity to express your opinion today is almost unlimited. There are so many avenues in which you can make your views known, and many people are out there doing just that.
- Paul is saying that there are a lot of conversations out there that you should avoid, that are not worth your time. There are two tests that we should apply to ourselves before you engage in a conversation. The Bible continually urges us to engage in "sound speech." What exactly is "sound speech"?:

1. It is edifying (encouraging, building up) to those who hear? Are my words in this conversation building someone up, encouraging them, or am I tearing them down? Is my speech what someone needs to hear at that specific point in time? Does my speech minister grace?
 - a. Eph 4:29: Let no unwholesome word come out of your mouth, but if *there is* any good word for edification according to the need of *the moment, say that*, so that it will give grace to those who hear.
 - b. Prov 25:11: *Like apples of gold in settings of silver, Is a word spoken at the proper time.*
 - i. Proverbs says that the ability to speak the right words at the right time, to minister to someone in the right circumstances, is rare. It is so rare that it is precious, like apples of gold in settings of silver.
2. Is the speech biblical? This does not mean I need to quote a Bible verse every time I speak; it means that my speech should be rooted and grounded in biblical truth.
 - a. 1 Peter 4:11: *Whoever speaks is to do so as one who is speaking actual words of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*
 - "...further ungodliness" - as you earn interest on the money you have in the bank, your money is compounded. This means that my money is earning interest. The interest that I earned in January is added to my bank account and incorporated into the calculation of the interest I will earn in February.
 - The more I'm engaged in "worldly and empty chatter" that is neither edifying or biblical, the more it begins to compound or snowball into something even worse. The conversation started out ungodly, and the more I'm engaged in it, it leads to even more ungodliness. The more empty talk we engage in, the more rope we have to hang ourself.
 - The Bible, especially Proverbs, talks a lot about the danger of idle words:
 - Prov 10:19: When there are many words, wrongdoing is unavoidable, But one who restrains his lips is wise.
 - Prov 17:27: One who withholds his words has knowledge, And one who has a cool spirit is a person of understanding.
 - The danger today is even more so than it was in the past...when we engage in online debates or make comments online, those words do not go away. They are there forever, and can come back to haunt us sometime in the future.

17 and their **talk** will spread **like gangrene**. Among them are **Hymenaeus and Philetus**,
17 and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus,

17 and what they say will spread everywhere like gangrene. Hymenaeus and Philetus are like that.

17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;

- Now Paul provides three illustrations about his point in v16b...about what the spread of "worldly and empty chatter" looks like if it is not controlled

- "...talk" - *logos*, word; here used in the singular, meaning a single misplaced word can spread like cancer and infect everyone who hears it

- "...like" - *hos*, a simile; Paul is likening the spread of ungodliness to the spread of gangrene

- "...gangrene" - *gangraina*, a disease involving severe inflammation, possibly cancerous, which involves the spread of ulcers that eat away the flesh and bone so that which was once healthy becomes unhealthy.

- In Paul's day, medical writers used this Greek term to describe a sore that eats into the flesh. These "pointless discussions" act like gangrene, which spreads and eventually infects the body of Christ.

- Uncontrolled "worldly and empty chatter" is like gangrene, which starts off small and quickly spreads, and eats away at the healthy flesh and bones in one's body, bringing a lack of health to someone who was once healthy.

- A clumsy word can be spoken and before you know it, your house is on fire. Friends who were once friends become alienated, families are divided, bitterness grows.

- "...Hymenaeus and Philetus" - probably from Ephesus (1 Tim 1:20); evidently their verbal speculations were derailing other sincere Christians from God's truth

- The mention of these two heretics by name may seem innocuous, but it actually is the basis for a hot debate within Christianity today. The debate surrounds whether or not heretics, which is what Paul called Hymenaeus and Philetus, should be named publicly.

- This debate is framed by two extremes: one side says you should never call out the name of a heretic publicly in church, and the other side is so aggressive in calling out names that they end up criticizing people, not on the basis of correct theology, but on the basis of their own personal preferences.

- One thing we need to understand is that Paul did two things in his ministry: teaching and warning (Cf. Col 1:28). Teaching is a positive presentation of truth, communicating to people what you stand for. A warning is a negative critique of a false teaching, explaining to people what you stand against.

- Sometimes when Paul was engaged in warning, his critiques could be very severe, where he sometimes named the names of heretical advocates who were teaching things contrary to what Paul taught. Paul does this four other times in his epistles:

- Gal 2:11-14: Paul confronted Peter publicly, to his face, and Barnabas, about their hypocrisy of acting one way in front of Gentiles, then another way in front of Jews

- Phil 4:2: I urge **Euodia** and I urge **Syntyche** to live in harmony in the Lord.
 - Note: Euodia and Syntyche were not heretics, so they differ from the others Paul called out by name, but Paul did choose to call them out by name publicly because of a disagreement between them that was causing division.
- 1 Tim 1:20: Among these are **Hymenaeus** and **Alexander**, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.
- 2 Tim 1:15: You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are **Phygelus** and **Hermogenes**.
- 2 Tim 4:14: **Alexander** the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds.

— The logic behind naming names is that if you don't name names, then the people will not know who to beware of. If you just call out the heresy without naming who is promoting it, you are not shepherding your flock and you are taking away a weapon that God has given to His church.

- There are three primary objections to "naming names" of heretics within the church:

1. The primary objection of those who do not believe in calling out heretics by name is that Paul named names, but you're not Paul. Paul was an apostle, you are not. Paul performed miracles, you do not. That is correct...no one today is Apostle Paul, and there are certainly things we can't take over from Paul's ministry. However there are a lot of things Paul did that were role models for spiritual shepherds. He taught and he warned. In Acts 20:18-35 Paul reflects to the Ephesian elders in Miletus about he taught them the whole counsel of God, and also warned them how false teachers (heretics) would arise from within the Ephesian church. Each of the five names listed above, as well as Diotrephes (3 John 9), came out of the church of Ephesus and are called out by name in the NT as heretics (see note on Acts 20:30).
2. The second objection, prevalent in the charismatic movement, is "you can't touch the Lord's anointed." So you can't criticize someone who is teaching blatant error because that person was anointed by the Lord. They pull this belief from the end of 1 Samuel, where David, being pursued by Saul, had the opportunity on two occasions to kill him, but decided not to. His reasoning was that he was not to touch the Lord's anointed. However, David not killing Saul has absolutely nothing to do with holding someone doctrinally accountable. And holding someone doctrinally accountable cannot be compared to killing someone.

3. The third objection people have is Matt 18:15-17, the passage on church discipline.

When you call out someone by name who is teaching in error, some people will ask if you first went to that person privately, "because isn't that Matt 18 tell you to do?"

Well, no actually. Matt 18 lays out the method of church discipline for dealing with a private offense, an offense against me as an individual that perhaps no one else knows about. This is completely different than someone who stands behind a pulpit, or on TV or radio, and disseminates theological error (false teaching). This is not a private situation, it is a public situation, which Matt 18 does not deal with whatsoever.

— So where is the balance between teaching and warning? Well if we use Paul as our role model, the vast majority of time spent by pastors/teachers should be teaching the positive aspects of what we believe. But that pastor should not shy away from calling out false teaching or false beliefs when the situation calls for it.

18 men who **have gone astray** from the truth, claiming that **the resurrection has already taken place**; and they are **jeopardizing** the faith of some.

18 men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some.

18 They have abandoned the truth by claiming that the resurrection has already taken place, and so they destroy the faith of others.

18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

- "...have gone astray" - *astocheō*, to turn, to wander away from, to astray by departing from a moral and spiritual standard. Paul uses this word 3x (1 Tim 1:5-6; 6:21).

- "...the truth" - *ho alētheia*, notice the definite article "the" which denotes Paul is not speaking about truth in general, but a specific truth. Paul wasn't worried about people's preferences being violated, people's traditions being violated, what he is worried about the very truth that Paul has commanded Timothy to focus on in this passage.

- Notice that what Paul is addressing here is a in-house issue. Hymenaeus and Philetus were both at one point in alignment with Paul, but they have since departed from "the truth." Paul is not critiquing some cult or belief that is way outside of Christianity, he's critiquing people who used to agree with him and were in ministry with him.

— It is interesting that when you look up all the various topics that are covered in the NT epistles, the second-most mentioned topic is apostasy (departure from known truth). In fact, entire NT books were written as a warning against apostasy (Galatians, Hebrews, 2 Peter, Jude).

- "...the resurrection has already taken place" - Paul doesn't just name names, he describes exactly where their apostate belief strayed from the truth: that the Rapture has already taken place.

- In v14, Paul tells Timothy what not to focus on idle speculation, but instead Timothy should focus on Scripture (v15). His point is that if you get into a conversation about idle speculation, the conversation is going to go from bad to worse. In that "worse" stage of the conversation, as you continue to wrangle about words and arguing about things that the Bible doesn't speak on, what can ultimately develop is a full-fledged heresy.
- Paul pointed out two heretics in his day, Hymenaeus and Philetus (v17). The heretical doctrine they were claiming as truth, when it actually is not truth, was that the resurrection of believers had already taken place.
- Paul, most notably in 1 Cor 15:20-24, clearly taught that the resurrection of Church Age saints, and non-Church Age saints, was yet future. The early church fathers, for the first 200 years of the church, believed that as well, to a man.
- What Paul is warning Timothy about is a early form of amillennialism, the idea that the OT messianic kingdom was already in place, about 250 years before this belief was codified by Augustine in his book *The City of God*.
- What Hymenaeus and Philetus were doing is taking a biblical prophecy that will be fulfilled in the future and teaching that it has already been fulfilled in the past. This was an early form of preterism.
- "...jeopardizing" – *anatrepō*, overthrow, overturn, upset, subvert; to cause serious difficulty or trouble with respect to someone's beliefs
- This word is used two other times in the NT, most notably in John 2:15 when Jesus "overturned" (*anatrepō*) the tables of the moneychangers in the temple. It's also used in Titus 1:11 to describe the words of "rebellious people, empty talkers, and deceivers" (especially Jews), who Titus says "must be silenced" because they are upsetting (*anatrepō*) entire families.
- Consider this: every moment you spend with a false belief in your mind, you are stagnated in your growth as a Christian. This is why the devil is so eager to push false teaching into the church. He knows that false teaching, which leads to false belief, is the most effective way to neutralize God's people and keep them in a state of immaturity.
- Even worse, if you're an unbeliever and you have false beliefs, those false beliefs could send you to an eternity in hell

(I) Clean vessel illustration (2:19-23)

(a) General admonition toward sanctification (2:19)

19 Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His;" and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to keep away from wickedness."

19 Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from

wickedness."

19 However, God's solid foundation still stands. It has this inscription on it: "The Lord knows those who belong to him," and "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord must turn away from evil."

19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

— "Nevertheless" – after describing the heresy that was being taught by Hymenaeus and Philetus (v18), Paul says that even false teaching will not derail God's purposes for the church

— "...the firm foundation of God" – this describes the church because this is how Paul described the church in 1 Tim 3:15

— "...stands" – because the foundation (the church) was laid by God, it will stand. Even the false teaching of two of Paul's former companions cannot derail the firm foundation of God

— "...seal" – further reason why the church can never fail or be blotted out of existence: because it has been "sealed" by God (Cf. Eph 4:30)

— A seal in Greco-Roman times was a mark of ownership. It was a special insignia or mark placed on special documents to show who the document was intended for and the document's author.

— Thus, the church is something that stands firm in the face of false doctrine because it was built by God and has been sealed (is owned) by God

— "...The Lord knows those who are His" – a quote from Num 16:5, speaking of God's ownership over His people

— "...Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to keep away from wickedness" – many Christians today do not know who they are in Christ. What they are told constantly is don't do this, don't do that, do this, and do that.

— "is to keep away" – *aphistēmi*, to withdraw, to stand off. It's in the imperative mood, meaning a command

— But the Bible never teaches us from that angle...it teaches us who we are in Christ, the fact that we are owned by God. It begins with positional truths, not commands on what to do or what to not do.

— This is how the book of Ephesians is set up...in Eph 1-3, Paul does not give his readers a single command. What he gives them are a bunch of truths about their position in Christ. Then in Eph 4-6, based on the positional truths he laid out in Eph 1-3, he gives them commands on how to act.

— For example, if God has told me that He has made peace between believers in the church (Eph 1-3), then maybe I should pursue peace in my daily life (Eph 4-6). If God has told me that I am holy positionally (Eph 1-3), then I should act holy (Eph 4-6). So the better

we understand our identity in Christ, the better we understand how to behave and think in our daily life.

— The NT epistles lay out who the believer is in Christ, then consistently urges us to act according to what we are (positionally). Sanctification is when our behavior (practice) begins to look more and more like our position.

(b) Vessels described (2:20-21)

20 Now in a **large house** there are not only **gold and silver implements**, but also **implements of wood and of earthenware**, and some are for honor while others are for dishonor.

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.

20 In a large house there are not only utensils made of gold and silver, but also those made of wood and clay. Some are for special use, while others are for ordinary use.

20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

— "...a large house" - a metaphor here for the church (this is a pastoral letter from Paul to Timothy). Paul is giving Timothy an example of

— "...gold and silver implements" - vessels of honor; in this metaphor, these are Christians in the church who are making progress in the sanctification process. They are sanctified unto God not just positionally, but practically. Their practice in their daily lives is mirroring more and more their position in Christ.

— "...implements of wood and of earthenware" - vessels of dishonor (lack of honor); in this metaphor, these are Christians who are not making progress in their sanctification process. Their practice is not catching up with their position because they are constantly going back to their sin nature.

— Some interpreters come to this passage and think the vessels of honor are believers, and the vessels of dishonor are non-believers. But this interpretation does not fit the context of the epistle nor the audience (Timothy). There is no doubt that Timothy was saved, so the distinction here is not between believer and unbeliever, but between a believer who is making progress in the second tense of their salvation (sanctification), and a believer who is not.

— To interpret this verse as between believer and unbeliever is to read a foreign idea into the text. The purpose of this epistle is not to get Timothy saved, it is to encourage him to endure through the trials and persecutions, as well as his personal weaknesses, so that he will fulfill his purpose in Christ and be fully rewarded when he stands before Him.

— Many Christians simply believe that there are Christians and there are non-Christians. But Paul is much more sophisticated than that. In 1 Cor 3:1-3 Paul lays out three types of

Christians: the spiritual (growing/maturing believers), the babe (a new believer), and the carnal (non-growing/maturing believers).

— Paul uses this metaphor about silverware or plasticware because Timothy was silverware, but he was thinking about shrinking back from his calling because of persecution and internal struggles. If he did so, he would become plasticware. The choices that Timothy was contemplating was not risking his eternal salvation, but it was risking his status as a glorious, honorable vessel of God in His house.

21 Therefore, **if anyone cleanses himself** from **these things**, he will be an implement for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.

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

21 Therefore, if anyone stops associating with these people, he will become a special utensil, set apart for the owner's use, prepared for every good action.

21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

- If you're plasticware today but you want to become silverware, Paul explains here how that happens. You have to "cleanse yourself."

- "...if" - third class condition, the condition of possibility or potentiality. Maybe a Christian will cleanses themselves from "these things," maybe they don't. The choice is up to them.

- "...anyone" - not just for pastors, those who graduate from seminary, or those who have a higher knowledge of Scripture than others. Anyone here describes every single Christian who has put his faith in Christ and has the indwelling Holy Spirit. The ability to move from plasticware to silverware, from a lack of honor to honor, is available to every believer.

- "...cleanses himself" - notice the responsibility for moving myself from plasticware to silverware is on each individual, not on God. God has already done everything for us that He could possibly do (Eph 1:3). Whether I decide to live according to my position in Christ, out of my own free will, is up to me.

- "...these *things*" - cleanse myself from what things? Sin/wickedness (v19), youthful lusts (v22), and foolish arguments (v23).

(c) Applications (2:22-23)

(i) Avoid sexual impurity (2:22)

22 Now **flee** from **youthful lusts** and **pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace** with those who call on the Lord from **a pure heart**.

22 Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

22 Flee from youthful passions. Instead, pursue righteousness, faithfulness, love, and peace together with those who call on the Lord with a pure heart.

22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

- Paul tells Timothy that if a believer wants to move from being plasticware into being silverware, here is the path:

- "...flee" - *pheugō*, escape; to seek safety by flight. The verb is in the imperative mood, meaning it is a command not a suggestion. It's in the second person, meaning Paul is directly speaking to Timothy, instructing him on his path forward (Cf. Gen 39:12).

— The command here is to ruthlessly deal with sin. Quit playing games with sin. Cut it off, and do it NOW!! (Cf. Gen 4:7; Matt 5:29-30; 18:9; Mark 9:47; Rom 6:12). Jesus used strong hyperbole—intentionally shocking language—to stress how serious sin is and how radically His followers should deal with it. His point is that sin is so detrimental to our relationship with Him that it would be better to lose something of great value (an eye or a hand) than let sin destroy our entire life.

— The great deception is that you think we have sin under control. You don't have sin under control. Sin is more powerful in our lives than we give it credit for. If I think I can get away with this sin over here, that no one knows about and doesn't hurt anyone, I'm self-deceived.

- "...youthful lusts" - "lusts" are any type of desires that come from our sin nature: jealousy, covetousness, etc. "Youthful" here refers to attracting desires that appeal especially to the young. It's not that older people are not vulnerable to these lusts, but they have an especially good inroad in the youth (younger people). Paul brings this up because Timothy was a young man (Cf. 1 Tim 4:12).

— Many may think that "youthful lusts" mainly refer to sex lusts or desires, which is obviously true. But we shouldn't confine "youthful lusts" only to sexual desires. In the context of Hymenaeus and Philetus (v18) falling prey to false doctrine. So "youthful lusts" could refer to a desire to argue, a desire to always be right, or a desire to develop a unique theology to make oneself famous.

- "...pursue" - *diōkō*, imperative mood, a command. God never tells us to not do something or stop doing something without giving us something to replace it with. In this case, Paul tells Timothy to "flee" youthful lusts, and "pursue" righteousness, faith, love, and peace.

- "...righteousness, faith, love, and peace" - not sure if a decision you're contemplating is God's will or not? Run it through this grid: Is it righteous? Does it strengthen my faith? Is it based in or will it result in love? Is it based in or will result in peace?

— If you run a decision through this grid and get an affirmative answer, pursue it. If not, flee it.

- "...a pure heart" - at the end of the day, God is not interested in ritualistic religion, He is after the heart of people. God is looking for people who pursue Him with a pure heart. David is a great example of this.
- David committed some pretty major sins (adultery & murder), then covered it up and did not repent until he was confronted. And yet God said of David that "he is a man after My own heart" (Cf. 1 Sam 13:14; Acts 13:22). David pursued God not through the rituals of religion, but with his heart.

Is 29:13 [NASB95]: Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned *by rote*,

Sin will take you further than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay.

(ii) Avoid quarrelsomeness (2:23)

- 23 But **refuse****foolish** and ignorant speculations, **knowing** that they produce quarrels.
- 23 But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels.
- 23 Do not have anything to do with foolish and stupid discussions, because you know they breed arguments.
- 23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.
- "...refuse" - *paraiteomai*, imperative mood, a command. It means to avoid or reject.
- "...foolish" - *mōros*, stupid; where we get the English word "moronic"
- Paul has already made reference to these idle speculations, that have nothing to do with Scripture at all, earlier in this epistle (v14,16; Cf. 1 TIm 1:4; 4:7; 6:4-5,20; Titus 3:9-10).
- If you want to be silver instead of plastic, get away from these types of non-Scriptural, non-beneficial, debates. Debates for the sake of debating, about topics that are not talked about in Scripture and provide no benefit to the hearers.
- "...knowing" - *eidō*, to know through perception; Paul knew that Timothy knew how these idle speculations, these foolish disputes, these ignorant speculations, only serve to start arguments in the body of Christ.

(J) Servant (2:24-26)

- 24 The Lord's **bond-servant** must not be **quarrelsome**, but **be kind to all, skillful in teaching, patient when wronged**,
- 24 The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,

24 A servant of the Lord must not argue. Instead, he must be kind to everyone, teachable, willing to suffer wrong,

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

– "...bond-servant" - *doulos*, usually translated as "servant" or "bond-servant" but better translated as "slave"; Paul labeled himself a "slave" of Jesus Christ in many of his epistles (Cf. Rom 1:1; Phil 1:1; Titus 1:1).

— What kind of person does God use to advance his purposes? Slaves of Christ. Because slavery has such a negative connotation in America, as it should, many people see this and say, I don't want any part of that.

— However, in one way or another, we're all slaves to something. If you're a growing believer, if you're silverware and not plasticware, you are a slave to Christ. But if you're a Christian walking in the sin nature, or an unbeliever, you are a slave to sin (Cf. John 8:34). So everyone is a slave to someone or something...whether or not you're a slave or not is not an option for any of us (Cf. Rom 6:16).

— When people get wrapped up in sin, they love to promote it as freedom. However, addiction to sin (alcohol, drugs, pornography, gambling) is NOT freedom. God wants to set people free from their slavery to sin because being a slave to Christ is freedom, being a slave to sin is bondage (Cf. John 8:36).

– "...quarrelsome" - picking up on the quarrels/arguments he described in v23, which come from foolish and ignorant speculations, Paul tells Timothy that if he is to be a slave to Christ, he cannot be quarrelsome.

– "...be kind to all" - the Bible has a lot to say about not just *what* we say, but *how* we say it. Paul says in Eph 4:15 that speaking the truth in love is a sign of maturity in Christ. It's possible to win an argument with someone, but lose their heart. A good thing to keep in mind when debating spiritual issues, theology, or really any topic is: The first person to get mad loses the debate. No matter how strong your arguments might be, no matter how right you are, if you move from kindness to anger, you lost.

– "to all" - not just to those who agree with you; not just to those who treat you with kindness. To all, meaning everyone, regardless of what they've said or what they've done to you.

– "...skillful in teaching" - *didaktikos*, a person who is accurate in how they present biblical information and knowledge. Various forms of *didaktikos* are used throughout the NT; the only other place this form is used is in 1 Tim 3:2, where Paul is laying out the qualifications for elders ("able to teach").

— This is difficult. It's easy to be biblical if you aren't kind, and it's easy to be kind if you're not biblically accurate, but it's a completely different thing to present God's Word accurately and at the same time be loving (Cf. Eph 4:15).

- "...patient when wronged" - enduring difficulties without becoming angry or upset.
Enduring difficulties without allowing your emotions to become negative.
- Frequently we endure difficulties, but we do so with a grudging spirit. This doesn't mean to be patient when things are going well. It means to endure without anger when someone has or is wronging us in some way. Justified hurts are the most dangerous; they are the hardest to let go (Cf. Eph 4:32).
- You don't test patience when people treat you properly and respectfully. You test patience when people abuse you, say all kinds of ugly, untrue things about you, spread rumors about you, criticize you for things outside of your control. Enduring these things patiently, without getting angry or bitter, without allowing my emotions to overflow, is how my patience is tested.
- It's whether or not we respond by God's grace in these types of circumstances determines whether or not we become the type of "slave" that God wants to use in spiritual warfare.
- Didn't Jesus give us a perfect example of being patient when wronged? While hanging from the cross, while being mocked, laughed at, spat upon, He said, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Stephen, while he was being stoned, said, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:60). When we are patient when we're wronged, we are displaying Christlikeness in the highest degree.
- Not being quarrelsome, being kind to all, being skillful in teaching, and being patient when wronged are not attributes that we conjure up under our own power or willpower, white-knuckling it through self-discipline. These are things that the Holy Spirit will produce in us as we walk moment-by-moment according to the Spirit within us and we say no to the yearnings of our sin nature.

Now Paul tells Timothy why he should desire to be a "slave" to Christ. The answer is usability. First, God wants to use slaves to further His purposes (v25), and second, God wants to use His slaves to hinder Satan's work (v26).

- 25 with gentleness correcting **those who are in opposition**, if perhaps **God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth**,
- 25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,
- 25 and gentle when refuting opponents. After all, maybe God will allow them to repent and to come to a full knowledge of the truth,
- 25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

- When we follow 1 Peter 3:15 and are ready to make a defense to everyone who asks, to give an account for that hope that is within us, Paul says, we must do so in gentleness.
- Sometimes it's easy, when you encounter some kind of false thinking or doctrine, to simply unleash a mountain of biblical evidence to refute that false belief. Even though you may be right in what you say, Paul (and Peter) both state that it's important that this defense be made in gentleness.
- Many Christians like to quote 1 Peter 3:15 because that is the famous apologetics verse: be ready to give an answer. That is a good thing! However, they often stop there and do not finish the end of the verse, which agrees with Paul here: "...yet with gentleness and reverence."
- Peter, like Paul here, is saying it's not what you say but rather how you say it. Paul also says this in Gal 6:1. In Matt 7:5 Jesus talks about this topic...take the log out of your own eye before you bother taking the spec out of your brother's eye. From a medical perspective, if you needed to take a spec out of someone's eye, it is not something you dive into elbow's deep. It's not something you rush. It's something you carefully do, taking the utmost care and precision, so that the procedure will be beneficial to them rather than injure them further.
- Prov 15:1: A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger. This proverb works in every situation in which you use it, but especially in your little cocoon of social media. People will say things to other people on social media that they would never say to that same person to their face. If you want to make a fool of yourself in front of the entire world on social media, you have unlimited opportunities to do that.
- "...those who are in opposition" - Paul issues this advice to Timothy because there were obviously people in Timothy's church who opposed him. Notice that Paul never says, These people have a point, Timothy, you should seek to understand them. On the contrary, he implies that these people are challenging Timothy unfairly.
- These people who are challenging him unfairly are the ones Timothy is to "correct with gentleness." Timothy's problem wasn't that he was doctrinally or theologically wrong on some point; his problem was his reaction and retort to those who unfairly opposed him. This is what Paul is addressing in Timothy.
- "...God" - is it my responsibility to drive that person to repentance? No. I need to stay in my lane and focus on what He has commanded me to do (correction in gentleness). It's God's job, "perhaps" if He sees fit, to grant them repentance. I don't cause repentance, God is the cause of repentance.
- But God is ready, willing, and able to use us, *IF* we emulate through His Spirit, the characteristics of a "slave." It is first our "kindness" (gentleness in correction) shown to those in opposition that leads to God's kindness. Rom 2:4 says that the kindness of God leads to repentance.

- If it is God's kindness that leads a believer or an unbeliever to repentance, then what is God going to use to change the mind of a carnal Christian or an unbeliever? It is them seeing in me the very act of kindness as God has displayed to them.
- "...may grant" - *didōmi*, subjunctive mood, the mood of possibility; maybe God will grant repentance, maybe He won't. But we shouldn't worry about it anyway because it's not our job to create repentance in another person's heart...it's God's job. I need to focus on developing the characteristics of servanthood, allowing the Holy Spirit to reproduce those in my life.
- Whether or not we become servants as God calls us to will tell us whether or not God's purposes are going to be fulfilled in our life, either over wayward believers or unbelievers.
- "...repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth" - this is the goal that Paul wants Timothy (and us!) to pursue. When Timothy (we) respond to opposition or false doctrine with truth delivered in love with gentleness, the door is open for God to "perhaps" do a work of repentance in that person's heart.
- The end game here is not to win the argument; the goal here is for a heart-felt change of mind (repentance) to take place in the mind(s) of the opposition, which would then lead them to the truth
- If those in opposition to you are unbelievers, and you are a "slave" to God, God wants to use you in such a way that they change their minds about Jesus. But Paul is not talking to Timothy about opposition from unbelievers...the opposition Timothy was under was from within his own congregation in Ephesus. Timothy had the opportunity, as a slave of God, to get these Christians in his church, who don't think the right way, to begin thinking the right way.

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

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

26 so that they might escape from the Devil's snare, even though they've been held captive by him to do his will.

26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

- "...they" - those repentant people from v25

- "...come to their senses" - the people opposing Timothy were not in their right mind. Their mental faculties were not thinking biblically, rationally, or logically. There is something greater than themselves influencing them, which he describes in the rest of the verse.

- "...snare of the devil" - these opposers are in the trap of Satan and unable to loose themselves and get out. Unbelievers outside the church as well as believers inside the

church that literally have a steel trap over them from which they cannot escape, and in many cases they don't even know it.

— This is a completely different way of looking at people who oppose us. There is something greater than them holding them back, trapping them. This is why we need to be patient and gentle, not quarrelsome with them. We need to speak the truth in love to them because they are not in their right mind.

— Do you look at people who oppose you virulently as victims? Probably not, You probably look at them as an enemy. But a victim is exactly what this verse says they are. They are victims of Satan's trap.

— This is a problem with evidential apologetics, which believes that if you just align your arguments the right way, you can get people to come to your side and believe what you believe. But the problem is that evidential apologetics doesn't take into account spiritual warfare, as outlined in this verse. So even if you present the best possible case, with the tightest, non-disputable logic right from the Bible, they will take that argument into their mind and distort it because they are caught in a trap and not in their right mind.

— Apologetics is a great thing, and we're commanded to be able to give an answer for the hope that lies within us, but we can't lose sight of the spiritual warfare part of the equation, and we must, must, must approach every conversation or debate with gentleness.

- "...captive" - held in bondage by the snare of the devil. We understand this with unbelievers (Cf. 2 Cor 4:4), but does the devil hold believers in bondage? Yes! Satan is so good a deceiving people that it's almost outside of our understanding how deceptive he is. Rev 12:9 says that Satan has deceived the whole world.

— Satan deceived one-third of the angels, who stood in the very presence of God in heaven, to rebel against an all-powerful God? Satan even deceived himself in that process. Satan also deceived Adam & Eve, who were without a sin nature, in a perfect environment, and in direct fellowship with God. If the devil has this unbelievable capacity for deception, what can he do to deceive unbelievers? Anything he wants. What can he do in the church, filled with people whose minds have not been renewed (Rom 12:2)?

- "...his will" - God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. True. But we also need to realize that Satan hates you and has a horrific plan for your life (John 10:10).

Summary

To: Timothy (and us), As you are interacting with those inside the church and outside the church, you are in the midst of an angelic conflict. God wants to use you through an attribute of kindness to liberate from bondage men and women. The job of repentance and liberation is not your job, it's His job, but He'll use you as His vessel if you cooperate with Him by being a servant.