



2 TIMOTHY

A Verse-By-Verse Commentary

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CHAPTER 1

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, 2 Timothy 1:1

Welcome to the book of 2 Timothy! It is the second of the three “pastoral epistles,” and it is comprised of 83 verses. Thus, it is exactly 30 verses shorter than 1 Timothy, and it will take us (one day at a time, just as we get up each day to go about our business) a smidgen under three months to analyze it.

It is hoped that you will be blessed as each verse brings marvelous insights into this beautiful epistle from the mind of God and through the hand of Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Paul begins the epistle by identifying himself – He is Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, Timothy’s mentor, and the one with whom Timothy had traveled and fellowshiped in a close and personal manner. He next identifies his apostleship with the words, “an apostle of Jesus Christ.”

He is a messenger of the Lord, having been called by Him personally to perform this weighty duty which has been so amazingly fruitful for the past two thousand years. This is his one claim to the authority of writing a letter of doctrine, and it is with this authority that he thus writes. After this, he notes that his apostleship is “by the will of God.”

This is the same phrase as is seen in 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, and Colossians. It is what further defines his calling and which affirms his authority. It also is a note of humility in that he was selected, and therefore it was not of his own merits. Instead, it was by the sovereign decision of God that he is so designated an apostle.

His selection was nothing he had sought after, and it was entirely unmerited. Having said that, Paul notes elsewhere that it is a calling that he could have ignored, thus demonstrating free will is included in the matter.

That is found in Acts 26:19, where he says that he “was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.” The implication is that he could have been disobedient to it. He then states, “according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus.”

The words “according to” are not speaking of what has transpired in him, but in that which he is called to proclaim. In other words, it is the subject matter which he dealt with as an apostle. The NET Bible gives us the correct sense of what is being said (as underlined) –

“From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to further the promise of life in Christ Jesus.” (NET Bible)

Next, there is an article connected to “life.”

Thus, it more accurately reads, “the life.” There is life in mortal humans; there is life in an electric wire; and etc. Paul is being specific that what his apostleship is called to is a proclamation of “the life” which is found in Christ Jesus.

It isn’t the animation of a physical body which will die someday. It is the regeneration of the spirit of man, reconnecting him to God, and granting true and eternal life to those who are united to Christ Jesus. As Paul says, this life is “in Christ Jesus.”

He is the Possessor of it. Those who come to Him, and who are “in” Him, are granted that same life. It is a promise which came just after the fall of man, in Genesis 3:15. And, it is the promise which is referred to throughout the entire Old Testament, anticipating the coming of Messiah.

In Him is the restoration of all things, and in Him is the life of which Paul is called to be a herald to the Gentiles.

Life application: 83 verses comprise 2 Timothy. Is it too much that you would spend a few minutes each day, for less than three months, studying this precious epistle now that you have started? The reading and studying of Scripture is the most important thing that You will do during your day.

In knowing God’s word, you can then apply it to your life. In this, you will be found pleasing to Him in all you do. Please make the effort, follow along in the study, and know that you will be further along in your theology when you are finished with this precious book, 2 Timothy.

Lord God, You have given us Your word for study. Grant us wisdom to pick the thing up and study it. The amount of dust which gathers on Your word, and the newness of the pages inside of it as well, stand as a testimony to how important we feel a right

relationship with You is. Help us to commit to a right study of Your word. Today Charlie is beginning a line-by-line study of 2 Timothy. Can I spare the five minutes it takes each day to join in? Help me stand approved, by learning and applying Your word to my life. Amen.

To Timothy, a beloved son:

Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 2 Timothy 1:2

After having identified himself and his commission, Paul now identifies the main recipient of the letter, Timothy. As noted, based on the apostolic identification of himself, something Timothy was perfectly aware of, the letter was certainly intended to be for more than just Timothy.

He was to have it available for any and all to see and read. It is an epistle of church doctrine as much as it is a personal letter. However, it is still a personal letter, written “To Timothy, a beloved son.”

These words are similar to his opening words to Timothy in his first epistle to him. The only change is that “a beloved son” here was “a true son in the faith” there. The word translated here as “beloved” is the Greek work *agapétos*. It signifies “divinely loved.”

Paul truly loved Timothy as a “son,” and the bonds were as strong as if Timothy was Paul’s own legitimate offspring. As he personally took Timothy under his wings, and as Timothy stayed with him while so many others departed, the bond was all the stronger.

In Acts 16:3, Paul even circumcised Timothy in order to ensure that the Jews would be more responsive to the message of Christ. It was not a means of making Timothy acceptable for salvation, but a means of ensuring that Timothy would be properly accepted by those Jews who needed to hear the gospel message of Christ.

In circumcising him, it would eliminate pre-judgments about Timothy’s status. In other words, it was a helpful tool for evangelism. Next, after having identified himself and his recipient, he adds in his greeting which is a close match to 1 Timothy, “Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.” Unlike his other epistles, in his three pastoral epistles, he adds in the word “mercy.”

As the letter is written to Timothy, the words apply to him, not to Paul. Paul petitions for “mercy” in his pastorals because he knew it is a job which requires a great deal of mercy from God. It is a delicate, complicated, often frustrating, always tiring, and very sensitive job.

Where those under a pastor often feel it necessary to heap trouble on him, mercy is all-the-more necessary from the other direction. Without this endowment from God, the job will quickly lay low the pastor of strongest faith and resolve. Therefore, Paul petitions for these things – grace, mercy, and peace to be bestowed upon his beloved son in the faith. And the petition is “from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Paul speaks of God as “the Father.” This then is in line with the petition for grace, mercy, and peace. As a father would grant such things to his own son, so Paul knows that God will grant such things to His sons in the faith, a faith which is grounded in Christ Jesus. And as God is the Father of Jesus, the petition for grace, mercy, and peace will naturally flow from Jesus to His other true children as well.

Paul’s salutation is a full example of a complete understanding of the workings of God towards His ministers, who are also His sons by adoption.

Life application: The job of a pastor is a tough one, but Paul knew Timothy could handle it. And yet, he still asked for grace, mercy, and peace to be bestowed upon him. The stress of such a job requires these things. And though he is petitioning them from God, it is certain the pastor needs these things from the congregants as well.

The more difficulty they lay on the pastor, the more stress he is going to be under. Therefore, as a member of a congregation, remember that your pastor’s life is full enough. Give him a bit of grace, mercy, and peace as well.

Heavenly Father, give us wisdom in how we deal with the pastors, teachers, and deacons in our churches. They have a stressful job when dealing with people, and a limited amount of time to do so. Help each of us to make their lives easier by recognizing their limitations, especially that of time, and then help us to be willing to not take up more of it than is necessary. Help our desire to speak many words be tempered with their need to hear a few less. Amen.

I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as *my* forefathers *did*, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, 2 Timothy 1:3

After his salutation, Paul begins his main thoughts with, “I thank God.”

The words are most probably connected to “the genuine faith” mentioned in verse 5. Thus, it would make everything between these parenthetical. In other words, “I thank God ... when I call to remembrance the genuine faith.” Paul rejoices over the faith of his

young protege, and where it has led him in his life. From his thanks to God, he then explains his relationship to Him by saying, “whom I serve.”

Paul is an apostle of Jesus Christ at this time in his life, but throughout his life he had dedicated his time and energy to a pursuit of God. The fact that he missed Jesus in the process for a time doesn't mean he wasn't serving God, but that he was simply doing it incorrectly. His service was and is, “with a pure conscience.” Rather, the Greek here reads, “in a pure conscience.”

It isn't that he merely had a pure conscience and he served God with it, but that he had a pure conscience, and it was in that sphere of spiritual recognition that he served God. One could say, “I served my nation with the USAF.” This would mean that he served his nation, and it is by the USAF that he did so. Or he could say, I served my nation in the USAF. The USAF became the sphere of his life.

Everything that comprised who he was as a person serving his nation was dedicated to the sphere in which he had united. In Paul's case, he served “in a pure conscience.” From there, he explains that this was “as *my* forefathers *did*.”

Two possibilities exist of what he means here. The first is speaking of his forefathers in the faith, such as Abraham, Jacob, David, etc. The second is his line of ancestry through his parents. He was raised a Pharisee, and schooled from a young age in this capacity.

His parents would have sent him to school for this, and they would have been schooled before him, holding fast to the traditions of this sect. It is hard to be dogmatic on which option he is referring to, but in Galatians 1, we seem to have a clue –

“For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and *tried to* destroy it. ¹⁴ And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.” Galatians 1:13, 14

The hope of his fathers, either of the faith, or of his ancestry, was in the coming of Messiah. He had missed that coming, and a special call by the Lord Himself was needed to correct this, but it was his hope, nonetheless.

During his time before coming to the Lord, his life was directed in a pure conscience. That continued on, but with a new direction in which to live it out. To finish this verse, he

then says that his thanks to God were heartfelt and ongoing. This is seen in the words, “as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day.”

Timothy must have come to his mind a great deal. As he received reports of him, he would stop and pray for him. As he remembered their travels, he would stop and pray for him. As he worked or walked, he would mentally connect with the Lord and pray for him. The two thoughts, “as without ceasing” and “night and day” are intended to be taken in this way.

Whenever Timothy came to mind, and in whatever Paul was doing, he would also be in prayer to God for him.

Life application: Our minds are always being filled with something. Even when it seems we are not really thinking of anything, something is going on up there. If we train ourselves to be thankful, then thanks will become a part of who we are. If we train ourselves to remember others as we live out our lives, then those type of prayers will become as common as inhaling. Let us mentally redirect our daily thoughts to that which is honoring of God, and productive as Christians.

Lord God, redirect our minds to the contemplation of that which is good and productive. Help us to be thankful always, and to express that thanks to You in everything we do. And help us to think on others that we interact with, and to then remember them in prayers always. This can become as natural as the very breath we take. And so, mold us to live in this way. May our lives and thoughts be an honor to You at all times. Amen.

...greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy,
2 Timothy 1:4

This continues Paul’s thought concerning his relationship with Timothy of the previous verse. Here he next says to him that he is, “greatly desiring to see you.”

The Greek word he uses indicates a longing for, or a yearning. We can greatly desire something we see at the store without having yearned for it. But those things we long for are the things we set our mind on continuously.

Paul’s mind was brought back, time and again, to his fellowship with Timothy, and his heart was stirred for more of it. And there are two reasons for this. First he says, “being mindful of your tears.”

It can be inferred that upon their last parting, Timothy openly broke down and wept. His heart was broken that Paul, his teacher and friend, was being separated from him. This exact same thought is conveyed to us concerning the very church that Timothy was now given the charge of overseeing. In Acts 20:36-38, we read –

“And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. ³⁷ Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul’s neck and kissed him, ³⁸ sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.”

The care Paul had for the churches he ministered to, for the people that he fellowshiped with, and in particular for Timothy whom he traveled with and mentored, would overwhelm the hearts of those people when they realized their parting may be permanent. It stands as a testimony to the beauty of Christ being reflected through this great apostle.

Timothy’s tears of parting rent Paul’s heart, and he longed to see him again, and to instead see and experience tears of rejoicing, and in turn that he may rejoice. That is his second reason for wanting to see Timothy. As he says, “that I may be filled with joy.”

In seeing Timothy again, there would be joy in abundance. There would be talks of missionary travels, of conversions, of baptisms, of love feasts, and of doctrine. The world would seem right as they talked about everything that had been missed or experienced during their time of separation.

There would be rejoicing in the fellowship of the Spirit, and in the blessed hope of being united once again with the Lord upon His return. These things would fill Paul with joy, and this is why he yearned to be with his protege once again.

Life application: Ecclesiastes says that there is a time for everything. This includes times of permanent parting. If we knew when that time would be, would we act as we do towards those around us? Even if we plan to see someone in the morning, the morning may never come for one of us. Let us be careful to hold those we love with a special note of care as they depart our presence.

Gracious heavenly Father, You have granted us fellowship with people that we have come to love in our lives. We are all the more blessed because we know them and have had personal times of joy with them. But there is a time when we will be parted for the last time. And so, help us to be wise about how we depart from their presence, knowing

that we may not see them again in this life. But for those who have the hope of Christ and of the resurrection, at least we know that the separation is not forever. Thank You, O God, for this blessed assurance which comforts us beyond even the grave itself. Amen.

...when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.

2 Timothy 1:5

The words here now take us back to verse 3. Paul had said, “I thank God.” Now he continues that thought with, “when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you.”

Paul’s gratitude to God is found in Timothy’s sincere faith. He calls it to remembrance as if the most cherished of memories. For a true and sound believer, the faith – steadfast and deep-rooted – is truly a source of rejoicing. This is because when we think of our beloved brother or sister, we know that when they face a time of great trial, sadness, or disappointment, it will not be a reason for that person to be in utter despair.

Genuine faith does not mean that they will not feel the pains of life, but that they will be able to endure them without losing all heart. Faith in Christ will ultimately be their rock of stability. In this, we can truly give thanks to God. Paul next notes that Timothy’s faith “dwelt first in your grandmother Lois.”

Here is a word used only once in all of the Bible, *mammé*, or grandmother. It is comparable to us saying “mamma” to a grandmother as a term of endearment. The word “dwelt” is in the past tense, implying that Lois is now dead, but that while alive, faith resided in her as if in an abode.

She was the first in the line of Timothy to possess saving faith, and it resided in her in a way obvious to those around her. Hence, Paul’s note of it now. Likewise, he adds in, “and your mother Eunice.”

The same thoughts apply to her as to Lois. They were both now dead, but while alive, they were women of great faith. Eunice was a Jewess. This is learned from Acts 16:1 –

“Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, *the* son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father *was* Greek.”

It is implied that the father was not a believer, but the mother had received her Messiah at some point during her life. As only Eunice is mentioned, but not by name in Acts, and as both are mentioned now, it is a note which truly displays the authenticity of this epistle. The two accounts beautifully align to comprise a united picture of this family of faith.

Finally Paul, speaking of these women's faith, says, "and I am persuaded is in you also." Paul knew this was true, but by saying it in this way, it is given as an encouragement to Timothy that his faith is one of a noble tradition which looked to Christ Jesus. In this, Paul was stirring up Timothy to continue in that tradition and build upon it.

Life application: There are times when reminding someone about their family's faith is an appropriate thing to do. If Franklin Graham were to seem overwhelmed with the challenges of his ministry, patting him on the back and saying, "You are from a great line of faithful people" would be a great encouragement to him.

It would remind him of the things his father had done and it would then spur him on to even greater things. We should remember this, be aware of the line of faith in others, and use that in an appropriate manner when needed.

Heavenly Father, some of us have come from a line of believers in Christ Jesus that goes back for generations. Some of us are the first in our line. In each, there is a unique opportunity. We can build upon the faith of our fathers, or we can start a new line of faithful followers, encouraging the next generation to fan the flames of our love of Christ. No matter what, may each of us be willing to continue on this line of love for Jesus, and to make it grow and flourish in our families. To Your glory! Amen.

Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 2 Timothy 1:6

The word "Therefore" is given to confirm what he has just said, concerning "the genuine faith that is in" Timothy. Paul knew it to be so, and he is giving strong encouragement based on this. He knew Timothy as a father knows a son. And Timothy surely looked to Paul as a father. In this, there is the heartbreaking thought that Paul was in prison, possibly on his way to execution.

Along with that were troubles within the church itself which Paul has already noted, and which he will continue to refer to (such as in 1 Timothy 1:18-20 & and in 2 Timothy 2:17,

18). Instead of being downcast because of such things, Paul gives him positive exhortation by reminding him “to stir up the gift of God.”

The word which translates into “stir up” is found only here in the Bible. It refers to fire being fanned into flames. Paul is then encouraging Timothy to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in him, as he then says, “through the laying on of my hands.” This is probably referring to the same thing as was stated in 1 Timothy 4:14 –

“Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.”

Though the laying on of hands was done by a group of men, Paul is using the singular here to make his participation in it personal to Timothy now. There may have been others present, but as a father to a son, Paul laid his hands on Timothy. In this act, Paul and the others made an acknowledgment that the Spirit resided in Timothy, and he was now being set apart for service to the Lord based on the gift he possessed as a leader.

It is this gift that Paul is imploring him to fan into flames. This is reminiscent of his words of 1 Thessalonians 5:19, “Do not quench the Spirit.” Instead of stating it in the negative, he is stating it as a positive. Rather than quenching, he is admonished to fan.

Life application: Despite the many trials of our lives, we can and should stir up the flame of the Spirit in us. In doing so, we will be able to overcome the trials and difficulties we face. But the only way to do this is to act in accord with the Spirit – reading the word, praying to the Lord, praising God, joining with other believers in fellowship, and the like. In doing these things, we will stir up the flame, and we will then be able to press on with far less difficulty as we continue down life’s path.

Heavenly Father, help each of us to stir up the flame of the Spirit in our lives. Help us to do this so that we can face the many challenges which lie ahead of us in our family life, our jobs, our social life, and in other areas which can often be so challenging. May we be willing to tend to Your word, speak to You with our hearts, and rely on others for fellowship and encouragement. In these things, surely You will direct us and guide us through the daily difficulties. Thank You for being with us as we pursue You. Amen.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.
2 Timothy 1:7

Paul now explains the previous statement he made to Timothy which said, “Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you.” The word translated here as “fear” is a noun found only this once in the Bible. It signifies timidity or cowardice. Its corresponding adjective signifies someone who would be fainthearted, and thus falling short in following Jesus as the Lord.

Paul is encouraging Timothy, not rebuking him. He is saying in essence, “God hasn’t given us a spirit of cowardice. You will face many great challenges in your duties, but He has given you a spirit of the ability to handle them.”

This same thought must transfer to all Christians. When we have a fear of displeasing others, we are not demonstrating that which is of God. If there is, for example, a moral issue which is presented for the Christian to stand on, they are to stand on that without wavering. Next, Paul contrasts the “spirit of fear” with one “of power.”

The word is closely connected to having a sense of boldness. It reflects the ability to overcome difficulties and obstacles which one is bound to face, such as persecution and confrontation. Paul further defines the spirit we have been given as “of love.”

In 1 John 4, it says, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear.” Rather than fearing, we have the love of God, and that for the lost. This should be such a love that fear is cast out. We should be willing to say, as so many faithful witnesses of the past have, that our love for the gospel is so strong that we will fearlessly proclaim it.

Jesus, speaking to the disciples, showed them this when He said, “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” There should be a calming peace in us as we face the unknown, because in reality, our end is known. Whatever we face is simply leading us to the glory that is promised to the saints. Finally, Paul says that the spirit we have received is “of a sound mind.”

It is another word unique to Scripture which carries the idea of “self-control.” HELPS Word Studies says that it is “safe-minded, issuing in prudent (‘sensible’) behavior that ‘fits’ a situation.” Instead of being fearful and unable to meet the challenges we will face, if we rightly apply God’s instructions to our lives, we will be able to meet whatever comes our way in a wise and sensible manner.

Life application: As we look at Christians around us, many who do not demonstrate (even nearly) the qualities that are mentioned in this verse, we might question whether

the words here are true or not. We may not even fit the words of the verse very well. And so, where is the disconnect?

It is not in the word, but in us. It is we who have to follow through with our salvation by applying God's word to our lives. In reading it, remembering it, and heeding it, we will then have the spirit that Paul now describes.

If we don't, we cannot blame God. He has given what is necessary for it to occur. Further, this verse is often cited by people, almost as a talisman, claiming that they have a supernatural spirit which will allow them to do anything. This is wholly unrealistic. The same people may not know their Bible at all. In carrying this verse around as a catch-all for possessing power, they set themselves up for a fall.

Let us be grounded in our doctrine, and rely on what we are given in Scripture as our source of boldness, power, love, and sound thinking.

Lord God, when Your word says that we have been given a spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind, those words need to be taken as conditional upon our knowing Your word and rightly applying it to our lives. Help us not to claim things from Your word unreasonably, but to keep things in context. In this, we will not set ourselves up for disappointment. Help us in this O God. Amen.

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God,

2 Timothy 1:8

"Therefore" is based on what was just stated in verse 7. Paul reassured Timothy that "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." With this understanding, the exhortation now for him is, "do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord."

As there is a guarantee of eternal life, no matter what happens in this life, there should be no true fear. In having no fear, one should then be animated about the testimony of Christ Jesus. Why should a minister of the gospel ever be ashamed of the one message of peace and reconciliation with God? It would be contradictory.

The testimony of Jesus is laid out carefully for us in His words. Though there may have only been a few books written down and kept at that time, the message was well-

transmitted by mouth, and it was well-studied by those who had copies of the Old Testament.

With these sure teachings, and with any books that were written and available, the words of Jesus, and the life He lived, were already a sound and reliable testimony. It seems that maybe Timothy's character may have led Paul to assume he might shrink back at times of difficulty or persecution, and so his words are given as an encouragement that this should not be the case. This is then bolstered by his words, "nor of me His prisoner."

It is of note that Paul is in a Roman prison, and yet he is a prisoner of Jesus (His prisoner). This means that Paul fully understood that he was in prison because that is where the Lord allowed him the honor of being. It is where the glory of Christ would shine through him the most radiantly at this point in his life.

As Paul has understood this and acknowledged it to Timothy, then it is intended that Timothy would understand this and be willing to follow in the same avenue if so called. There was no shame in Paul's status as a prisoner, because he is the Lord's prisoner. Because of this, instead of fearing, he encourages Timothy to, "share with me in the sufferings for the gospel."

"Fear, Timothy? Not at all. Instead of fearing, I desire that you share with me in these sufferings!" The idea here is that, "Should you be persecuted, it will be because the Lord has allowed that persecution. Should you be beaten, it is because the Lord saw that such a beating would ultimately bring Him glory.

Should you follow Him in crucifixion, then that is the Lord's ultimate sign of approval of your life." Suffering for the gospel is not a source of shame, but it is a point of honor. Though it may be hard to process it as such, this is what Paul is telling Timothy (and thus us) concerning this matter. Finally, he says that such suffering for the gospel is "according to the power of God."

The power of God is that which will enable Timothy, as it has for Paul, to endure the trials and difficulties which suffering for the gospel entails. One is to remember that Christ also was persecuted, and He was crucified. However, He was also resurrected. In following Him, this too is guaranteed for those who likewise suffer.

No matter what we are to face, even in death itself, the power of God is evident, and it will be evident. This is what Paul is conveying to Timothy, and likewise to all who follow Christ.

Life application: Without Jesus, there is a complete lack of purpose in one's life. We live, we experience, and we die. In the end, it is a futile thing. But in Christ, everything takes on purpose and meaning, even our sufferings. God has allowed us to suffer, for reasons known to Him. In giving Him the glory in our sufferings, there will be great reward indeed. Let us be faithful to remember this, and to glorify God through good times and bad.

Heavenly Father, should we accept the good times and not the bad? Have You not ordained one as well as the other? If we are living according to Your word, and yet we are suffering, isn't it then right to give You thanks for it when it comes to pass? Help us to live with this perspective always. Our suffering is not unknown to You, and it serves a purpose which we may not understand now, but help us to accept it and to glorify You through it. Amen.

...who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, 2 Timothy 1:9

The words now describe “the gospel according to the power of God” of the previous verse. It is through this gospel message that God “has saved us,” meaning all who have believed the message of salvation (Romans 10:9, 10). Paul writes the words as an accomplished action, “has saved us.”

There is no question in his mind of the certainty of the action. Just as Christ cried out, “It is finished,” so it is in the believer. With this understanding, he then says, “and called us with a holy calling.”

Though the two thoughts occur simultaneously, they are two separate things. God has saved us through Christ's work, and God has called us through the work of the Holy Spirit. The calling is both for salvation, and it is of salvation. We are called through the hearing of the word which leads to salvation, and we are called into holiness because of the salvation obtained. This process is “with a holy calling.”

The thought here speaks of our being separated from sin by the work of the Spirit. The believer is brought into a new state before God because of the calling. However, Paul continues with, “not according to our works.”

The entire process is one of God. All works of man are excluded from the process. In other words, one does not become holy by becoming a monk and separating himself from the world around him. Nor does one become holy by scourging himself in a public demonstration of repentance. Nor does one become holy by being ordained as a pastor, preacher, or priest.

There is nothing we can do to merit this process except believe in the work of Christ. As belief is not considered a work (Romans 3:27), it is the free-will choice of man – responding to the work of Christ, through the Holy calling of the Spirit – which then results in the salvation which was offered. All work is of God “according to His own purpose and grace.”

These words do not exclude free-will at all. Rather, in the next clause this will become evident. For now, God determined the means of salvation from beginning to end. Further, it is for His own reasons that He has accomplished the process. Everything about salvation is according to God’s purposes.

Man’s desires or attempts to merit salvation are excluded. It is solely an act of grace. Grace cannot be earned or merited. It is simply an offer based on God’s goodness. To do something in order to obtain grace nullifies the grace. It must simply be received as grace. Paul then finishes up by saying that this process is one “which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.”

These words show that “according to His own purpose” is not speaking of the present time, but of all time. One cannot use Paul’s words to say that free will is excluded. If God’s plan was to save men through Christ, before man was even created, then everything about the process was decided upon at that time.

If God’s decision was that “I will send Jesus, and all who believe will be saved” is the necessary response for salvation, then that is how salvation comes about. The grace is “given” not “determined.” This is important to understand.

When something is given, it is done so as an offer. An offer can be received, or it can be declined. The words “according to His own purpose” is not speaking about “who” would be saved, but “how” salvation would come about.

This is the predestination that the Bible speaks of. It is not speaking of a selection of certain people who will be chosen by God to be saved. Instead, it speaks of a selection of a certain people who will choose God's offer in order to be saved.

The reason this distinction is so important to remember, is because it sets the tone for everything that follows after salvation. Will one's walk with the Lord be one of gratitude, or smugness? Will one be desirous of telling others the gospel, or will they assume that God has chosen others apart from our getting the word out (see Romans 10:14-17)? The list could go on, but it all comes back to how one views what has occurred in the salvation process.

Life application: If you have not willingly received Jesus Christ, believing in His work, you have not been saved. If you have, you are saved – forever. Salvation is of God, and therefore it is fully sufficient to save, and it is a complete and eternal salvation.

Heavenly Father! It is so wonderful to rise in the morning and to share in Your goodness each day. Everything that we experience – from the food we eat, to the flowers we smell, and everything else along the way – is an expression of Your care and love for us. May we always be grateful for the many blessings You give us, but may our hearts be especially grateful for the Gift of Jesus our Lord. Thank You for Your kind hand of grace upon us. Amen.

...but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,
2 Timothy 1:10

Paul's previous words spoke of the "grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began." He now shows that despite that grace having always existed in His eternal counsel, there was a particular point in time in which He chose to reveal it. He says, "but has now been revealed."

The grace was always there, but when the fullness of time had come, God entered into the stream of humanity, uniting with human flesh, in the Person of Jesus Christ. This is the revelation of that eternal grace, and it was done "by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ."

A Savior implies the need to be saved. Man intuitively understands this, and he goes about life doing things to ease his nagging conscience, and to justify his good standing among others, and in order to appease the God he knows he must face someday.

However, if God sent Jesus Christ as Savior, it means that man still needed to be saved. It is not of works, but of grace, by which salvation of the human comes.

Christ came to make this grace known. The wages of sin is death. This is why men die, but it is through the grace “of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death” that sin is dealt with. If God has abolished death through Christ Jesus, then that means that sin has no power over the one who is saved. It takes us back to Paul’s words of 2 Corinthians 5:18, 19 –

“Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”

Jesus Christ is the Savior. In order to save, He must eradicate sin (through which is earned the wages of death). In His atoning, substitutionary death, Christ Jesus has dealt with the sin problem – once and for all for those who believe – so that God, who is in Christ, can fellowship with man once again. And for those in Christ, He is “not imputing their trespasses to them.”

If no sin is imputed for those in Christ, then death can no longer be imputed as well. That is why Paul can say that Christ Jesus “has abolished death.” But more, He has “brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

It is the gospel – this marvelous grace of God which is revealed in Christ Jesus – which brings to light the “life and immortality” which had been lost since the fall of man. The word translated as “immortality” literally means, “no corruption.”

Man disobeyed God, and he fell from grace. He was exiled from the Garden of Eden and his body began the process of corruption, eventually he died and returned to the earth from which he was created. This has continued on for all men since then.

The sin is inherited, and thus all men follow this same pattern. But Jesus came without sin, died in fulfillment of the law, and – as man’s Substitute – took away our sin. As Paul says, in Colossians 2:14, “having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”

The law, through which sin is made known, is taken out of the way. And because Christ Jesus had no sin of His own, He was resurrected to eternal life. Sin is dealt with, and life and immortality are revealed – all in one fell swoop.

Christ has completed the task and shown the grace of God to man. For those who accept this, only life and immortality are left! This is why sin is no longer imputed to those in Christ as seen above. We are “in” Christ, and thus shall live forever. Can there be found a better verse for eternal salvation? No, probably not. Paul says in Romans 8:38, 39 –

“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

If we are a part of creation, and nothing in creation can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, then salvation, by default, must be eternal. Sin is not imputed, the law is annulled and so sin cannot even be charged, and we are “in Christ.” Deal done; Christ has won! Glorious victory has been realized upon Calvary’s tree.

Life application: That you could ever lose your salvation is a concept so foreign to the writings of the Bible, that it is beyond comprehension that this (false) doctrine is taught. Beware of anyone who would so tarnish the glorious message of Christ that they would dare presume to say that those who are “in Christ” could ever be separated from Christ!

Jesus Christ did not come to give His people eternal insecurity. Be of good cheer, you are saved despite yourself.

Lord God, how often we slip and fall short of Your marvelous standard of holiness. And how painful it is to consider having done so. But for those who have received the gift of Your Son, we have no worry that we have forever distanced ourselves from You. Rather, You have already dealt with the sin-problem once and for all. We are redeemed and forever on the path to glory. Thank You for this wonderful reassurance when we fall short. Amen.

...to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.
2 Timothy 1:11

The words, “to which” speak of the gospel referred to in the previous verse. It is the message of Christ Jesus, sent from God to save us, that Paul was “appointed a preacher.”

The word is one which speaks of a herald, or a town crier who proclaims critical news for the public to hear and heed. It carries its own sense of authority in that the message is of another. In this case, he proclaims the message of Christ. He then says, “an apostle.”

This word simply means “sent one.” However, the term is inappropriately used by people today. An “apostle of Jesus Christ” means one commissioned by Him personally. Paul was appointed as an apostle of Jesus personally. His calling and commission are recorded in Acts. However, to use the title today is an error.

The apostolic age of the church ended when the last appointed apostle of Jesus died. His word is complete, and therefore, there is no need for continuing with the foundation which has been laid. Paul then says, “and a teacher of the Gentiles.”

The phrase “of the Gentiles” is not found in some ancient manuscripts. Whether it is a later addition, or whether it was inadvertently dropped out of those other texts, it doesn’t change doctrine. It is already fully established elsewhere that Paul’s ministry was to the Gentiles. Here, it is noted that in this capacity, he was also a teacher.

The word signifies someone who is known for his mastery in a particular field of learning. In the case of Paul, it is that he was a fully capable and competent teacher in theology.

Life application: It was Paul’s passion to preach the word, teach the word, and to fulfill his mission as one sent by Christ Jesus to the nations. Each of us has a responsibility to carry on that goal by either proclaiming Christ, or by supporting those who do. This is to include pastors, teachers, and missionaries. Have you been faithful in contributing to meeting these needs?

Lord God, please give us hearts which are willing to share what we have with those who are dedicated to spreading the message of Jesus. There are preachers, teachers, and missionaries who need to be tended to. Help us not just to be on the receiving end of their labors, but to assist them in their efforts. This is especially true with missionaries who often live on the total support of others in lands which can be most inhospitable. And spur us on to praying for these people as well. Give us such willing hearts, O God. Amen.

For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day. 2 Timothy 1:12

“For this reason” speaks of Paul’s ministry. He “was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.” And these three were based on the gospel message. Therefore, it is his proclamation of the gospel message that, as he says, “I also suffer these things.”

Paul was in prison at this time for his faithful proclamation of the gospel. But Timothy was well aware of much more suffering than just imprisonment. Paul had continuously been subjected to difficulty. He writes of such trials a couple times, but most notably in 2 Corinthians 11. There, in referring to himself in relation to others, he says –

“Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I *am* more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. ²⁴ From the Jews five times I received forty *stripes* minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶ *in* journeys often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils of *my own* countrymen, *in* perils of the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; ²⁷ *in* weariness and toil, *in* sleeplessness often, *in* hunger and thirst, *in* fastings often, *in* cold and nakedness— ²⁸ besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn *with indignation*?”

-2 Corinthians 11:23-29

Paul had suffered and yet endured through so much. It had been inflicted by the Romans, but it had also been inflicted by his own people. The note of having received stripes was a Jewish punishment. The note of having been beaten with rods was a Roman one. Both were considered corrective measures for malefactors. Thus, they were designed to bring shame upon the person in order to change their attitude. But for these, and all other sufferings he says, “nevertheless I am not ashamed.”

His words here are certainly being given as an example to Timothy. He would also surely suffer as well if he faithfully carried out his duties. Paul had risen above the sufferings, and he felt no shame at proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. Timothy is being encouraged to do likewise. It is a sentiment that Peter builds upon in his first epistle –

For what credit *is it* if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is* commendable before God. ²¹ For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

²² “Who committed no sin,
Nor was deceit found in His mouth.” 1 Peter 2:20-22

With this same noble attitude, which is explained by Peter being found in Paul, he continues with the words, “for I know whom I have believed.” The word “believed” signifies “to trust” in this case. One can believe in something, but not trust in it. One can believe in the Supreme Court of the United States, but he may not always trust in the decisions they will render.

However, what Paul believes in is also his source of trust. He knew the work of Christ was of God. He knew that Christ’s work was sufficient to save him from his sins. He knew that in being declared guilt free, he was justified. He knew that in being justified, he was positionally glorified, and that he would be actually glorified someday.

There was a deep-seated trust in this which could not be beaten out of him, and it could not be wrung out of him through imprisonment. It was steadfast in him to the end. As he says in confirmation of this, he is “persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him.”

What fear had Paul in any trial? What remorse had he in any public punishment? What temptation of walking away from the Lord did he have because of his suffering? There was nothing that could deter him from the course he had set because he knew the character of God. He is ever-faithful to keep that which is committed to Him.

The body could be beaten, imprisoned, crushed, and brought to its end, but the bonds of even death itself had been defeated. The Jubilee for the captive had been proclaimed, and the human soul which belonged to God because of Christ was free. This was a certainty from the unchanging God who carefully tended to that which had been entrusted to Him “until that Day.”

The day he speaks of is the day when Christ will come for His people as described in 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4. Paul had already explained the doctrine of the rapture to the church in those epistles, something that Timothy was surely aware of.

On that wondrous day, the soul will be united to an eternal body; one which will never suffer, never endure shame, and one which will possess a glory unimagined by man at this time. Paul knew this lay ahead, and so he stood ready to possess it without fear.

Life application: How certain are you of the faith you proclaim? How ready are you to suffer for it, or to even die for it? A little bit of faith is all that is needed to bring you to a right relationship with God. But exercising your faith through study of the word will cause it to deepen to a point that you can truly say, “No fear here. I belong to Christ. Nothing will diminish that.”

Stay in the word, meditate on it always, and be grounded in what you believe.

Most glorious heavenly Father, are we ready to face difficulties for our faith in Christ Jesus? Can we confidently say, “I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.” Are we so grounded in our faith that we are willing to proclaim it even when it will bring difficulty to our day? Help us to never shrink back from what we believe. May the certainty of Christ in us be the rule and guide for all we do. To Your glory we pray. Amen.

Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. 2 Timothy 1:13

Paul now exhorts Timothy to go further than he has thus far. He has been implored to not be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord (v.8), but now he is told that a “pattern” has been laid down in order to do this. The word is found only here and in 1 Timothy 1:16. It indicates an outline, or a sketch. Thus, Paul is telling Timothy that he has been given an outline already that he is to not deviate from. He says this with, “Hold fast the pattern of sound words.”

Timothy’s ears have received the necessary pattern from Paul which he was then to follow. As he says further, “which you have heard from me.”

While Paul and Timothy traveled, evangelized, and taught, Timothy learned the outline of sound doctrine from his mentor. He had also encountered the Judaizers and false teachers who would tear the flock away from the simple gospel which is found in Christ Jesus the Lord. But Paul seems to indicate now that Timothy himself is susceptible to being led astray – and it is so.

This is not just a warning for Timothy, but for all. It is as natural as breathing to want to include oneself in any such equation. But the gospel – from beginning to end – must be about Christ alone.

Paul's exhortation is a simple, but forceful, reminder that there is a pattern which has been set, and which needs to be held fast to. There is to be no wavering from it, and no going outside the lines which have been carefully laid down for those of the faith. And further, Paul encourages him to hold fast to it "in faith."

One can teach about Jesus without faith. Even a person of faith can do so. The difference is often noticeable to those who hear. Teachers cannot allow teaching to become rote and lifeless. Instead, as with Paul exhorting Timothy, they are to hold fast to the faith, and to teach in faith. In so doing, those they teach will be enlivened by the faith which comes from the teacher who is faithful. Added to that by Paul is also "love."

A message can be mechanical, as if piecing together components of something. A message can be angry, it can be filled with bitterness, or it can be subversive. Such teachings are not in love. One can be wholly opposed to something, like abortion, but he can present the message in a stern but loving way.

Righteous indignation does not have to include unrighteous anger. To teach in faith and love then is what is proper, but there is already an example to follow. It is those "which are in Christ Jesus."

He is the object of our faith, and He is love. By contemplating His words, by following His example, and by speaking in a manner which emulates Him, the man of God will hold fast the pattern of sound words, in the proper way. But again, Paul says the pattern is the one "you have heard from me."

The gospel message to the Gentile led church is given by the hand of Paul. It outlines our doctrine in Christ Jesus, and it is to be adhered to and passed on in faith and love.

Life application: For sound church age doctrine, we are to follow Paul's epistles as the outline. Everything else is to be taken in relation to them. Understanding this context will keep the rest of Scripture properly aligned for us as we read it and assimilate it into our lives.

Lord God, grant to us the wisdom of applying the proper context of Scripture to our lives, our doctrine, and our teaching. Amen.

That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.
2 Timothy 1:14

The words here reflect the same thought as that of 1 Timothy 6:20 – “O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust.” This “good thing” is the gospel message of Christ and all that is rightly associated with it. It includes proper doctrine, teaching in love, fleeing unrighteousness, etc. Paul is imploring Timothy to be a man of God who proclaims the word of God which speaks of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul tells Timothy, “This was committed to you.”

Paul had personally laid his hands upon Timothy (along with other elders as is noted in 1 Timothy 4:14), and he had entrusted to him the responsibility of the most important treasure any person could ever possess. Having it so committed to him, Timothy is now implored to “keep by the Holy Spirit” this good thing.

Men of God wrote the word of God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. As this is so, it is only right to entrust the Holy Spirit to be the one to secure it rightly in ourselves. The word “keep” signifies “having an eye on.” It refers “to the uninterrupted vigilance shepherds show in keeping their flocks” (HELPS Word Studies).

Man’s mind is prone to wander, his thoughts are corrupted by the sin nature, and his ability to discern what is right is influenced by his character and presuppositions. In order to keep the gospel pure and untainted, a total reliance on the Holy Spirit is necessary.

When Scripture was written, it was done by the direct influence of God. Therefore, the direct influence of God, without all of those limitations of man, is necessary to rightly discern its meaning. And this isn’t something which must be sought out and groped for. Instead, Paul says that the Holy Spirit “dwells in us.”

This is to be taken in the limited sense of “believers” only. A person who has not received Jesus Christ does not have the Holy Spirit in him. However, upon belief, the Holy Spirit seals the believer (Ephesians 1:13, 14). From that moment, we are to grow in fellowship. This is done by being “filled with the Spirit,” a passive action.

We are to yield, and the Spirit will fill. In this, Timothy will be able to properly keep that which is entrusted to him, and each believer will be able to move into a closer relationship with God. But this process can also be quenched. Therefore, the admonition here is for Timothy to always fan the flame and be intimately connected to God through yielding to the Spirit. In this, he will certainly keep that which is entrusted to him.

Life application: No person is immune from quenching the Spirit. In fact, as long as we are in these mortal bodies, it is the default position. We must yield to the Spirit, and in so doing we will be filled. Eventually, if we pursue righteousness, the default position moves closer and closer to a full connection with the Spirit. But this bond can still be quenched, and so we must always remain on guard in this matter.

Lord God, as believers in Christ, help us to keep the precious deposit which has been entrusted to us. May we yield to Your Spirit, being filled even to overflowing with Your presence. May there always be more of You and less of us evident to this dark world. And when we stray, call us back to You. Surely we are prone to wander, and so keep us from this. This we petition in Jesus' name. Amen.

This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. 2 Timothy 1:15

“This you know” introduces a new thought which will be explained as he writes the verse, but it shows that Timothy is already aware of the matter which Paul will relay. The specific thing is “that all those in Asia have turned away from me.”

The area of Asia is not what we think of as “Asia” in the modern sense. Rather, it is a vague description for the churches around Lydia, Mysia, Phrygia, and so on. It could also be speaking of the area referred to in Revelation 1:4. If so, it includes Ephesus where Timothy is at as Paul writes. With that in mind, he says that in this area everyone had turned away from him.

It is obvious that this was not the case in the absolute sense. Entire churches had not turned from Paul, and Timothy was in Ephesus receiving Paul’s letters. And so, what it is believed to mean is that Paul, in prison in Rome, was accompanied by representatives from Asia.

In their time with him, they had turned away from him. Although entirely conjecture, it is believed by some scholars that they had been sent to Rome to testify of Paul’s character, but due to the increased pressure on Christians, and the possibility that they too could be caught up in the persecution and imprisonment, they had turned away from him.

They were unwilling to stand and defend him in order to save their own skin. This certainly seems likely, and it gives a good reason why Timothy would already be aware of it. Paul then names two of these offenders, Phygellus and Hermogenes. This is the only

time these two are mentioned in Scripture, and so nothing more is known about them. However, Phygellus' name comes from the word *pheugó*, meaning to flee, or shun.

What an appropriate name for the situation. Hermogenes comes from two words. The first is *Hermes*, the messenger of the Greek gods. The second is a word meaning "come into being." In essence, "born of Hermes."

Did Paul choose to name him here to indicate that he was more of a herald to Hermes than he was of one for Christ? He chose two names out of all of the people who had deserted him, maybe in order to tie their names into their actions. Either way, it is probable that Timothy personally knew them because Paul has mentioned them by name.

Life application: Your life is being recorded, and you will be remembered for something. In this verse, the only remembrance of these two people is that they were unwilling to stay with Paul, but instead turned away from him. This is the entire record of their lives. If you are to be remembered, and you will be, what is it that people will say about you?

Lord God, when our lives are up and our actions have been recorded, what will be the thing we are most remembered for? Help us to live our lives out in a manner which will first and foremost be remembered for being Your faithful servants. What else is of any value at all? In the end, all came from You, and all things are Yours. To have been willing to follow You, honor You, and proclaim You is the greatest testimony of all. Help us to live this out in the short lives we have been given. Amen.

The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; 2 Timothy 1:16

In the preceding verse, Paul spoke of those who had turned away from him – Phygellus and Hermogenes. Now he contrasts their faithlessness to the faithfulness of Onesiphorus. He is mentioned only here, and in 2 Timothy 4:19. In both instances, Paul writes of "the household of Onesiphorus."

For this reason, some scholars feel Paul is conveying that he is now dead, and he is asking for mercy upon his household. Others disagree, and say that he was still living (citing verse 18 as a proof) and that he was simply absent from his home at this time.

The reason for supporting the second view is because Paul's words of verse 18 almost sound like a prayer for him. If this is so, then it would supposedly be evidence that one

can pray for the dead. However, Paul's words in that verse are no different than anyone else who simply refers to the dead in a manner similar to this.

It is not necessarily a prayer, but an acknowledgment that their lives were well lived and we are entrusting their judgment to the Lord's wise discernment. Either way, living or dead, Paul desires that "The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus."

He trusts that the benefit of mercy hoped for because of Onesiphorus' life and actions be granted upon his whole household. And the specific reasons for this are given by Paul:

- 1) For he often refreshed me. Onesiphorus was kind to Paul, ministering to him while others had abandoned him. He lifted Paul up when things were grim and difficult. It is reflective of the words of Jesus in Matthew 25:26 which say, "I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me."
- 2) [He] was not ashamed of my chain. Paul was a prisoner for the sake of the gospel, but this meant that he was an enemy of the empire. By tending to him as a prisoner in this capacity, Onesiphorus was aligning himself with Paul, and he was thus risking himself in the process. And yet, he was more concerned about Christian charity for Paul than he was for his own safety. While others walked away, Onesiphorus stuck fast to his duty to the chained apostle.

Life application: How faithful are you willing to be to those who have been faithful to the Lord? There may be a time when Christian friends are sick at home, laid up in the hospital, or facing some sort of trial or difficulty. Are you ready to refresh them in their time of distress? Or will a simple post on Facebook, hoping for them to get better, be the extent of your effort?

People do remember such things. When your time of trouble comes, they will probably respond in kind to how you extend yourself for them.

Lord God, help us to be willing to do more than just post a note on Facebook when friends are having trouble. Give us the sense to reach out to them personally, and to offer help as they may need it. A call and a prayer with someone is surely something that will help them to readjust and refocus. And a personal visit, when possible, shows that we care enough to go out of our way for them. Give us wisdom in this, O Lord, and help us to be people who demonstrate love with more than just platitudes. Amen.

...but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me.

2 Timothy 1:17

Still speaking of Onesiphorus of the previous verse, Paul continues to relay the remarkable nature of the faithful brother. He had come to Rome, an exceptionally large city, and he had searched out Paul. Unlike his first captivity, where he was kept in a house with a guard (see Acts 28:16), he was probably now confined in a prison.

In order to find him, he would have had to go to each prison and ask if he was there. Paul also may have been kept in some other place related to state prisoners, rather than a common prison. No matter, there had to be a lot of asking around. As Paul says, “he sought me out very zealously.”

Paul knew the amount of trouble that Onesiphorus must have gone through in order to find him, and his heart must have been overjoyed when he came in and gave a brotherly Christian greeting. Imagine the questions! Imagine the joy! And for Onesiphorus, imagine the relief!

The quality of Onesiphorus’ faithfulness is set in stark contrast to those who knew Paul, knew where he was, and yet abandoned him. Take normal life, add in a bit of trial or trouble, and what is the standard result? It is normally a parting of the ways and a, “Best wishes to you.” Onesiphorus was not such a person.

Life application: How caring are you about those who are down and out? Are you there for hospital visits? Are you there for the good times and the bad? How strong your ties are depends on how willing you are to expend yourself for them. And that takes advanced planning and conviction that you will stand fast and be true.

God could have left us all captives, and it would not have changed His lot one little bit. But He didn’t just care and speak comforting words. Rather, He came to our prison and took our place in our deserved execution. Think about that as your fellow Christian sits alone and miserable.

Lord God, the world is one large prison, and its inmates are all under the sentence of death. It would not change who You are at all to allow us to receive our just due. But instead, You sent us letters of encouragement, promising to come visit. And then You came, visited, consoled, and even accepted our sentence of execution – in our place! You have set the captives free. How willing are we to act in a similar manner toward our fellow men when they are in their own place of trouble and trial? Give us compassionate

hearts to empathize with those who still need freedom from the sentence they bear. Amen.

The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day—and you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus. 2 Timothy 1:18

As noted in verse 16, the words of Paul are taken by some that Onesiphorus was dead at this point, and so Paul is actually making a prayer for the dead. This is the Roman Catholic opinion which is used to justify praying for the dead and the like. Others disagree and state that this verse shows that he is alive and simply not with his household at the time. Thus, the doctrine of praying for the dead cannot be found here.

Regardless of which is true, using this one verse to build an entire doctrine of praying for the dead is not wise. The words could merely be Paul's way of saying something in writing that expresses his great appreciation for the efforts of Onesiphorus.

One might write to another about Paulinus Maximus and say, "The Lord grant him mercy that he may stumble upon a treasure chest of gold for all he has done to help me." The meaning would carry the same intent of Paul's words now. Understanding this, Paul begins the verse by saying, "The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day."

The more unusual aspect of this isn't whether he is speaking about someone who is alive or who is dead. Rather, it is the mentioning of "the Lord" twice in one verse. What is probably the case for doing this is the highlighting of the action to be taken. The psalms will do this by repeating the word Lord in one verse after another. It then is a way of showing the all-encompassing hand of the Lord, from beginning to end, in what is being relayed.

The words "in that Day," are speaking of when the saints stand before the Bema seat of Christ to receive judgment for things done in the body (see 1 Corinthians 3:8-15 & 2 Corinthians 5:9, 10). Some scholars speak of "that Day" as the great white throne judgment found in Revelation.

That is not the case. Believers in Christ will not be judged for salvation or condemnation which is found in that scene. Instead, they will be judged for rewards and losses as is noted in the letters to the Corinthians. After this, Paul takes the time to remind Timothy of the marvelous care that Onesiphorus had provided to him, even before coming to

Rome. He says, “and you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus.”

Onesiphorus was a faithful soul all along. He was there to minister to Paul at Ephesus, and he followed through with that same care in Rome. As a note, some scholars see this as care for Paul after Onesiphorus had left Rome, meaning he tended to things requested to be done upon his return. This is explained by Paul having written first about Rome and then about Ephesus. Either way, Onesiphorus was a faithful guy in Paul’s times of need.

Life application: How great is the burden you are willing to bear for others? Are you actually willing to go out of your way to help someone when it may inconvenience you a bit? We get so caught up in time schedules, anticipated projects, lunch engagements, and the like, that we often forget that people’s needs may be a bit more important than getting home to watch a football game. Keep your priorities straight, and use Onesiphorus as an example of how you can be considered a faithful friend as well.

Lord God, there are some folks in the Bible who are mentioned just once or twice, but we can learn so much from what we read about them. They have been remembered for zealous work which honors You, faithful friendships which have comforted others, longtime friends who were always there in times of need, and so on. If You highlighted them in Your word for such reasons, maybe we should consider them as examples of the type of people You are pleased with. May we be remembered by You in a similar, positive light. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 Timothy 2:1

Paul now redirects his focus and attention on his “son” Timothy. He has been speaking of those who were faithless, Phygellus and Hermogenes of verse 1:15; and of Onesiphous who remained faithful as is recorded in verses 1:16-18. He is also referring to himself as noted in verses 1:11, 12. Now, in his redirect to Timothy, he says, “You therefore...”

He is asking Timothy to consider what he has said, and to learn from it. In essence, “I know whom I have believed, and who will keep what I have committed until that Day. I know who has been unfaithful and who will suffer loss because of it. And, I know who has shown faithfulness to me during my own trials, and who has presented himself strong in the Lord. Understanding these things, my son, ‘be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.’”

There is a well that one can draw from, and which will keep a believer strong and faithful. That well is “the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” As an external source, we can turn to 2 Corinthians 12:9 and see how the Lord provides it to those who need it –

“And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

And as a well which is filled by that external source, and which can then be drawn on in times of need, we can turn first to Ephesians 6:10 –

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”

The Lord provides the strength, but the believer must be willing to access that strength and apply it when needed. This is again seen in Philippians 4:13 –

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

That this external grace must be worked out by us is then clearly demonstrated by Paul’s words of 1 Corinthians 15:10 –

“But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God *which was with me.*”

Just as rain which falls from the sky rests on the good and bad (a form of grace), the grace of Christ is granted to those who have called on Him. But some will never make use of the rain and store it up for crops and the like. Others will, and they will thus have a well which to draw from. In like manner, the grace leads to labor for the wise. This is what Paul is saying to Timothy.

Life application: You have been bestowed the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ – to apply it to your life, and to use it in good times and in bad. No evangelist, pastor, or missionary has received more or less than you, although it may have been received in a different way than you. The grace of Jesus Christ is open and available to all, to strengthen us and to allow us to then be strong in Him.

Let each of us endeavor to use what is available to us now, so that in the ages to come, our rewards will stand as a testimony to our faithfulness in using that which we have been given.

Lord God, You have given us grace in abundance. Your word then asks us to be strong in the power of Your might; to use Your strength for honorable purposes; and to labor abundantly, knowing that You are with us, and will give us all we need to accomplish the tasks set before us. May we understand this, and be strong in You at all times. To Your glory we pray. Amen.

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

Paul just told Timothy to “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” Now, in order that this will continue on beyond Timothy, he gives the admonition of this verse. “And the things that you have heard,” are certainly all of the teachings that have come to Timothy’s ears throughout many travels, in numerous congregations, in private talks, and in open forums.

Paul had been a faithful herald of God’s word to the people he encountered, and Timothy had been with him for a great amount of that time. He wanted Timothy to remember all of what had been entrusted to him. And these things were, as it says, “among many witnesses.”

Paul had spoken before Jew and Gentile; in synagogue and home-church; in marketplaces and on ships; to the high and the low; to kings and to jailers. Whenever Timothy was with him, he was a witness as were these others.

Paul implored him to remember these things, and to remember that they were spoken openly and to all. It is the gospel of salvation for all people, and for all circumstances. It was this precious message, and all the doctrine which accompanied it, which he now instructs Timothy by saying, “commit these to faithful men.”

Timothy is asked to entrust these instructions not just to believers in general, but to faithful men. There are believers who are unfaithful. There are believers who are not competent in the ministry. There are believers who are otherwise morally unqualified because of lingering sin. And so on.

These things may be taught to them for instruction, but not as a means of making them instructors. Paul is speaking specifically about furthering the church in a leadership capacity. And this is all the more evident with his final words of the verse, “who will be able to teach others.”

Like being a plumber or an architect, teaching is a skill. It can be naturally acquired, or it can be cultivated over time by some. There are others who will never make good teachers. Paul is asking Timothy to be observant, and to be aware of those who would make good teachers. It is implied that he is then to be aware of those who would not make good teachers as well.

The word of God is to be handled carefully, not sloppily or by those who are unqualified to teach it. This is the intent behind Paul’s words in this verse.

Life application: Let us remember the admonition to Timothy in this verse. Churches are entitled to select their teachers and preachers, but they are not qualified as a whole to ordain them as such. Only proven leaders who already possess the necessary qualifications should be behind the ordination and training processes necessary to raise up qualified leaders in such matters.

Heavenly Father, You have given churches the honor of selecting men whom they wish to be their leaders. We pray that each church only select those men who have first proven themselves to other qualified leaders as being properly trained in Your word, and in the ability to teach it and preach it effectively. Without this, there is only one sad direction a church can go, and that is away from You. Help us to be careful in this, O God. Amen.

You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 2 Timothy 2:3

Within the verse, the words chosen by Paul include the thought of “with.” In essence, Paul is telling Timothy that he is not alone in the hardships he will endure. What he says conveys the idea of, “You, therefore, must endure hardships along with me.”

Paul is in prison, and he is suffering privation and loneliness. Along with that, his entire ministry is one which was fraught with troubles. One good list of them is given in 2 Corinthians 11. There he provides a record of his trials that Timothy would have been fully aware of –

“Are they Hebrews? So *am* I. Are they Israelites? So *am* I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So *am* I. ²³ Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I *am* more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. ²⁴ From the Jews five times I received forty *stripes* minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶ *in* journeys often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils of *my own* countrymen, *in* perils of the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; ²⁷ *in* weariness and toil, *in* sleeplessness often, *in* hunger and thirst, *in* fastings often, *in* cold and nakedness— ²⁸ besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn *with indignation?*” 2 Corinthians 11:22-29

Although Timothy would probably be spared from the majority of these difficulties, Paul is letting him know that his work, by nature, would bring out hardships. And so, he was to remember that Paul suffered, and he was simply joining him in that honor. From there Paul tells him to endure those hardships “as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”

The life of a soldier is typically filled with deprivations and difficulties. They sleep in the rain, they often go without proper food. They are attacked constantly. They face extreme physical trials. But more, they tend to face these many trials without complaint. A soldier is expected to follow his leader faithfully.

As soldiers of Jesus Christ, if we are faithful and obedient, whatever comes our way is because He has allowed it to occur. Paul is telling Timothy (and thus anyone who is faithful in the ministry) that this is what is expected in following after our Commander.

Life application: The life of a faithful minister is one which is guaranteed to be quite difficult at times, and almost always very tiring. As the enemy lofts in his spears and shoots his arrows, the minister has to be ready for them, and to put his trust and faith even more in the Lord who is leading.

The question for you is, “Are you acting on the Lord’s behalf, or are you acting on the enemy’s behalf, as you interact with your pastor, preacher, or minister?”

Lord God, You have ordained that those who follow You faithfully in the ministry are to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ. As a faithful Commander, Jesus will never lead His people into a battle which cannot be won. And so, remind Your church leaders this, instilling in their hearts that they have all of heaven’s power to fight off the enemy and win the battle in which they are engaged. May Your faithful ministers bring You glory as they fight on. Amen.

No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. 2 Timothy 2:4

Continuing on with the simile of the previous verse (being as a soldier), Paul next says to Timothy, “No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life.”

When people are enlisted in the military, that is their sphere of life. This may appear less so in modern times, but Paul is writing during the time of the Roman empire. They lived as soldiers, they trained as soldiers, they served under their commanders as soldiers, and they – if called to do so – suffered, fought, and died as soldiers.

Even today, those in the military have lives set apart for the call of the service which is different from those in civilian life. This is their profession, and the affairs of a civilian life are set apart from their conduct as military men. Civilians go to work, they come home to their family, they buy and they sell, and they go on vacations if time and money permit.

In a host of other ways as well, the life of a civilian is entirely different than those of a military man. Further and especially, civilians have a different structure of leadership. The military has a set line of command, and soldiers are dedicated to their commander’s authority.

Because of this, the soldier does not get involved in regular civilian affairs. The soldier's priority and conduct are first and foremost geared toward that of the military so "that he may please him who has chosen him to be a soldier."

The soldier isn't concerned about a civilian boss, and he isn't concerned about a company's profit. He was enlisted into the military by an overall military commander, and it is to that individual that he is to show his allegiance.

Paul's words are to be equated to the minister of Christ, and to Christ who has chosen him for the ministry. Timothy is being instructed that his allegiance is to be first, foremost, and solely to the Lord Jesus. This is certainly true with all Christians, but Paul is addressing Timothy as a minister.

He is ensuring that nothing of worldly entanglement will draw him away from his whole-hearted allegiance to serving his Commander, Jesus. As an interesting connection to this thought, the Constitution of the State of Tennessee states the following –

Article IX. Disqualifications.

Section 1. Whereas ministers of the Gospel are by their profession, dedicated to God and the care of souls, and ought not to be diverted from the great duties of their functions; therefore, no minister of the Gospel, or priest of any denomination whatever, shall be eligible to a seat in either House of the Legislature.

Section 2. No person who denies the being of God, or a future state of rewards and punishments, shall hold any office in the civil department of this state.

In the Tennessee constitution, they consider ministers in the light which the Bible proclaims here in 2 Timothy. Their calling is one which, by necessity, should preclude them from becoming entangled in the full-time political affairs of the House of the Legislature. Atheists, being morally unqualified because of their lack of belief, are also prohibited from holding office. If their oaths cannot be trusted, their moral direction is therefore unreliable and perverse. Good job Tennessee!

Life application: Atheists in Tennessee are no different than atheists anywhere else. The difference is that their constitution explicitly recognizes what others fail to see. If a person does not believe in a Creator, he thus acknowledges that there is no afterlife where judgment will be executed on humanity. Because of this, he believes he is not accountable for immoral decisions made now.

Therefore, they identify themselves as wholly unsuited to make decisions on behalf of people who are moral beings. Consider this as you place your vote for those in public office. Find out what they believe, and base your voting decisions, first and foremost, on a sound, moral, and godly standard.

Lord God, when we vote as citizens of a nation, our thoughts first and foremost should always be, "Is this person going to act in a godly manner, honoring of You?" Help us to remember this, and to never vote for any person who would be willing to support abortion, societal perversion, or immoral levels of taxation – taking from earners and giving to the indolent. May our votes be cast while honoring You. Amen.

And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. 2 Timothy 2:5

Paul now changes his comparison from the soldier to an athlete to continue to open Timothy's mind to proper Christian life. He says, "And also if anyone competes in athletics."

The word is found only in this verse (twice), *athleó*. It means to wrestle; to compete as an athlete. One can see the germ of our modern word "athletics" in it. Paul returns to what is an obvious favorite metaphor of his, that of the Grecian games. He uses it elsewhere, such as in 1 Corinthians 9 –

"Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. ²⁵ And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. ²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified." 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

For all who compete, Paul notes that "he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules."

How obvious this is in the modern Olympics. Doping is not allowed; it is one of the rules of the game. If someone is found to be using steroids or other physically enhancing drugs, they are rejected. The same was true in Paul's time. The athletes had certain rules in which to conduct themselves. If they did not complete accordingly, they not only failed to receive a crown, but they would be disqualified completely.

But the crown is what all of the years of training was intended to obtain! And so only a desperate person, or a truly deceitful fool, would attempt to break the rules. In Paul equating the work of the minister to the athletes in Greece, he is showing that ministers must strive according to the rules set down for them – Scripture.

To not follow the manual, is to disqualify oneself for the prize. How many preachers, teachers, priests, and pastors think they will receive the inheritance simply because of the title they held! And yet, which of those failed to run their course in faith? For those who do not, there shall be no crown awaiting them.

Life application: The finest manager, the greatest orator, the seemingly wisest counselor, or the most knowledgeable theologian, may not even be on the right track while running the race. It is the unwise congregant that sits in a church only because he appreciates one of these qualities in their minister.

A meticulous manager who increases the church's size and budget may be skimming the till in the process. A great orator may be preaching a completely false gospel. A counselor's instruction may not even be biblical. And the most noted Bible scholar of all may not actually have faith in what he is teaching.

Be sure to properly evaluate your leader to ensure that he is running his race according to the rules.

Lord God, You have given Your ministers a set of guidelines in order for them to run the race set before them. Give us wisdom to evaluate our leaders according to that set standard. Let us not be awe-struck by flashy oration, good looks, supposedly deep knowledge, or great planning and growth. Instead, let us evaluate our ministers based on how they adhere to Your word, and in the faith that they exhibit in Christ Jesus. May nothing else sway our minds but their running the race according to the rules already laid down for us. Amen.

The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops. 2 Timothy 2:6

Paul now goes to another metaphor to describe the responsibilities and benefits of being a minister of the Lord. He began with the soldier, he then moved to the athlete, and now he speaks of the farmer by saying, "The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops."

Speaking of the soldier, he relayed the concept of obedience by ministers to Christ, and not mixing in the affairs of the world. In his words about the athlete, he conveyed the message that the minister of the Lord was to conduct his affairs according to the set rules, implying the word of God. Now, in these words about farmers, he is showing that there are other requirements, and also benefits, of the ministerial office.

When a farmer works his land, he takes what is necessary for himself before selling off his produce to others. He takes enough for food for himself and his family. He takes enough to feed his animals. He also sets aside enough to be used for planting future crops.

All of this happens before he sells his first bushel to others. It is a laborious, time-consuming process. It takes great exertion of energy and dedication in order to come to this state. If he has not cared for his own house first, then he will fail as a farmer in the future. The same is then true with the minister.

In this lesson, there is both a spiritual and a physical aspect to be understood. First, from a spiritual aspect, the minister must feed himself with the word. There must be a dedicated effort of growing in the word, cultivating it, and caring for it.

Any minister who has not put his effort into the spiritual growth of his harvest will be a pretty horrible minister. Further, he must ensure that his family is set in the word as well, living in accordance with its precepts. And he must store up his knowledge of the word for the future. He must always be ready to apply it to his life and actions.

Secondly, the minister must tend to his needs in a physical sense as well. He must sow into his crop, tend to it, harvest it, and store up what is needed. Some pastors are known for giving of themselves to the point of having nothing left to give.

Paul would call this unwise. There must be a store from which one can be willing to give, and it must be accessed with wisdom and prudence. If it is depleted, then it is he who will then be the soul needing other's help. If it doesn't come, then there will be no ministry at all.

Paul speaks of this elsewhere of this general precept in 1 Corinthians 9 –

For it is written in the law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.” Is it oxen God is concerned about? ¹⁰ Or does He say *it* altogether

for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. ¹¹ If we

have sown spiritual things for you, *is it* a great thing if we reap your material things? ¹² If others are partakers of *this* right over you, *are* we not even more?

-1 Corinthians 9:9-12

Life application: The minister's job is one which must be cultivated through hard work, and it is also a job which requires the minister to be wise and careful in how he deals with both his physical and spiritual gain. To allow either to fall into shortage will cause him to be less effective in his ministerial duties.

There must be a storehouse which will be accessible for the future to meet the obvious needs which will arise in his own life, in that of his family, and also in the ministry.

Lord God, Your word tells us to save for our children's children, while at the same time we are instructed to help meet the needs of others as they arise. Help us to be cautious and careful to do the former, and yet to not let the latter fall by the wayside. Give us wisdom in helping out in needs that are truly needs as we are able to do so. Thank You for being with us as we proceed. Amen.

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

2 Timothy 2:7

Paul now gives an exhortation as to the words he has just passed on to Timothy. The words, "Consider what I say," are present and active. It gives the sense of "Consider what I am saying."

For this reason, some scholars tie his words not to what he has just said (concerning the comparisons concerning the soldier, the athlete, and the farmer), but to what he is about to say concerning the great and theologically weighty words about Jesus Christ in the verse to come.

Either way, Paul is asking Timothy to reflect heavily upon his words. It is something that Timothy would certainly do concerning what has been said, and also what will be said. From there, he says, "and may the Lord give you understanding in all things."

A slight variation in the word "will give" in some manuscripts causes the sentence to read, "for the Lord will give you understanding in all things." Whether Paul is making a

petition, or whether he is stating this as a certainty, it actually doesn't change the intent of the words as much as some might argue. The reason is that Paul began the sentence with, "Consider what I say."

Timothy must first make an active attempt to think on Paul's words before a result will come. In doing so, he either prays for his protegee to gain an understanding (something one would anticipate the Lord granting), or he confidently states that the Lord will provide needed understanding.

Either way, Timothy is to reflect on the instruction of the apostle, setting the example for others in the ministry to act likewise. One who is ordained to the ministry is expected to actively pursue the things of the ministry, first and foremost that of knowing the set directions for ministering.

It is the words of Scripture which provide that knowledge, and so the man of God is to read, contemplate, and apply Scripture to his life. It is to be an active and ongoing part of his life at all times. Even if "for the Lord will give you..." is the true reading, the words of Paul here cannot be carried around and misquoted as a talisman that someone will automatically have understanding in all things, as if the Spirit simply illuminates the believer to be perfect in knowledge and doctrine.

Unfortunately, this is the attitude that many have, and it always leads to poor doctrine. Rather, the words, "Consider what I say," are key. Be wise, contemplate the word always, and keep all things in proper context.

Life application: There is no easy path to sound theology. It takes a tremendous amount of reading the word. From there, that knowledge of Scripture can be taken into consideration when being trained in theology. As there are many views on major doctrines, not all can be correct. In first knowing Scripture, one can more readily weed out that which is incorrect.

Read the word, read the word, and read the word some more. After having this sound foundation, then study the doctrines of theology. This is a wise and sound course of obtaining proper theological knowledge.

Lord God, how good it is to have Your word available to us in so many ways. We have a large variety of versions to give us better understanding into original intent. We have hard copies, digital copies, and audio Bibles – all ready for our use. We have concordances and commentaries galore. But there is one thing we often lack –

commitment. We have time for novels, time for TV, and time for internet activities. But Lord, we don't make time for the study of the most important thing we can pursue... You. Help us to correct this gigantic flaw in our lives. May we pursue You first, not last or never. Amen.

Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, 2 Timothy 2:8

The KJV and the NKJV are incorrect in their translation of this verse. The order is wrong, and the word "that" is incorrectly supplied. It should read: "Remember Jesus Christ, raised out of the dead, of the seed of David, according to my good news" (YLT).

By diverting from the proper order of the Greek, the actual focus is wholly obscured. It is first on Christ Jesus – Remember Christ Jesus. "Christ" means "Messiah" or "Anointed One." He is the fulfillment of the messianic promises which existed from the very fall of man. From there, the focus is directed to the raising of Christ from the dead. The Anointed One is alive, now and forever.

Paul has been speaking of the hardships a minister will encounter, and also of the responsibilities and benefits which go with the position. But things for a minister, by the very nature of the job, will be difficult on good days and almost overly burdensome on bad days. If the job were just a regular one, meaning with no connection to Christ Jesus, he who filled it would surely become despondent rather quickly. But it is not.

The job of a minister is one which is based on factual history. As this history is the basis for being a minister, it is to be remembered and considered at all times. Jesus Christ was raised out of the dead. He is a literal, physical human being who suffered and died in the execution of His duties – given to Him to perform by God.

However, in properly performing His role, He prevailed over death; having died without sin of His own. Thus, it demonstrates that His death is sufficient for the removal of the sins of His people He died for (substitution).

As this is so, then death can no longer hold them either. It is a one-time act with eternal ramifications. Paul is telling Timothy that his duties as a minister have eternal significance, and that should prompt him on during even the lowest moment of his ministerial life. From this remarkable point of surety, he then says that Jesus Christ is "of the seed of David."

His words here are given to substantiate and validate Christ's human nature – both before and after the resurrection. As a human, He truly died. As a human, He truly rose. Being “of the seed of David” also confirms His acceptability as Messiah. The Lord's promise to, and covenant with, David concerning the Messiah (2 Samuel 7) is that He would come from David's line.

The ancestral line of Christ, which is clearly recorded in the Gospels; the work He performed; the death He died; and the resurrection He was given; all point to His fulfillment of Scripture. This is what Timothy is being asked to remember when he is downtrodden and worn out from the battle. The remembrance of these truths is to be the elixir which will pick him up and set him on his feet once again.

Paul then finishes up with, “according to my gospel.” The message he preached was committed to him by Christ personally. It was a bestowal which is in accord with sound doctrine anticipated in the Old Testament, and which is realized in the work of Jesus Christ. He calls it “my gospel,” because it is a personal gospel to him as much as it is a proclamation for others to hear. And yet, elsewhere Paul speaks of “our gospel.”

It is in the plural (1 Thessalonians 1:5 & 2 Thessalonians 2:14). In this, he shows that though the gospel is personal, it is not his anymore than it is for all other ministers who preach it. The thought is similar to saying, “I love my Jesus,” and yet a group can say, “O how we love our Jesus.” Like the gospel message, He is both a personal Savior, and the Savior of all who are saved.

Paul's words here in 2 Timothy are reflected by his opening words to those in Rome –

“Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated to the gospel of God ² which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, ³ concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, ⁴ *and* declared *to be* the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”

-Romans 1:1-4

Life application: Paul is speaking to Timothy as a minister who will surely face immense difficulties and times of great trial. But the words of this verse belong to all in Christ. We should remember Christ Jesus, raised from the dead, of the seed of David at all times. What God has done in Him is something we can reflect on, and hold securely in our hearts at all times. It is the great reassurance that all is ok!

Lord God, it is true that we face times of real trial and difficulty, but as followers of Christ, if we just redirect our thoughts and minds to what He accomplished, we can let go of the troubles and stresses we face. He came, He lived, He died, and He rose again. The theology which is tied up in that thought should be enough to keep us upbeat and content through any time of trouble that we face. Hallelujah! Christ has prevailed. Amen.

...for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained. 2 Timothy 2:9

The words, “for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer” are referring to Paul’s proclamation of the gospel. For speaking the only message that can free humanity from the bondage of imprisonment and slavery to sin, Paul is himself held as a prisoner. His pen brings forth the irony of the situation.

Although translator’s preference allows any of various words to be selected for a given original word, the use of “evildoer” is not a great choice. A person can do wrong without actually doing evil. Paul is held by the Romans for supposed wrongdoing according to their law.

Thus, a word such as “criminal” would be a better choice of translation to form the proper analogy. The meaning here is technical rather than moral. It is as a criminal that he is held, “even to the point of chains.”

This is not a unique occurrence in Paul’s life. In Ephesians 6, he asked for prayers from those at Ephesus by saying, “that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak” (Ephesians 6:19, 20).

Paul was bound because of the gospel. It inhibited his ability to get out and speak, but even in his chains, he still proclaimed the word to whoever was around. He also continued to write letters, encouraging the churches he had ministered to, and providing doctrine for their continued growth. And so, he next says that even though he was chained, “the word of God is not chained.”

At times while chained, Paul was able to speak forth the words of salvation to others, even to kings and governors. This is seen, for example, in Acts 26 –

“And Paul said, ‘I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today,

might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains.”
-Acts 26:29

He repeats the sentiment in his letter to those at Philippi –

“But I want you to know, brethren, that the things *which happened* to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, ¹³ so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; ¹⁴ and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.” Philippians 1:2-14

Paul found that every possible cunning attempt, by devil and by man, was made to silence the gospel, but yet it continued to go forth. His unselfish attitude towards his Lord, and towards the message of salvation found in Christ Jesus, kept the word going. His letters did so as well, and they continue to do so 2000 years later. And based on this precious book called the Bible, which includes these letters, people are willing to follow in Paul’s example and speak boldly of Christ Jesus, even to chains or death.

Life application: How important to you is the message of salvation found in Christ Jesus? Are you willing to proclaim it, even at the expense of your freedom? What about at the expense of your life? Is that which is of infinite value worth your finite, temporary proclamation?

Lord God, how willing are we to proclaim the gospel message of Jesus Christ? This good news, which is of infinite value, often doesn’t seem as important to us as a temporary sports game, or a Hollywood movie. We put more care and attention in keeping our car clean than we do in telling others about the only way to find peace with You. Where are our priorities? Help us to set them straight, and to honor You with the lives You have redeemed by telling others of this good news. Amen.

Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. 2 Timothy 2:10

In verse 9, Paul said concerning his proclamation of the gospel, “for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, *even* to the point of chains.” Before that, he gave comparisons concerning the rights and responsibilities of teaching others about Christ Jesus. He spoke of the soldier, the athlete, and the farmer. They endured the challenges of their profession in order to achieve a good result. Because of these things, Paul now says, “Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect.”

His many trials, physical hardships and deprivations, imprisonments, and so on, were for the sake of the elect. He had just said that “the word of God is not chained.” He was willing to take this unchained message and proclaim it even if it led to chains, and even in his chains.

The elect are those who will obtain salvation through Jesus Christ. This is clearly explained in the words, “that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus.” This is a statement similar to 1 Thessalonians 5:9 –

“For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Relevant questions to be asked are, “Who are the elect?”, and “How does their election come about?” For the Gentile-led church age, Paul shows in Romans 15:29 that a certain number of Gentiles will come in before the partial blindness of Israel is lifted. Elsewhere, the church is equated to a building (see, for example, 1 Corinthians 3:9 & Ephesians 2:21).

A building is a structure with a set size. Therefore, there are a set number who will obtain salvation in order to form this building. The “how” of the process is explained by Paul in this verse and elsewhere. It is through his proclamation of the gospel, and of any others who proclaim it.

As this is so, there is a necessity to be an active part of those already saved in order to get this word out to others. Paul and others actively wrote the epistles, and that effort will lead to some being saved. Paul and others actively proclaimed the message, and that effort will lead to some being saved, etc. This implies free will on the part of those sharing the message.

They could say, “Today, I won’t go out and evangelize.” If this is their decision, then there are some who will miss hearing the words necessary for them to be saved. His words also imply free will on the part of those who then hear that message. He says he endured all of these things “that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus.”

If people are saved apart from free will, then there would be no need for Paul to even say this. But somebody must share, and there must be a response to the message which is shared.

Just because God knows the number of people in advance of completing the building, and just because He knows who will accept the message, it in no way negates free will in the process. In fact, as Jesus and the apostles all show, free will is a necessary part of this equation – believe, call on, receive, etc., are all active words requiring a person to respond to what they have been presented. Once responded to, Paul says that this salvation comes “with eternal glory.”

To be saved implies “from.” One is saved from something bad unto something good. If a person is drowning in the ocean, he must be saved from that. If someone is in a burning house, the fireman will go in to save him. This is what salvation is meant to bring about, a rescue. However, in salvation comes something extra, eternal glory.

We aren’t just saved to live out eternity in these fallen, corruptible bodies which get sick, get tired, get cancer, etc. Rather, we are destined to receive new and incorruptible bodies (see 1 Corinthians 15). There is glory for the redeemed, and it will be eternal in duration.

Life application: Paul was willing to suffer a great deal in order to get the only saving message for fallen men out. Without his (and other’s) efforts, there can be no salvation. A person who does not hear the message will not be saved. This is the means of salvation which God has chosen, and He will not violate that by doing an end-around the labors of His people.

Paul makes this clear. Faith in the message is what saves, and faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. What effort are you willing to exert in order for others to be saved?

Glorious heavenly Father, You have chosen the means of man’s redemption, and You have given us the task of getting that word out. Man is saved through faith in the finished work of Christ, and salvation is found in no other. We are told that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Help us to be willing to open our mouths and speak. Eternity hangs in the balance for all people. Let us feel the weight of our inaction, and respond by acting. Amen.

***This is a faithful saying:
For if we died with Him,
We shall also live with Him. 2 Timothy 2:11***

Like the book of 1 Timothy, Paul's second letter to his young protege centers on a poetic saying. Paul now begins that poetic saying for us to consider. He has just spoken of "the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." With that in mind, he says, "This is a faithful saying."

As with the words found in 1 Timothy 1:15, 3:1, and 4:9, the Greek reads, "Faithful is the saying." Thus, this refers to what precedes it, meaning the "eternal glory." From there, he begins his words. It is believed by some that what he says formed an ancient Christian creed that was already in use, being a part of the liturgy of churches.

There is really nothing to substantiate this, but it is still possible. Whether it is true or not, what he says is also reflected in other parts of his writings. Paul is ever-consistent to relay the truth of the works of Christ. For now, he begins with, "For if we died with Him."

This is speaking about our death to sin; it being crucified with Him. Although we are still physically alive, and although we continue to do things which could be considered as sin, God no longer views us in this light. Through faith in the work of Christ, meaning His death, we are counted as having died with Him.

Thus, when God looks at us, He no longer sees us as we were, meaning dead in sin. Instead, we are reckoned in a new way – alive in Christ. That is confirmed by the next words, "We shall also live with Him."

We are positionally in this new state already. Our hope and faith stand in the fact that it will be realized in us actually at some future point. This is a sentiment similar to Romans 6:8 –

"Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him."

What occurred here is explained by Paul in a very detailed way in 2 Corinthians 5 –

"Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.¹⁸ Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,¹⁹ that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation." 2 Corinthians 5:17-19

Dying with Him means that our sin nature (even if we still actually sin) has died with him. As we are dead to sin through Him, God no longer counts our sins against us. As the wages of sin is death, and as we no longer have sin imputed to us, then we are alive with Christ. And so, even if our earthly body dies, we must (no ifs, ands, or buts) resurrect to eternal life.

Just as it was impossible for death to hold Christ (Acts 2:24) because He had no sin, it is likewise impossible that death can hold us. We have died to sin, sin is not being imputed to us, and thus it is not possible that death can hold us. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:54-57 –

“So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’

⁵⁵ ‘O Death, where *is* your sting?

O Hades, where *is* your victory?’

⁵⁶ The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks *be* to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Indeed, if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him.

Life application: Beloved, if you have received Jesus Christ as Savior, you have died to sin. The process of resurrection to eternal life is more assured than the next sunrise. Christ did not die to give you a possible hope, and the Bible is not written to teach you eternal insecurity. Rather, Christ died for us to give us a sure hope, and the Bible records that eternal salvation is found in the blood of Christ.

Death is swallowed up in victory, and nothing in all of creation can separate you from God’s love which is found in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Heavenly Father, the magnificence of what You have done through Christ Jesus for us is only matched by its simplicity. Christ died for our sins. When we accept that premise we die to sin. The law can no longer accuse us because You are no longer imputing sin to us. As we have died to sin, and as we no longer have sin imputed to us, it is not possible for death to hold us. Death is swallowed up in victory! Thanks be to You, O God, for the full, final, and forever effective work of Jesus Christ in our lives! Amen.

**If we endure,
We shall also reign with *Him*.
If we deny *Him*,
He also will deny us.** 2 Timothy 2:12

Paul continues with his poetic offset, instructing Timothy on the mystery of our relationship with Christ. He now says, “If we endure.”

The word is properly translated. It signifies not just suffering, but bearing up under a load. All believers in Christ suffered in Christ, participating in the penalty of the cross through His substitutionary act. We have died to the law through His death. In accepting what Christ did, we bear up under the load of His work. This may continue on after receiving Christ, but it does not naturally follow so.

Some receive Christ at the end of their lives, and they are taken to glory. Others have lives which are not riddled with suffering. While others have to endure a lifetime of suffering because of their faith in Christ. This then obviously speaks of the penalty of the cross, and bearing up under what it signifies. If we so endure, “We shall also reign with Him.”

This is specifically stated again by Paul in Romans 8 –

“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.” Romans 8:16, 17

The truth we shouldn't miss is that suffering, in and of itself, doesn't meet the necessary conditions for the glory of heaven's riches. Only suffering with Christ does. When we suffer with Him in this manner Paul says that we will “also be glorified together” with Him.

There is nothing shameful in suffering for Christ, and in fact, it is the most honorable of all aspects of our Christian walk. To suffer for Him, and to endure with Him, is to have emulated Him in His highest moment leading to glory – the cross.

We are to bear the reproach of the cross with us at all times. If that turns into actual suffering, we are to endure through it. This is the expectation of the faithful believer, and it is a proof that we shall reign together with Christ. Paul then gives the opposing scenario for us to consider by saying, “If we deny Him.”

The verb is in the future tense and speaks of anyone who would deny Christ at any point into the future. The result of such an action is that “He will also deny us.”

To deny Christ is to be denied by Christ. It is a voluntary act of the free-will. The implication is that to confess Christ is to be saved by Christ. Thus, receiving Christ is an act of the free will as well. Paul made this explicit in Romans 10 where he states the opposite of what is being referred to in Timothy –

“...that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” Romans 10:9

Romans 10:9 is a verse of salvation. It is applicable any time and at all times. When a person receives Christ, he is saved. His salvation is from the time of Paul’s writing, a future action which is passive in nature. In other words, Christ saves the person based on the proclamation. The same is true with denying Christ. His denial of him is in the future tense as well.

At any point that a person denies Christ, Christ will also deny him. However, this cannot negate a later acceptance of Christ which leads to salvation. For example: Bill denies Christ, and so Christ denies him. However, five years later, Bill receives Christ. At that time, Christ no longer denies Bill, but rather He saves him.

It is important to understand this, because Paul’s words here in Timothy cannot be referring to a loss of salvation. This will become clear with the third verse in his poetic offset, meaning verse 13.

Life application: Does the Bible teach one can lose his salvation? Taking verses out of their context could lead one to believe that this is possible. 1 Timothy 1:12 may lead someone to believe that such is the case. But it is a part of a larger section of thought which Paul is fleshing out for us to consider. He has already said that if we die with Christ, we will live with Him.

That is a done deal for those who have accepted the finished work of Christ. He now says that if we deny Him, He also will deny us. How can the first sentence be true if this overrides it? The full and final thought must then be considered. As a life application, keep all things in context. Context is needed to derive proper interpretation.

Lord God, there sure are a lot of opinions about various verses in Your word. But when You wrote it through Your chosen prophets and apostles, there was one meaning flowing

from You. Where is the breakdown then? It is obviously in us. Help us to keep all things in context, and to not pull individual verses out of that context in order to form a doctrine. In doing so, we only produce a pretext. Give us wisdom in how we handle Your word so that our doctrine will be approved by You. Amen.

**If we are faithless,
He remains faithful;
He cannot deny Himself. 2 Timothy 2:13**

There are several major opinions on what Paul is saying in this verse. Two of which are diametrically opposed to one another. The word translated as “faithless” is one which everywhere else speaks of not believing. In using the word in this consistent manner, the first view looks at this as comparable to Romans 3:3 –

“For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect?”

Therefore, the opinion is that God is ever faithful, even when some do not believe. This would then indicate that God cannot receive as faithful one who has not proven true to Him by receiving Christ Jesus. To do so would be to deny Himself. In this then, the view is that it is speaking of those who have never believed and been saved, who are then contrasted to God who is unchanging, and who cannot accept those who do not come to Him in faith.

The second view is that the Greek word translated as “faithful” is a correct translation (which it is). Therefore, the word “faithless” is not speaking of “not believing,” but of not remaining faithful after having believed. In other words, the two words, “faithless” and “faithful” are set in opposition to one another.

This would be the person who “died with Him” in verse 11, but has not been perfectly faithful to Him after receiving Him; something that every single person who has come to Christ has done. The words would then explain God’s character towards those who have received Him, but have slipped and tripped along their walk.

Despite any faithlessness in us, God remains faithful. Examples of this relationship are found in 2 Corinthians 1:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:24; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; Hebrews 10:23; Hebrews 11:11; & etc. In such a case, the final clause, “He cannot deny Himself,” is speaking of keeping safe the believer despite his failings.

If God were to deny one who has come to Him, then He would be denying Himself, because those who have come to Him are “in Christ.” They are united to Him through faith. To deny them, despite their times of faithlessness, would be a denial of the covenant commitment rendered through His shed blood.

A third view is that this is speaking of someone who once believed, but has fallen away. That does not at all square up with Romans 3:3, nor does it square up with Paul’s words elsewhere. Only the first two options can be considered as valid. And so, which of the first two is correct? The answer is most assuredly “both.”

Matthew Poole evaluates this verse with the words, “...whether we believe or believe not, or whether we be faithful to our trust or be not, yet God will show himself faithful, either to his promises made to them that believe, or to his threatenings denounced against those that believe not.”

For those who have not come to Him, there will be wrath and indignation. For those who have come to Him, there will be mercy and salvation. Either way, the Lord cannot deny Himself. If someone is not in Him, He would deny His own character to save him anyway.

If someone is in Him, He would deny His own character by not following through with that person’s salvation. As Paul says, “...let God be true but every man a liar” (Romans 3:4).

Life application: Being “in Christ” means that one is united to Christ. If this is true, He would have to deny Himself if He rejected such a person. But God cannot deny Himself. Be of good cheer. If you have come to Christ, you are saved despite yourself – wholly and eternally.

Lord God, Your word says that those who received Jesus as Savior are “in Christ.” If at some point we act unfaithfully after coming to You, Your word also says that You cannot deny Yourself. You remain faithful, even when we are faithless. This is really great news, because the fact is that all of us are unfaithful at times. And yet, we continue to be saved despite our failings. Thank You for the sure, complete, and eternal covering of Christ. Amen.

Remind *them* of these things, charging *them* before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. 2 Timothy 2:14

Paul now exhorts Timothy concerning what he has been speaking about. This doesn't mean just the preceding few verses, but all of the exhortations thus far. In verse 1:8, he spoke of not being ashamed of the gospel. In 1:13, he exhorted Timothy to hold fast to the pattern of sound words which he had heard.

In 2:1, Timothy was told to be strong in the grace of Christ Jesus. In 2:8, Paul spoke of Christ's person, ancestry, and resurrection. In 2:11, he gave the poetic thought concerning the relationship between Christ and those who have or have not called on Him. These, and so many other points connected to those verses, are what Timothy is to remind others of. But along with reminding them, he is to charge "*them* before the Lord."

The word translated as "charging" indicates solemn witness. It is an intensified compound word that gives the sense of giving complete and clear testimony. Therefore, Paul is particularly interested in Timothy's special handling of what he has been taught.

Paul is an apostle, and therefore Timothy could use the words written to him as authoritative. Anyone contradicting what is written would then be given the charge to correct his error. This is exactly what responsible teachers of the Bible should be doing to this day. When someone wants to get argumentative over an issue, the teacher is to charge them, in the presence of the Lord, "not to strive about words to no profit."

The idea here is someone who argues over points which are invalid, twisting words to suit a perverse and incorrect agenda. He engages in "Scripture tennis," pulling verses out of context, and manipulating words, thoughts, verses, and concepts in order to come to improper conclusions.

Paul's focus is consistently centered on the Person and work of Christ. This builds up his audience, edifies them, and sets them on a sound path of doctrine and holiness. However, those who strive over words to no profit do so "to the ruin of the hearers."

They confuse the minds of those untrained in the word, mislead them into strange doctrines, divide the fellowship so that they can conquer as many as possible to their perverse side, and overthrow the faith of these people.

They go from being set and secure in Christ, to becoming legalistic work-your-way-to-heaven robots. Or they go from purity in Christ to license-to-sin-and-call-it-ok deviants. On and on it goes with cults and aberrant sects. They are filled with people who have been ruined by those with perverse agendas.

Life application: Paul always sets doctrine as the most important point in our relationship with Christ. Those who dismiss biblical doctrine do so because they have no knowledge of the Bible, and they are too lazy to put in the effort to get to know it. After all, it is so much easier to watch a movie than it is to engage one's brain in sound, reasonable theology.

Lord God; Heavenly Father; Almighty Creator – You have pieced all things together for Your glory. You have set in motion the plan of redemption, and You have fulfilled what is needed for our salvation through the work of Christ. Connected to this are many points of doctrine, given to keep us on a sound and straight path in life. And yet, we spend a lot more time watching TV than we do engaging our brains in the pursuit of theology. What a waste! When we stand before You, what will we present as having brought You honor? So many will have little to identify them as even minutely interested in the great things You have done for us. Help us to correct this, O God. Help us to desire You more, and to be pleasing and approved in Your sight. Amen.

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15

The previous verse exhorted Timothy to charge others “before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit.” Now he contrasts that with a thought concerning Timothy himself, beginning with, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God.”

The word translated as “Be diligent” carries with it the sense of being swift, or hastening. And so, there is a sense of urgency in the act. To paraphrase it, “Present yourself approved to God, and do so with fervency.”

In his statement is a contrast to striving about words to no profit. Such striving will only ruin those who hear. However, in presenting oneself approved to God, the minister will teach what is sound, reasonable, and in context. His doctrine will be set in order to please God rather than his hearers.

Instead of ruining the hearer, there will be edification and growth in sanctification and towards holiness. In performing in this manner, Timothy (and any such minister) will be “a worker who does not need to be ashamed.”

In presenting proper doctrine, there may be bitterness towards the teacher, but there will be no shame before God. Which is more important? In 2 Corinthians 11:13, Paul

contrasts this with those who will be ashamed. There he says, “For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.”

Timothy is implored now to remember such people and not act like them. In the end, all will stand before God, and they will have their works revealed. They will be tested for purity at that time. Many will stand ashamed. One particular way to ensure that such will not be the case is for the minister to ensure he is “rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Here Paul uses a word found only here in the Bible. It comes from two words which signify “straight” and “cut.” We can imagine a carpenter ensuring that the board he is cutting is straight, so that it will fit properly elsewhere. A tile-setter will make his cuts straight so that the mosaic will be harmonious and pleasing to the eye.

The priest of Israel would cut the sacrifices properly to ensure that the parts which were dedicated to God would be wholly reserved to Him as required. To improperly cut any such thing will lead to faults or flaws in what is cut. Therefore, the one receiving the item will have a diminished quality of product. The house frame will be off, the mosaic will look odd, and the sacrifice to God will be displeasing.

The same is true with presenting Scripture. Pulling one verse out of its intended context, and then inserting it with another verse in an inappropriate manner, will lead to something wholly unintended by God. Scripture should be used to interpret Scripture, not misinterpret it.

The axiom, “A verse out of context is a pretext,” is correct. It should always be remembered. To rightly divide the word of truth is to maintain truth in the word. Anything else is to form a lie, not intended by God for the instruction of His people.

In 1 Corinthians 3:9-15, Paul speaks of erecting a building upon a foundation. He says there that the foundation is Jesus Christ. Elsewhere (Ephesians 2:20) he says that the foundation is the prophets and apostles with Christ as the chief Cornerstone.

What that means is that the prophets and apostles spoke of Christ. Their word is what teaches of Him. Thus, He is both the Cornerstone and the Foundation, as revealed through their words. This building is now being constructed out of the people of the church. Our works are being revealed through this process, and Paul says that there is a time of judgment upon those works.

Take time to read that passage and consider if what you are doing is in line with the concept of “rightly dividing” the word of truth.

Life application: It can be difficult for a minister to continue with sound doctrine when the numbers are dwindling and no new congregants are coming in to replace them, or when people turn away because they don’t like what they hear. But in the end, if the ministry is the Lord’s to begin with, it is His to end. A church not established on this ideal is one not worth attending.

And one that is faithful should be considered that way, even if it is time to close the doors. If He established it, then He will continue it or close it. Changing doctrine away from what is biblically correct to keep a church open is evidence that the church is not in the Lord’s will at all. Run, don’t walk from such a place.

Lord God, when a church is established on Your word, and it later changes its doctrine away from what Your word teaches, it really is no longer Your church. Your word is eternal and unchanging. How sad it is that so many churches are now accepting what You have already forbidden. What a mournful day for them when they present their life and doctrine for Your evaluation. Convert hearts now Lord, before that terrifying day comes when many find out that they were never approved. Amen.

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

2 Timothy 2:16

The word “But” here is given as a strong and stark contrast to the things just stated, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” It was a positive exhortation intended to guide Timothy’s life and conduct before the Lord, and in the handling of God’s precious word. Now, Paul exhorts him to “...shun profane *and* idle babblings.”

The word translated as “shun” is one which means, “to stand around.” As it is in the middle voice here, it thus signifies to turn oneself around in order to avoid contact with something. The sense then is to look away from, and keep away from, such things. In this case, it is “profane *and* idle babblings.”

The word “profane” means “worldly.” It comes from two words signifying “go” and “threshold.” Thus, it is to cross a threshold which profanes due to improper entrance. The words are unfit to access God, particularly because faith is not involved.

The second word, translated as “babblings,” was first used by Paul in 1 Timothy 6:20 as he closed out his first letter to Timothy. It signifies empty disputing and worthless babble. This is now the second and last use of it in the Bible. In other words, Paul has already said this to him, but he is reminding him of the danger of such contact. This is how Paul stated it there –

“O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane *and* idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—²¹ by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith.
Grace *be* with you. Amen.” 1 Timothy 6:20, 21

Paul then gives a sound reason for avoiding these things by saying, “for they will increase to more ungodliness.”

The word translated as “increase” means to advance. It is as if they are on a mission, removing obstacles in the process in order to meet a set goal. They are as soldiers marching from a state of ungodliness to more ungodliness. In the process, they spit out their worthless words in order to bring more into their ranks as they continue forward.

Such people are found in abundance in Christian blogs, chat rooms, and discussion boards. They play Scripture tennis, pulling verses out of context, and dispute simply for the sake of disputing. Their goal is never edification, but destruction. Two of such people will be mentioned by Paul next, and he will explain the destructive effects of their march toward ruin.

Life application: Paul says elsewhere, “Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.” Playing Scripture tennis with a fool can only lead you to looking like one too.

Give your case, state your stand, support your doctrine, and be done with the perverse people who simply want to hear themselves as they rush headlong into destruction. Don’t let them take you there as well.

Heavenly Father, give us wise discernment to not argue with fools. Your word tells us to reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition. It’s hard to follow this path, because pride steps in and we want to defend our case concerning You and Your gospel. But there are many who couldn’t care diddly. They only want to hear themselves, and to prove their know-it-all-ness in the process. Give us wisdom with such warped people, and

the presence of mind to cut them off from further words. May we conduct our affairs to Your glory alone. Amen.

And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort,
2 Timothy 2:17

The words of this verse build on what Paul said concerning “profane *and* idle babblings” of the previous verse. Paul exhorted Timothy to shun those things. Unless that was done, Paul knew one thing was for sure concerning those who spoke out such nonsense, “their message will spread.”

The Greek words here literally state, “will have a pasture.” In other words, just as animals find a field of grass and come in to eat it up, moving ever-outward in order to find more fresh grass, so will such a perverse message spread. Paul then says, “like cancer.”

The Greek word is *gaggraina*, and it is found only here in the Bible. It signifies “gangrene.” The word “cancer” is not a good choice. Cancer can get into a person and affect only one portion of the body. Further, it can take quite a while for the cancer to finally destroy the person, even years. Gangrene is something which spreads quickly, and if not excised immediately, it will eat up everything around it.

Paul then speaks of two people who were just like gangrene, Hymenaeus and Philetus. Hymenaeus is probably the same person noted in 1 Timothy 1:20 whom Paul “delivered to Satan” along with a guy named Alexander so that “they may learn not to blaspheme.”

Apparently, he didn’t learn anything. He and Philetus were like a festering gangrene which ate away at the saints with their profane and idle babblings. The name Hymenaeus comes from Hymen, the Greek god of weddings. Instead of looking in anticipation of a marriage to Christ, he taught others to be wedded to unsound things which profited no one.

The name Philetus gives the sense of “amiable,” or “worthy of close friendship.” Unfortunately, the things he taught only made him unworthy of the friendship of the saints. Until these two stopped their unholy speaking, they would only cause dissension, not unity. In the coming verse, the false message they proclaimed will be explained.

Life application: As you go to Bible class, or discuss biblical matters on social media, watch closely and see who is teaching something sound and reasonable, and who is engaging in the discourse to simply stir up trouble.

If you step back and carefully evaluate people's words, it won't take long for you to come across these gangrenous folks. Once you have identified them, don't argue with them, just cut them off. They are a festering sore which will only spread and cause trouble and division.

Lord God, Paul describes the message that some folks spread among the church as gangrene. That is something which is festering, destroys quickly, and unless cut off, it will continue to cause disruption and harm. Help us to identify such festering folly, and then to cut off communication with those teachers so that they don't continue to harm proper doctrine. Your word is far too precious to be attacked in this way. Give us wisdom in this, O Lord. Amen.

...who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some. 2 Timothy 2:18

"Who" is referring to Hymenaeus and Philetus of the previous verse. Paul said of them that their message would spread like a gangrene which quickly consumes and corrupts. Thus, the message they proclaim is a false one. He then says of them, "who have strayed concerning the truth."

The words, "have strayed" are from a Greek word used only by Paul in 1 & 2 Timothy. This is its final use. It signifies "off target." If proper doctrine were a straight line, these two have gone off that straight line. This does not mean that such people are necessarily heretics, but that their doctrine is askew.

Heresy and bad doctrine are not always the same thing. In this case, what they are teaching is a type of heresy, and it is a source of causing others to wander and have their faith overthrown. As Paul notes, it is not correct "concerning the truth." Thus, they are teaching that which is false.

And what is their false doctrine? They are "saying that the resurrection is already past." The reason that what they are teaching can be considered heretical is because although they are teaching that the resurrection is true, they are saying that it had already occurred. The problem with this is that in taking the Lord's Supper, as outlined in 1 Corinthians 11, we "proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

If the resurrection is already past, then the Lord must have returned, and we are taking the Lord's Supper for no reason at all. In their doctrine, they are teaching one of a few possible scenarios.

- 1) That Christ has returned and resurrected His believers at the rapture. If this is so, then everyone else, including these two numb skulls, have been left behind. The implication is that they must now enter the tribulation period. This means that those left behind were not true Christians. Talk about wrecking someone's faith.
- 2) That the resurrection has occurred, and the tribulation period is now anticipated as outlined by Paul in 2 Thessalonians. This means that all living believers must then go through the tribulation period. Only the dead have been resurrected, but there is no pre-tribulation rapture for those who were left alive at the Lord's coming. But Paul has already explained this is incorrect in 1 Thessalonians 4. This would ruin the faith of those who had been instructed concerning this event as it was outlined in Paul's other letters. (Note: If you accept a mid- or post- tribulation, you will still be going pre-trib. However, you will just be more surprised than the rest of us).
- 3) That the resurrection has occurred, and those resurrected are living among the believers, awaiting the end times events together. This would mean that Paul was wrong about the conversion of our bodies to new bodies in 1 Corinthians 15. This would ruin the faith of the believers because Paul was wrong about this issue. Instead of new bodies, we are forever stuck in these fallen, corruptible, pain-filled bodies.

For one of these, and possibly other reasons, these people were wrecking the faith of others by claiming that the resurrection is past. Why is this important to have recorded in Paul's letter? It is because the truth of the issue has not, and will not, change throughout the church age.

Anyone who claims that the resurrection has occurred is causing the same confusion now as was caused at Paul's time. In this, they are calling into question the truth of Paul's words, and thus the truth of Scripture. In doing so, "they overthrow the faith of some."

This is a constant state of some people. It has been the same since the beginning. They teach this nonsense, and it can be found on Christian blogs and discussion boards even today. People will claim that the tribulation period has already started. People will claim

that the rapture has already occurred, people will claim that there is a resurrection but it is not tied to the rapture, and so on.

Each time they make these inane claims. They imply that what Paul says is incorrect. Each of these views comes from someone with a perverse mind, who is filled with vain babbling, and who has no idea of what he is talking about.

There will be a resurrection, it will be at the time of the rapture, and it will be for all true believers in Christ – from the first to the last throughout the church age – and it will be pre-tribulation. The saints will not enter the tribulation period; something implied in Paul's words here.

Note: John's "first resurrection" of Revelation 20:5 is not what is being referred to in these comments. The rapture is something different than the resurrection of those who die for Christ in the Tribulation period.

To understand the timing of these things, as outlined by Paul, this video can be watched. It clearly and concisely presents the timing of the events – ["The Timing of the Rapture"](#)
Life application: If you are a saved believer in Jesus Christ, and someone tells you that the resurrection is already past, tell them to take a hike. They have absolutely no idea what they are talking about. When the resurrection occurs, the believer in Christ will know it, personally. There is no secret knowledge that these folks possess in this matter. When the event occurs, all true believers will be affected at the same time.

Lord God, please keep us from people who teach false messages about things like the rapture, the resurrection, and the tribulation period. Your word shows that nobody is going to know in advance when the rapture will occur. It details the timeline of Your coming for Your people, and it tells about the tribulation period after that. Help us to not have our faith shaken by those who have not properly handled Scripture. May our doctrine be sound and in line with Your word! Amen.

Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." 2 Timothy 2:19

The word "Nevertheless" is given as a contrast to the false teachings of people such as have been mentioned in verses 16-18. The two false teachers, Hymenaeus and Philetus, had taught that which was untrue about the resurrection, but no matter what they had said, "the solid foundation of God stands."

In other words, there is one foundation, Jesus Christ (see 1 Corinthians 3:11), and that foundation is proclaimed by the prophets and apostles (see Ephesians 2:20) where Christ is the chief cornerstone of this foundation.

What Paul is saying is that the truth of the word of God is not diminished by false teachings. Despite people making outrageous or misleading claims which dupe people, the truth of the word stands. Some may walk away from the faith because they have been misled, but what they should have done is turned to the word and studied it on their own instead of losing heart and turning away. Paul then confirms the truth of God's word in this manner by saying, "having this seal."

Paul is using the term here metaphorically. A letter from a king is sealed with his royal seal in order to show its authenticity, that it has not been altered, and that it is official. Buildings, at times, are inscribed with a note of their original purpose, and who had been behind their construction. Such things show the source, the intent, and the reliability of what is stated. Likewise, the solid foundation of God is similarly sealed. The seal is that "The Lord knows those who are His."

This then is one of the inscriptions which is permanently seen on the foundation stone. Christ knows who belongs to Him, and who does not. Being led astray does not negate being His, just as having sound doctrine doesn't necessarily mean one is His. Belief in His work is the deciding factor. In Nahum 1:7, it says, "...He knows those who trust in Him."

This is what the Lord looks for above all else. In his words now, Paul may have been thinking of Numbers 16:5 –

“...and he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, ‘Tomorrow morning the Lord will show who *is* His and *who is* holy, and will cause *him* to come near to Him. That one whom He chooses He will cause to come near to Him.’”

Jesus gave this same type of terminology in John 10:14, acknowledging that He knows His sheep. No true believer will be left out of His promises. The inscription is written. Further, Paul next says, “and, ‘Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.’”

This is a second seal, or inscription, made upon the foundation. It may be a loose merging together of several verses from Isaiah. In Isaiah 26:13, we read –

“O Lord our God, masters besides You
Have had dominion over us;
But by You only we make mention of Your name.”

Also, we read in Isaiah 52:11 this –

“Depart! Depart! Go out from there,
Touch no unclean *thing*;
Go out from the midst of her,
Be clean,
You who bear the vessels of the Lord.”

Paul may be citing these two verses, or maybe he was just drawing them from the store of his memory as truth which apply to the church. Either way, the Lord divinely inspired Paul that this is the second inscription of the foundation. Those who are known by the Lord are to live lives of holiness to Him. We are to depart from iniquity and follow sound doctrine.

In citing these two things, it cannot be inferred that Paul is saying the two false teachers are not saved believers. Instead, he could be saying exactly the opposite. The Lord knows who are His, despite the incorrect doctrine, and they are being admonished by Paul, through Timothy, to turn from the iniquity of their false teaching.

As it was, they are examples for the church in all subsequent generations to not be followed or emulated. For those who follow the proper path, they are to stay on it and not get caught up in such false ramblings.

Life application: We are all accountable to God for our doctrine. If we fail to follow sound teaching, it does not negate our salvation – if our conversion was true. However, we will not be considered obedient to the Lord, and so we are exhorted to turn from the iniquity of false teachings, and to pursue holiness and righteousness through a sound evaluation of Scripture.

Lord God, You know all who belong to You. The Shepherd knows each of His flock. But we often get misdirected from the fold. We are prone to wander off into unsound teachings. Help us to not do this, but give us hearts that are willing to search out what is true, and to stay in line with that always. In this, we will stay safely among the flock and not be exposed to the false teachings of wolves. This we pray that we will be pleasing to You in our lives and doctrine. Amen.

But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. 2 Timothy 2:20

Paul has just spoken of the solid foundation of God. After that he said, “The Lord knows who are His,” and then “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” Now he turns to the words, “But in a great house.”

It seems like a diversion from what he was saying, but it is not. It is the same theme he has used before, and which Peter will also use. God is building a temple out of the people of God. This is stated by Paul in Ephesians 2:19-22 –

“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, ²¹in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²²in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”

Likewise, Peter says –

“Coming to Him *as to a living stone*, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God *and precious*, ⁵you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 1:4, 5.

It is this idea of a spiritual temple, being built by God out of the people of God, that is being addressed again here by Paul. He somewhat changes the imagery, however. Instead of the actual structure of the building, he turns to the things within the building. Of this great house, he says that “there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay.”

Not everything within a house is made of the same materials. Some things are made of that which is highly valued, such as gold and silver. Some things are made of that which is far more common, such as wood and clay. Each thing is used for a specific purpose and is treated more carefully, or less so, based on what it is made of, or even how it is formed.

Again, this same imagery is used by Paul when speaking of the works of those within the church, and which will be evaluated at our judgment –

“Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴ If anyone’s work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.” 1 Corinthians 3:12-15

What is obvious here is that Paul is speaking about saved believers, not the lost. The lost will face a different judgment. The judgment of believers is for rewards and losses, not salvation or condemnation. And so, we can see that in Paul’s reference to Hymenaeus and Philetus in verse 17 & 18, he considers them saved but wayward. This is the reason for his words now. There are those in the church who are formed “for honor and some for dishonor.”

Likewise, even the works of the honorable may be burned up if they are not of merit, and those works which are worthy will be purified in the fire. Paul’s words should be a comfort to those in the church that salvation of believers is guaranteed, but they should also stand as a warning that our lives now are being carefully evaluated.

Each thing we do is either of value in the eternal state, which is coming, or it is of no value. What we do now counts for all time.

Life application: As our deeds in this life have eternal consequences, let us daily consider all we do, and then let us be careful to direct our actions towards being pleasing vessels in God’s house. In the end, our judgment will be perfectly fair and unbiased, and it will be based on what we do now.

Our salvation has been procured by Christ. Our placement and benefits in God’s house are now being determined by us as we live out our lives in the presence of God.

Glorious heavenly Father, thank You for the salvation which is found in Jesus Christ our Lord. All that is necessary to reconcile us to You has been accomplished by His work. And now, You allow us to determine our rewards and losses at our judgment by how we live out our salvation in Christ. Help us to be proper stewards of our time and actions by pursuing You and Your will always. Be with us, keep us from tripping, and spur us on to great deeds for You! Amen.

Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. 2 Timothy 2:21

Paul continues the thought of the previous verse which speaks of vessels of gold and silver, as well as vessels of wood and clay. Some are “for honor and some for dishonor.”

He doesn’t really explain the thought. Instead, he assumes that Timothy (and all who read his words) will understand the metaphor he is using. And so, he says, “Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter.”

It cannot be that Paul is speaking of cleansing from one type of vessel to another type, meaning clay, wood, silver, or gold. Instead, he is referring to what the vessel is used for, meaning an honorable or a dishonorable use.

There are wood vessels which are used for honorable things, and it is possible that a silver or gold bowl could carry something dishonorable. The makeup of the vessel, combined with an honorable use, is what Paul is referring to.

When an otherwise noble person associates with those who teach false doctrine, and when a regular blue-collar worker refrains from associating with such falsities, which of the two is cleansing himself properly? Of course, it is the latter. Even though “wood” is cheap in comparison to “gold,” he has made himself “a vessel for honor.”

In this then, he is becoming “sanctified and useful for the Master.” The meaning is obvious, any vessel which is cleansed – meaning a person regardless of his status – is acceptable for serving the Lord in his station of life. This is certain, because a vessel is not considered unclean in the Levitical law until it touches something unclean.

Once this occurs, different things would happen to different materials. Clay vessels were to be broken. Bronze vessels were to be scoured. In Leviticus 15:12 it says for one type of defilement that, “The vessel of earth that he who has the discharge touches shall be broken, and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water.” When even a wooden vessel is rinsed in this way, it was once again “prepared for every good work.”

It is true that a gold vessel is generally considered as possessing the highest value, but a golden vessel which was defiled was of less value for holy service than an undefiled wood vessel. It remained so until it was once again cleansed. The only suitable vessel for the Lord’s work is one which is undefiled.

Life application: In the end, we are being shown that doctrine really matters to the Lord. The introduction of Hymenaeus and Philetus in verse 17 shows us that bad doctrine defiles a person, and that bad doctrine will corrupt good character.

We must separate ourselves from those who teach falsities, and we must cleanse ourselves through the application of pure doctrine. In this, we will be acceptable for the Master's use, and able to instruct others in what is right, sound, and edifying.

Lord God, we are who we are in person and position, but regardless of our station in life, we can be acceptable and of use to You. The most noble person who applies defiled doctrine to his life is less acceptable than the lowest commoner among us whose doctrine is pure and sound. Help us to cleanse ourselves of that which is incorrect through a careful study of Your word, and then help us to pursue Your word further, day by day, applying its precepts to our walk in Your presence. Amen.

Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 2 Timothy 2:22

Paul has noted that ministers are to “depart from iniquity” (2:19). He then brought in the idea of vessels of gold, silver, wood, and clay, noting that when properly cleansed, they will be vessels for honor which are “sanctified and useful for the Master.” Now, he continues with an exhortation that ministers are to “Flee also youthful lusts.”

This ties in well with his thought of 1 Corinthians 6:8. There he says, “Flee sexual immorality.” Youthful lusts are not wholly sexual in nature, but that is certainly a large part of what is on a young man's mind. Along with that target, come all the things associated with it – cars, fancy clothes, etc., which are intended to attain the goal of meeting the sexual desires that have been formed.

Paul would have Timothy, and certainly all in the church, to flee from such things. They turn our minds from what is good, proper, and holy. Further, such lusts, when acted out, inevitably will lead to scandals within the church which will not go unnoticed outside of the church. Instead of engaging one's youthful lusts, he gives a list of things to pursue in its place, starting with “righteousness.”

The man of God is to pursue that which is right and just, that which harms no one else, and that which involves integrity and an upright attitude. He is to pursue the righteousness of Christ which is the epitome of all of these things. Next, he mentions “faith.”

Hebrews says that “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (11:1). We have a hope which is in us, even if we cannot see it. But our faith is

evidenced in that we trust what is unseen, and when we live our lives in accord with that unseen force.

If we believe that God will reward those who seek Him and live according to His will, then we should pursue that belief, increase it through our study of His word, and apply it to our daily walk. In other words, as we learn what His word says about Him, and what He expects of us, we should live out our faith in accord with that word. Next, “love” is noted.

The love spoken of here is beautifully described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 13. We are to pursue love of God, love of Christ Jesus, love of our brethren, and love for the lost. In pursuing love, we will learn to put aside hate, bitterness, wrath, and the like. Paul then says that we are to pursue “peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”

In Romans 12:18, Paul says, “If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.” In Titus 3:2, he says “to be peaceable.” Each of these leaves it open to understanding that not all want peace with God’s people. Some are so perverse that they will neither accept peace, nor will they act peaceably. There is no need to seek peace with such perverse people.

If we live peaceably, and if we act in a peaceable manner, we have done our job towards those outside the faith. For those in the faith, we are to pursue peace with them “out of a pure heart.” This means that we are to act in peace towards them for the sake of peace itself, not with ulterior motives, such as profit or gain.

Life application: To flee is an active action. To pursue is an active action as well. We are not just to bumble through life allowing the winds to direct our steps. Instead, we are to actively shun and run away from that which is wrong, and we are to actively seek after, and pursue, that which is morally right and sound. Let us remember this as we hit the highway of life. May our feet actively do what our mind knows is right.

Lord God, Your word asks us to flee youthful lusts, and instead to pursue righteousness, faith, and love. We are also to do our best to live peaceably with all men. Help us in this! It is a giant challenge to act upon in these fallen, frail bodies. We are weak in ourselves, but through studying Your word and applying it to our lives, we can certainly prevail. Be with us, guide us, and keep us from those situations which will have us act in a manner contrary to what You wish. May we be found acceptable in Your sight always! Amen.

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

2 Timothy 2:23

What a verse for modern times! How easy it is to get into inane, ignorant disputes with others on social media. How many people have been eviscerated, and who return the evisceration, by the use of a keyboard and mere words! This is true in almost every subject possible.

Whether the earth is flat or not has brought people to ridiculous arguments as posts fly back and forth. Whether this person is suitable to hold office or not is argued to the point of nausea. Paul is certainly referring to any such argument – be it religion, politics, or whether chicken tastes better than beef. However, this verse can be kept to religion alone, and that will suffice as an example for all other areas.

Paul might say, “There are a million points which one could squabble over which will turn into foolish and ignorant arguments. Just don’t go there, Timothy.” He has already mentioned “fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes” in his first letter.

There are some things which might be inferred from Scripture that are debatable. There are some things which are completely unknown, such as the day of the rapture. There are things which are so complicated that we will never fully grasp them (such as the complete nature of God – it being an infinite subject). To endlessly argue over such things can be, and usually is, foolish. Those who do the arguing are normally ignorant.

The Greek word for “foolish” gives the sense of being dull (insipid) or flat (without an edge). It is *móros*, the root of our modern “moron.” It is a person who is mentally inert – a dolt – who speaks that which is moronic or insensible. We might call him “brainless.”

The word translated as “ignorant” is found only here. It means “uninstructed.” Thus, it is a person who shows a complete lack of proper training or education. Paul’s choice of these descriptive words is careful and purposeful.

With the coming of modern printing, the Bible has gone forth in a marvelous way. The word of God is opened up to millions, and there is true freedom in being able to pick it up, read it, and cherish it.

And yet, at the same time, there are those who stick to one particular subject of doctrine, pulling it out of context, and then claim to be specialists in it. This is especially true with sensational subjects like angelology, demonology, or prophecy.

They have no real training in proper theology, and they come to completely unfounded conclusions about these matters. And yet, they will argue their stand until blue in the face, constantly playing Scripture tennis in an attempt to look smart. Such people are ignorant, and they are fools. He exhorts Timothy to stay away from them, “knowing that they generate strife.”

This is what they live for, the argument for the argument’s sake. They have no desire to build anyone up, and they have no desire to be truly edified in the word of God. Instead, they perversely want to be proven right at all costs, and to the harm of any who would dare challenge them. Watch for them on Facebook or other social media. They are there, waiting to pounce. Paul has special words for dividers like this –

“Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, ¹¹ knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.” Titus 3:10, 11

They are the special type for which the BLOCK option is particularly designed for on social media. Let them argue with themselves. You should choose the better path and use your time building others up, edifying them in their walk with the Lord, and showing the love of Christ to those who are in need of His loving care.

Life application: It is so very easy to get sucked into tit for tat challenges about matters which don’t matter. Be wise and cautious to not go beyond what is written. Make your case, state your view, and then warn the divisive person up to a second time, and then POW! Ignore him, or even hit the block button, lest you argue yourself into the same state of foolishness that he has done.

Lord God, help us to not get into divisive arguments with fools. Your word specifically advises against this. If we give our view, and another wants to argue, we are advised to warn them once, warn them a second time, and then have nothing to do with them. How good it would be if we would follow this advice! We would save ourselves much grief in this world of easy-to-slay-one-another on social media and elsewhere. Help us in this, O God. Amen.

And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,
2 Timothy 2:24

Paul is still speaking primarily of ministers here, the letter being a pastoral epistle. However, as the minister is to be an example for the flock, the words are to be carried

into the hearts of all believers, and they are to be then acted upon by them. He begins this thought with, “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel.”

The word he chooses here is one which signifies engaging in battle, fighting one another, and disputing in contention. It was used in Acts 7:26 when speaking of Moses who came upon two Israelites who were disputing between one another. Moses asked them why they would so wrong one another, implying it was a heavy, angry dispute.

Rather than such contentions, the minister of God (and by extension all believers) should strive to be amiable, speaking words of truth. They should maintain a calm demeanor without provoking others to anger or wrath. This was said to apply to Jesus when Matthew quoted Isaiah concerning the coming Messiah –

“He will not quarrel nor cry out,
Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.” Matthew 12:19

Instead of such a contrary attitude of quarreling, the minister should “be gentle to all.”

The word *épios* is found only here. It gives the sense of “‘gentle-faith-speaking’ as we yield to God” (HELPS Word Studies). Believers should act in an even-tempered manner, and they should avoid being harsh. Rather, they should be congenial and speak in a forthright manner. In addition to this, ministers should be “able to teach.”

This is the same thing Paul said to Timothy in 1 Timothy 3:2. The words are exactly translated and should be easy to understand without further explanation.

Finally, he says that teachers are to be “patient.” It also is a word unique in Scripture. It signifies the ability to endure evil. A minister should be able to bear up, particularly when treated unjustly. Even if his treatment is undeserved, he should attempt to maintain his composure and be steadfast in his testimony before others.

Life application: A lot is expected of ministers. Keep them in prayer.

Lord God, Your word asks ministers to not quarrel, but to be gentle to all. They are to be patient, and also able to teach. Such things can be a daunting challenge when there are those who love to challenge their every spoken word as they conduct their duties. Grant them the ability to let these things go, and to continue to be patient and kind in the face of adversity. Surely Your hand is needed for them to be able to meet these demands. And so, we pray for that in them. Amen.

...in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, 2 Timothy 2:25

Paul's words of exhortation to "the servant of the Lord" continue on. He just said that the minister "must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient..." Now in the same thought he says, "in humility correcting those who are in opposition."

This is obvious. The minister is not to be arrogant as he corrects those who have different views. However, this does not mean he cannot be stern. There is a difference. He should be firm and resolute in his doctrine, never waffling. And yet, he can do this while remaining humble.

Further, he is (as noted in the commentary on verse 23) to not prolong his correction of those who are divisive. That is noted in Titus –

"Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, ¹¹ knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned." Titus 3:10, 11

One can cut off a divisive person while being humble. There should be no reason to arrogantly attack such a person. A few choice words of dismissal should be carefully spoken, and the door is to be shut on him as he departs. Under normal circumstances, however, the words of humble correction to those who are in opposition are intended for a specific reason. That reason is, "if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth."

The sense here is that if one argues his point in an arrogant manner, the one in opposition will normally double down on his views, simply because of the attitude displayed toward him. On the other hand, if the minister speaks firmly, but with humility, the one who is incorrect may take the time to evaluate his stand and repent of his incorrect doctrine. This will lead him to a knowledge of what is true.

An example for consideration would be that dreaded knock on the door by a couple of Jehovah's Witnesses. John warns about greeting such a person in his second epistle. There he says, "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; ¹¹ for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds" (2 John -10, -11).

Understanding this, you still need to answer the door. If you do so by saying, “You guys are a couple of heretics and you need to repent or be cast into hell,” there will probably not be any hope of them changing their mind.

However, if you address them with, “You don’t carry the proper doctrine of Jesus Christ, and so I can neither greet you, nor welcome you into my home, but I will show you where you are wrong here at the doorway if you wish,” then you might have a chance of showing them the error of their way. In such a meeting, God – through His word – may give their hearts repentance and a knowledge of the truth.

Life application: There is a right way to handle disagreements in doctrine, and then there is a wrong way. It is not possible to guess how each disagreement will pan out, and so the minister needs to keep a calm and humble attitude towards all. However, for those who become divisive, they need to be given one more chance to not be argumentative, and then they need to be excused.

There is no point in arguing back and forth. It solves nothing, and it eventually makes both look foolish.

Heavenly Father, with so many disagreements on matters of biblical doctrine, the church has divided and redivided countless times. Despite the divisions, for those churches that hold to the core doctrines of the faith, it is wise and proper to not be arrogant with those in other denominations. Only when core doctrines are departed from should we consider totally cutting off fellowship. Give us wisdom concerning when we should make such a decision final. Help us in this Lord. This is Your church, and so grant us wisdom when dealing with others in it. Amen.

... and *that* they may come to their senses *and* escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will. 2 Timothy 2:26

The words of the verse are rather complicated, but with a bit of thought, the true meaning should come through clearly. First, Paul has been speaking of “those who are in opposition,” meaning those whose doctrine is unsound.

He was instructing Timothy to not quarrel with such in hopes that God might grant them repentance, and thus come to the truth. Understanding that, he now says of them, “and that they may come to their senses.”

The Greek word is found only here in Scripture. It gives the sense of recovering from a drunken stupor. The root of the word was used twice in 1 Thessalonians 5, imploring those in the church to be sober. Paul's admonition here is that those who have incorrect doctrine are just like those who are inebriated, they have no idea of the danger which surrounds them.

In coming to their senses, they will then be able to "escape the snare of the devil." In having bad doctrine, a person is caught, as in a snare. A snare is something unseen, and it suddenly springs up and catches the unsuspecting one. From there, he is held prisoner, or as Paul says it, "having been taken captive by him."

This is speaking of the devil. It must be remembered that the word of God has been misused by him from the beginning. By subtly changing or manipulating the word, he caused the fall of man. He attempted to do this with Jesus, but Jesus stood on the word without compromise. Anyone caught up with false doctrine has been snared by the devil, and he is now in bondage to him.

This leads to the final words of the verse, εἰς τὸ ἐκείνου θέλημα, "for the 'his will.'" The major question and debate among scholars is, "Who is 'his will' referring to?" There are two possibilities: either the devil or God. If it is speaking of the devil, it is saying that in possessing bad doctrine, they are doing the devil's will, and are thus subject to him.

If it is speaking of God, then it is saying that once they have come to their senses, having escaped the devil's will, they will now serve God's will. Without being overly dogmatic, a few points should be considered. First, verse 25 spoke of God granting "them repentance, so that they may know the truth."

The focus is on God and the truth. Secondly, two different pronouns are used in the Greek, both translated as "his." The first is αὐτοῦ, and the second is ἐκείνου. It appears that Paul is using these different words to show a difference in subject. And thirdly, Paul is speaking of believers with faulty doctrine, not unbelievers.

This goes back to verses 14-19. Therefore, it appears that Paul is speaking of God's will. In order to accomplish this, these believers with faulty doctrine must come to their senses and escape the devil's snare. This idea is expressed in 2 Corinthians 10 –

"For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the

obedience of Christ, ⁶and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.” 2 Corinthians 10:4-6

Charles Ellicott gives his rendering of this verse –

“And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil—being held captive by him—to do His (God’s) will.”

Life application: There are verses which are difficult to discern what is actually being said, or who is actually being referred to. Rather than being dogmatic, giving both possibilities will help the reader come to a fuller knowledge of what is being said. Further, by looking at the surrounding context, the meaning usually becomes clearer.

And finally, by referring to other comparable passages, the actual intent may become realized. The study of the word of God is to be taken slowly, methodically, and with great care. In the end, our doctrine must be in accord with the Lord’s intent.

O great and glorious God! How good it is to be in Your presence, and to share in Your goodness. You have fed us with the bread of Your word, You sustain us with Your open hand of grace, and You lead us in paths of righteousness – all for Your name’s sake. Help us to follow on that path, never diverting from it. Help us to receive Your grace with thanksgiving and praise, and help us to feast upon Your word daily – nourishing ourselves on that which truly sustains. All to Your glory we pray this. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 Timothy 3:1

In the previous chapter, Paul warned Timothy of those who would “strive about words.” He said, “their message will spread like cancer.” With warnings such as this, he exhorted Timothy to be strong in the faith, avoiding things that can lead to ruin, and striving for that which is honorable.

Understanding this, he now begins a section which will point to the great challenges expected as the church would develop and grow. “But know this,” are words of surety.

What he says is certain, and Timothy was to be set and prepared for it. He was to apply what he had just been instructed to his life so that he would be ready to face what lay ahead. From this, Paul then says, “that in the last days.”

This term is often used by people to claim that the church is now in the last days, as if the time that they live, is seeing the fulfillment of the words. In this claim, they are implying that before their time, these things didn’t exist, and that now – in their generation – they have come to pass, demonstrating that the last days are upon them. With this springboard, they have claimed that the return of Christ must be moments away.

Commentaries going back for eons have made this claim, or cited others who have. However, what Paul describes here are things common to any era, and some of which are actually recorded in the epistles themselves. They are the normal state of things in any given church at any given time.

As churches age, the things Paul describes arise. New churches are established to correct the errors, and things eventually devolve again. Rather than a set time which proves the Lord’s return is right around the corner, Paul’s words here speak of the entire church age. This is validated, for example, by the words of John – a contemporary of Paul –

“Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.” 1 John 2:18

An honest reading of 2 Timothy 3:2-9 will reveal that the things Paul will speak of are to be noted throughout the church age. It may be true that wickedness will increase

towards the end of the church age, and it appears that such is coming upon the world now, but the world has been on the precipice before and stepped back.

Churches have likewise. Therefore, it is best to not get caught up in sensationalist teachings concerning Paul's coming words. With this understanding, he next says, "perilous times will come."

This is what he will begin warning Timothy about. The word "perilous" is an adjective found only here and in Matthew 8:28 when speaking of the violent demon-possessed men of the Gergesenes. They were exceedingly fierce. Thus, Paul is warning that such men will arise to cause their own trouble against the church.

There will be injurious times, and so he is giving advanced warning for Timothy, and thus all, to be prepared.

Life application: Paul's warning of this verse is to Timothy. Further, it can be inferred from his other writings that he honestly thought that the return of the Lord was not far off. He was apparently not privy to the fact that the church would last over 2000 years.

With this understanding, it becomes evident that his words were a warning for Timothy to be prepared in his own life for the things which he said were coming. As noted already, it is unwise to use these verses to make sensational claims about the certainty of the return of the Lord in one's own day.

Lord God; Precious heavenly Father, and Source of all strength and grace – grant us Your peace and joy as we face our daily struggles. The stresses we face, the trials that arise, and the conflicts which surround us... these can be debilitating and overwhelming. But from You there is an infinite supply of help, if we are willing to reach out for it. You, who sent Your own Son to redeem us, certainly care for us in our redemption. And so still our hearts and invigorate our souls with Your presence. Grant us this peace, O God. Amen.

For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 2 Timothy 3:2

Paul now describes why "perilous times will come" as indicated in the previous verse. He will pen out a long list describing people whose life and conduct will bring about a stain on Christianity because of their character. As these are evaluated, remember that these types of people exist both in the church and outside of the church.

Further, they have existed at all times in humanity. Therefore, Paul's note about "the last days" in the previous verse encompasses the entire church age which lies ahead from the time of his writing. In his descriptions, he begins with, "For men will be lovers of themselves."

This is an obvious flaw that describes countless people. In the church, it is wholly inappropriate. If a person has called on Christ, it is because he realizes he needs to be saved. If one needs to be saved, then he realizes that he is fallen due to sin. For someone to be a lover of himself is to set himself against a need for Christ's cleansing from sin. Self-idolatry and true worship of God through Christ cannot coexist. Next he says, "lovers of money."

The sense here is someone whose god is money. He is greedy for it. It is his passion and desire to get rich, and to continue to increase in wealth. One can be a billionaire and not be a lover of money, and one can be a poor man and be a lover of money. The possession of money is not the issue, but rather the desire for the possession of money.

Jesus, speaking under the law, stated a truth which exists at any and all times when He said in Matthew 6:24 –

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

Paul next speaks of those who are "boastful."

The word describes a person who shows himself off in a loud and arrogant way. HELPS Word Studies says of this word, "properly, a wandering vagrant (vagabond), boasting to anyone who is foolish enough to take him seriously! This kind of person *claims many things he can't really do*, so he must always keep moving on to new, naive listeners." This is a person who has an "I" problem. The next category is the "proud."

In the Greek, it is a compound word, *huperephanos*. The word *phainō* signifies to "shine forth." Add the word "hyper" before it, and you can instantly get the sense. He "over-shines." It is a person who goes beyond the faith that he has professed because he tries to be more than what God directs. Like the one who is boastful, this person also has a serious "I" problem. Paul then mentions "blasphemers."

They are those who reverse both spiritual and moral conditions of reality, and who then use slanderous evil-speaking. The next are those who are “disobedient to parents.”

The family is the nucleus of a well running society. When the family structure breaks down, the society naturally breaks down as well. And so, discipline within the family must be maintained. So great is the necessity for this, that God when speaking out the law to Israel included this –

“If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and *who*, when they have chastened him, will not heed them, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city. And they shall say to the elders of his city, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.’ Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall put away the evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear.” Deuteronomy 21:18-21

Likewise, in Exodus 21:17, the Lord noted that anyone “who curses his father or his mother” shall be put to death. Unfortunately, modern society has completely reversed the roles and television shows commonly portray children who are insolent to their parents and who tell the parents what to do rather than the other way around. This can only lead to chaos within a society because God’s order of what is right has been rejected. After this are the “unthankful.”

Here Paul uses a word found only here and in Luke 6:35. It is a word that signifies “experiencing grace,” but it begins with a negative prefix. In other words, “not experiencing grace.” When one doesn’t understand God’s grace (unmerited favor), they will naturally be ungraceful, and unthankful. The last in this verse is “unholy.”

This is a word used only by Paul, and only in 1 & 2 Timothy. It describes someone who ignores his duty to God, disregarding it as unnecessary to his life. They will profane the name of the Lord without compunction, and simply give up right living for a life of sin and wickedness. Such degenerates are coupled with the “profane.”

The profane speak of sacred things in a lewd manner. Their actions may carry the same intent. Great examples of this type of person can be found all over the film and music industries.

Life application: Paul's list is just getting started, but you can see that it describes people at all times and in all places. When such as these creep into the church, surely perilous times will come. We always need to be on the lookout for people like this and to ensure they are not allowed to come in and destroy the fellowship. Further, we need to remember what Christ saved us from, and not allow ourselves to fall back into such sins as well.

Heavenly Father, we are warned in Your word to watch out for those who walk contrary to You, and who have no heart for the work You accomplished in our salvation. But we surely must also remember that our salvation means that we once walked contrary to You. Help us to not fall back into our sins of the past, but to conduct our lives in holiness, and in a manner which honors You. Amen.

...unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,
2 Timothy 3:3

Paul continues his description of the miscreants who bring about the perilous times in the last days. The verse begins with the “unloving.”

The word here comes from the concept of a person who lacks natural affection. This again transfers through what is moral to what is political. It points directly to the morally lacking thought process. The “natural affection” Paul is referring to is the bond between a parent and a child.

What should be the strongest bond of all is missing when the knowledge of God is rejected. The Bible is replete with passages where children were sacrificed to Molech, and causing them to “pass through the fire,” such as in 2 Kings 17:16, 17 –

“So they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, made for themselves a molded image *and* two calves, made a wooden image and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and soothsaying, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger.”

The cultures Paul was exposed to left female children out to die, preferring male babies. Some buried the children alive. Albert Barnes notes that during an earlier period, “In most of the Grecian states, infanticide was not merely permitted, but actually enforced by law. The Spartan lawgiver expressly ordained that every child that was born should be

examined by the ancient men of the tribe, and that if found weak or deformed, should be thrown into a deep cavern at the foot of Mount Taygetus.”

The modern parallel is of course abortion. The left is rabid in their defense of abortion and any attempt at restricting or eliminating this legalized murder is met with the strongest opposition possible. They have lost any true natural affection and have replaced it with immoral sensuality and licentiousness. This moral depravity fits naturally with the next on the list, those who are “unforgiving.”

The Greek word comes from the thought of “without libation,” or “without truce.” Pouring out a libation to a god was a way of making peace with that god and thus forming a treaty. The idea then is a person who is completely unwilling to make peace; they are implacable.

There is no agreement, there is no reconciliation, and there is no felicity. Instead, there is only “us and them,” and we will never cede an inch in our battle of depravity and moral perversity. Next are the “slanderers.”

The word is an adjective that would better be rendered “slandorous.” This signifies a false accuser, or one who unjustly criticizes others in order to hurt them, even to the point of severing relations. When an article is used in front of this Greek word, it speaks of the devil.

He then speaks of those who are “without self-control.” It is translated from a single Greek word found only here in the Bible. It indicates “inclined to excess,” or “powerless.” Such a person is unable to control his inner urges, and plows ahead in whatever unhealthy addiction or perversion he is prone to.

Just as a person who wears a diaper is incontinent and cannot control his physical body, such a person lacks the same ability to control himself. He then next speaks of those who are “brutal.”

Again, it is a word found only here in the Bible. It signifies someone who is not tame, but rather fierce or savage. He tears angrily at those around him, and cannot be controlled. Finally, Paul notes those who are “despisers of good.”

Again, it is a unique word in Scripture which indicates one who hates good. He is completely hostile to what is right. The things of God are abhorrent to him. He is an active enemy of his Creator and the work which God performs as is described in

Scripture. He is exactly the opposite of the man called to serve the Lord in Titus 1:8. There Paul says an elder should be “a lover of what is good.”

The only difference in the words is that a negative particle is added here to form the opposite thought.

Life application: It’s rather easy to find any and all of those described in this verse today. All we need to do is turn on the news and look at the left in our society. They call evil good, and they call good evil. They despise Christ Jesus, and yet they claim to be moral, pious people. Let us use their lives as examples of how not to act, and let us use Christ Jesus as our example of how to act!

Lord God, the news media, and the entertainment world, driven by left-wing ideology is completely upside down. They exalt that which is evil, and they call out those who are moral and upright as wrongdoers. They support the murder of the unborn, and yet they refuse to hand over criminals for justice. How long will the wicked prosper? Help Your people to stand against them, and to proclaim righteousness until You come for judgment. Strengthen us, O God. Amen.

...traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,
2 Timothy 3:4

Paul’s lengthy list of miscreants continues on once again in this verse. Here the words begin with “traitors.” The meaning of the word is obvious. Either “traitor” or “betrayed” is an acceptable translation. The word is found only in Luke 6:16, Acts 7:52, and here. Next he names the “headstrong.”

It is again a rare word, found elsewhere only in Acts 19:36. The word literally means, “fall forward.” Thus, it is someone who is reckless, rash, or whose headstrong manner is brought on by foolhardy passion. Paul then speaks of the “haughty.”

It is a word used only by Paul, and only in the pastorals of 1 & 2 Timothy. This is its final use in Scripture. The word is *tuphoó*, and one can see the word “typhoon” coming from it. It signifies “to blow smoke,” or “to cloud up the air.” And so, figuratively it means to have a cloudy mind-set which is a moral blindness leading to poor judgment. From there, further loss of spiritual perception is the natural result. The verse finishes up with “lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.”

People who are pleasure-lovers have always abounded in the world. They draw more closely to the animal instincts rather than focusing on the higher morals we are endowed with. Some focus all their pleasure on fast cars, some on sexual engagements, some on living in a drunken stupor, etc.

Each of these has its own word to describe it, but these things may be used in different ways. The word here indicates that such things are engaged in simply for the pleasure obtained from them. In such a pursuit, a love and sense of God is eradicated.

Whatever type of pleasure is sought after can become so addictive that it becomes its own idol in our minds. When this happens, the door to God is shut and locked.

Life application: It is important for us to evaluate individual words like those Paul is using. By developing them into their full meaning, we can see what he had on his mind when choosing those particular words. From there, we can then carefully evaluate if we bear any trace of these failings and correct them in our lives. Though an in-depth study of such things can be a bit tiring, in the end, we will have benefited greatly from the knowledge we have obtained.

Gracious heavenly Father, look upon Your people whom You have redeemed, and be merciful to us as we stray, fail in our obligations, and forget to put You first in our lives. Give Your people wisdom to turn again to You, and to reestablish our walk in uprightness and holiness before Your infinite glory. Guide us in paths which You have chosen for our feet to tread upon. Amen.

...having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!
2 Timothy 3:5

Paul here is referring to the miscreants listed in verses 2-4. In those verses, he gave a lengthy list of people who possess faults which will bring about perilous times. Now, referring to them one final time, he notes that they have “a form of godliness.”

The idea here is one of wearing a mask. They appear one way, but they are actually different behind the mask. Their profession of religion is a show of piety, but it belies the truth of who they are. Paul says that such people have this form of godliness, but they are “denying its power.”

What they do is for show, but there is no sense of the true power of Christ working in them or through them. As one example, we could think of the pervert priests which infect many denominations.

They profess Christ in the pulpit, and they wear the robes of a priest (thus looking showy and pious); but the truth of their lives is one which denies the cleansing power of Christ, the effective working of the Holy Spirit, and the life-changing abilities of the word of God. The words they speak may impress the hearer, but there is no power to convert the soul to Christ because they don't believe the very message they proclaim.

In addition to lacking personal conviction in the word, such people may put forth traditions or extra-biblical church doctrines which are supposed to add to their external appearance of piety, but they add nothing to the truth of Scripture or the glory of God.

The procession of church officials carrying crosses on a stick, marching in order through the church, raising hands and proclaiming church-written proclamations ad nauseam, do nothing to convert the soul. They are simply external forms of godliness with no substance behind them.

The same is true with modern teachings within the messianic movements. Leaders and congregants wear traditional Jewish garments, even when not Jewish, they follow traditions of the Jews, even when they have no biblical connection at all, and they utter words and names in Hebrew in order to sound more pious and godlier than others, and yet they have departed from accepting the full and finished work of Christ.

Instead, they rely on adhering to selected precepts the Law of Moses in order to seem godlier than others. These are the types of things that Paul warned against. In this, he then directly and poignantly says, "And from such people turn away!"

Paul's words here to Timothy are in the present tense. This shows, without any doubt or need for further controversy, that the "last days" referred to in verse 3:1 are speaking of the entire church age. It is not a point in history where people can claim, "The Lord is near; the signs of the last day are fulfilled in our lifetime."

Rather, they were being seen at the time Paul wrote the epistle. His warning to Timothy, and then to all who would follow in right doctrine, is to turn away from such people. External acts of piety, exclusive "one version of the Bible only clubs," wearing certain cheesy garments by priests or rabbis in order to appear more godly, adhering to church

traditions, and on and on – all of these things have a form of godliness, but they deny its power.

The preacher who preaches from the word of God while in blue jeans can be much more powerful in converting the soul than any such-and-so wearing special clothes and uttering nonsense from tradition could ever produce.

Life application: Stick to the word of God for your doctrine. Don't get caught up in traditions, showy rituals, or interesting but useless presentations during your church services. Instead, find a church where the word is opened, read from, and then explained. This is where true instruction from God comes, and this is what will open up the power of God in your life.

Heavenly Father, we need You in our lives, but we also need to know what that means. Lead us to churches which actually open the word each week and read from it. And after it being read, it is then explained. Keep us from showy presentations, dead rituals, and leaders who wear certain clothes which look pious, but add nothing to the message of Your word. Without Your word being introduced into our lives, we are not going to have You filling us as we should. Direct us to sound churches with sound doctrine. In this, we will become well-fed, mature followers of You. Amen.

For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, 2 Timothy 3:6

Paul continues to refer to the same wicked sort that he has been describing since verse 2. In the previous verse, he said that they have a form of godliness, but they deny its power. Now he continues to describe them, saying that "...of this sort are those who creep into households."

The idea here is that their doctrine is false, and incompatible with what is open, sound, and reasonable in the church at large. And so, they start their corrupt teachings by creeping into households. If their voice is not accepted in the congregation, then they will start in the home.

They have enough Scripture memorized to sway those who are uninformed in proper theology. And so, by capturing their unsuspecting prey in the household, they have a captive audience to lead astray without anyone to contradict them. But once in the household, there is a particularly easy target to start with. Paul continues with, "and make captives of gullible women."

It was the woman who was deceived, and it is the woman's makeup to base decisions more on emotions than man will. They are the more easily deceived, being gullible, easily flattered, and having an ear receptive to twisted doctrine. This is why Satan went to the woman first. The pattern remains with those who would infect households, normally starting with the woman. Paul continues to describe the women next with the words, "loaded down with sins."

The false teachers can readily spot those who would make easy targets. By a simple look at the life being led by the woman, he can determine if she is already laden with sins. If so, then to manipulate her will be much easier than someone who is morally upright and sound. Women who are burdened with sinful lives will naturally fall prey to false doctrines, not having the knowledge of the truth stored up. Finally, he says that they are "led away by various lusts."

This is generally believed to not exclusively be "lusts of the flesh," such as sexual immorality, but the lust of life in general. They already have sinful lives, so if they can meld a religion that will ease their conscience while they continue in lustful pursuit, then how easily swayed they will be!

They may be filled with pride, greed, vanity, susceptibility to flattery, and so on. When a false teacher comes into their home, they are already so misguided in their lives that adding in unsound theology is as easy as putting on a nice-fitting dress.

The goal for the false teacher here is not specifically to sexually seduce the woman, but to have control. As his false teaching is absorbed, it will hopefully spread. Paul points this out in Titus 1:11 by saying about these teachers that their "mouths must be stopped."

It is they "who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain." This is the goal then. They desire control, and control leads to profiting off those whom they have in bondage.

Life application: There is nothing wrong with home Bible studies, but they should be conducted in an open setting by someone who is known to have sound doctrine, and who is considered trustworthy. How easy it is to sway those who are not informed in the basics of biblical doctrine. Let us always be on guard, watching out for those who clearly fit Paul's description in the words of this verse.

Precious Lord God! Daily we rise and see Your hand of infinite wisdom displayed in the things You have created. How sad it is that the world attributes Your handiwork to

random chance. And how easy it is for us to be swayed by false doctrines that arise right from a false presentation of Your word. When we are duped in one area of it, that is bound to spread to other areas. From creation through salvation, and a hundred other areas of Scripture, help us to be attentive and not led astray by false teachings. Amen.

...always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 2 Timothy 3:7

The Greek shows that this is still speaking of the “gullible women” of the previous verse. They are “always learning,” because they are looking to hear of a remedy for the sin in their lives. They listen intently to the false teachers, seeking to hear something that will exonerate their immoral lives while still allowing them to live out lives of immorality. They heap up words that will tickle their ears concerning their lives, but they are “never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

One cannot discover truth when pursuing lies from liars. One could ask, “Why would anyone go to a Universalist Church?” They teach that everyone goes to heaven. If this is so, then why even bother with church at all?

One can do whatever he wishes, pursue any desire of the heart, and continue down any perverse path he wants, and yet he will be in heaven. Spending time in church then would be as pointless as a bald man buying a comb.

However, people continue to go because there is the perverse desire to be told, again and again, that things that will continue to be OK, even when a life of sin is pursued. These people will never come to the knowledge of the truth, but they continue learning. However, what they are learning is a lie.

The sheer folly of such an existence is incredible, but it is the path of countless souls who simply need to fill their wayward lives with something to quell the conflict which rages deep inside.

Life application: Truth can only come from what reveals truth. And truth is what corresponds to reality. If a liar speaks, what he says is not truth. One must evaluate what is heard, and then determine if what is said corresponds to what actually is. To feed on lies because they are lies is not mentally sound, but it is the only option for someone who is sin-filled, and who desires to remain living sinfully.

In order to be free of sin, one must come to Christ; die with Him, and then be given the new birth apart from sin. No other avenue will suffice.

Lord God, Your word asks us to die to sin so that we can live in righteousness. How can we do this while still living? Thank You that You have done it for us through the work of Christ. By receiving Him, we die to the law which He fulfilled. Without law, sin is not imputed, and we are free from condemnation. What a truly marvelous thing You have done for us. Thank God for the full, final, and forever work of Jesus Christ our Lord. Reconciled! Praise God, we are accepted once again. Hallelujah and Amen!

Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; 2 Timothy 3:8

Jannes and Jambres are the names of two of the “wise men and sorcerers” mentioned in Exodus 7:11 & 22. Though their names are not recorded in Scripture before this, the oral traditions of Israel kept them alive.

They are also recorded in the Targum of Jonathan for Exodus 7:11 & 22. Paul now equates these two men of Pharaoh’s court, who stood against Moses as he cried out for Israel’s release from bondage to those he has been describing in verses 1-7. And this is exactly what these false teachers Paul warns against are working towards – bondage for those they cunningly connive to captivate with their falsities.

Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, and these people resist the words of the prophets and apostles which point to the finished work of Jesus Christ. As Paul says, “so do these men resist the truth.”

Christ’s work is complete, and the Law of Moses is fulfilled and annulled in Him. But false teachers claim that we must continue to observe some or all of that now obsolete law. Christ calls us to holiness, but false teachers claim we can live lives of immorality and licentiousness.

The Bible is written, and Scripture is complete. But false teachers continue to claim special revelation from God. On and on it goes. Where there is a stand against what is taught in Scripture, there the same spirit found in Jannes and Jambres continues to resist the truth. Paul then speaks about their character, first calling them “men of corrupt minds.”

The meaning of this is that these people have hearts that are wicked and they focus on evil, teach what is evil, and spread any falsehood which suits their depravity. They are men who are destitute of the truth. The meaning here is that they once knew the truth, but they put it away from themselves.

Thus, they have nothing but that which is false to pass on to their hearers. This type of person doesn't look to Christ for godliness at all. They look to bring others into subjection in order to wield authority over them. They are, as Paul says, "disapproved concerning the faith."

The Greek word here signifies, "failing to pass the test; unapproved; counterfeit." Their doctrine is worthless, and thus they are reprobate. This, however, does not mean that they were not ever believers. Nor does it mean that they have lost their salvation if they were saved. What it means is that they have departed from the faith, and they now teach that which is completely false. There will be no reward, but only loss, for their teachings.

Salvation is by grace through faith. It is a one-time occurrence which is eternal in its scope. Doctrine, however, is something to be developed after salvation. When one fails to learn proper doctrine, he will inevitably have bad doctrine. For those who wish to lead, but who are not sound in their doctrine, they will most likely end up like those Paul now describes.

Life application: The only knowledge Jannes and Jambres had of the Lord is what they heard from Moses, or what they learned as they saw the works of the Lord. At first, they stood opposed to the Lord. Eventually, Pharaoh's magicians claimed that what Moses did was actually the finger of God (Exodus 8:19). It may be that this included Jannes and Jambres. If so, they realized that the Lord is God.

However, whether they stayed in Egypt and continued down a wrong path, or whether they joined the Israelites in the Exodus, we cannot know. Having a knowledge of the Lord does not mean one has proper doctrine concerning the Lord. One must first grow in doctrine before becoming a teacher. If not, disaster will certainly be the end result.

Lord God, how can we know if the pastor at our church has proper doctrine or not? Maybe he is spot on, or maybe he is just blowing smoke. Unless we are willing to study the word ourselves, read up on sound doctrine, and then listen carefully to his words, we obviously have no idea at all. Whose fault is that then? With our souls destined to stand before You for judgment some day, shouldn't we care a bit more about such things? Help us in this. Give us wisdom to apply our time to careful study of Your word. Amen.

...but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was. 2 Timothy 3:9

Paul, referring to those “men of corrupt minds” who are “disapproved concerning the faith,” of the previous verse now says, “but they will progress no further.” He uses the same word as was used in 2 Timothy 2:16. There he said, “But shun profane *and* idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.”

Whereas they were destined to increase in that verse, Paul shows that their increase will grow to a certain point and then “progress no further.”

And this has been true throughout the church age. False teachers creep in and tear some away. Nutty sects arise and flourish to a point as well. But these never wholly consume the church. The truth of the gospel continues to spread, and false teachers and sects are identified and tagged as such. From there, those groups become isolated and proceed forward apart from the true body. The reason for this is because “their folly will be manifest to all.”

Eventually, the cunning craftiness of their false teaching is exposed. This happened at the reformation. Men of God began speaking out, translating Scripture into modern tongues, studying biblical doctrine while standing away from church tradition, and the error of what had arisen in Roman Catholicism was revealed.

The same careful identification of the false teachings of the Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Hebrew Roots, and many other sects has been, and continues to be, revealed. Their error is made manifest to all.

For those who care, they will reject such teachings. For those who are unwilling to test the doctrine, they will continue to follow these false teachers and teachings. Paul finishes up with a reference to Jannes and Jambres who resisted Moses. The false teachers’ folly will be manifest just “as theirs also was.”

The Lord revealed His power, and confirmed His word through Moses. He continues to do this through His word today. That which is given through the apostles and prophets is a sure and powerful word.

Though many have come along attempting to obscure or destroy its truth, they are exposed in due time. As this occurs, the church continues on with sound doctrine being revealed through faithful teachers and preachers of the word.

Life application: With social media, false teachers of the word have multiplied in abundance, and their teachings have risen to new levels of followers. One of the largest

groups to benefit in this way in recent years is the Hebrew Roots Movement. This teaching, however, is contrary to the message of Christ.

He has fulfilled the law, and the law is annulled in His death. Despite this truth, they teach adherence to the Law of Moses, in part or in whole. Though it may seem that this false teaching will prevail, it won't. It will go so far, and it will find its peak. The Lord's word exposes the folly of the teaching, and many who are willing to study it will walk away from this unsound doctrine.

Heavenly Father, there has been a continual need for reformation in Your church. As churches stray from Your word, a new generation steps out and shows where the error lies. This is because Your word has power, and Your word contains truth. When rightly divided and properly taught, that power is revealed, and its truth is seen. How blessed we are to have such a sure and wonderful gift from You to keep us on the straight path. Thank You for Your precious word, O God. Amen.

But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, 2 Timothy 3:10

Paul now contrasts Timothy with those who are "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." He says of him, "But you have carefully followed my doctrine."

It is important to know the true intent of this word is "followed." The older KJV says, "But you have fully known my doctrine." That fails to convey the meaning of Paul's words. One can know to do right and yet not do it. The word "doctrine" here, means literally "teaching," but conveys the idea sufficiently. Paul is complementing Timothy on not only knowing his doctrine, but having followed it.

Timothy had traveled with Paul, he had seen him teach, preach, and evangelize. He had read his letters, and he had talked with him about things that were on his mind. After this, he took that great store of information, and he followed it, applying it to his own life, doctrine, and practice.

How unlike so many who go to a sound seminary, are trained in proper theology, and then lead a church down a winding path of confusion and discord! Timothy was doing well in following Paul's doctrine. But he also followed his "manner of life."

It is a single Greek word, *agógé*, used only here in Scripture. It signifies leading or guiding, and thus a mode of life. Timothy was led by Paul, and he continued to follow that leading. This idea is conveyed, exactly, concerning Timothy to those at Corinth –

“For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.” 1 Corinthians 4:17

Along with this, he followed Paul’s “purpose.”

The word is used to describe the show-bread (the consecrated bread) of the tabernacle. Thus, it signifies “purposely set forth.” Paul’s life was set forth for a specific purpose by Christ. Timothy was following that purpose as well. Next, he is noted as having followed Paul’s “faith.”

This may be speaking of simple trust in the Lord, as is outlined in Romans 10:9, 10. However, it may more be describing his *faithfulness*. In other words, it is a purposeful following of proper doctrines found in sound theology. Timothy knew them, and he applied them faithfully to his life. Further, Paul notes that Timothy was faithful in following his “longsuffering.”

If anyone could be considered longsuffering, it would be Paul. Several times in his letters, Paul speaks of the trials he faced. But despite them, he pressed onward. He didn’t just quit and sit around waiting for the rapture. He continued to place himself in a position of difficulty in order to get the gospel message out. To see one of Paul’s descriptions of his trials today, read 2 Corinthians 11:16-33. After that, Paul notes that Timothy followed him in “love.”

Paul describes love in 1 Corinthians 13. He wouldn’t send on such a marvelous description without taking the time to apply it to his own life. Timothy read the letter, saw the man applying it to self, and followed along on that same treasured path of love. Paul commends him for it now.

Finally, the verse notes Timothy’s perseverance. Merriam Webster defines perseverance as, “continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failures, or opposition.”

Paul was longsuffering through his trials, and he persevered despite them. In other words, he didn’t just accept the trials as the necessary end to his work. He saw them as

a part of his work. And so, he persevered through them. Timothy saw this most marvelous trait in Paul, and he followed it closely, even right at his heels.

Where Paul stepped, he stepped as well, pushing ahead despite everything that attempted to hinder his forward motion.

Life application: Don't get stuck in a single, fallible, translation of Scripture. Timothy didn't just "fully know" Paul's doctrine, manner of life, etc. He applied it to his own life, following it into the same hazardous conditions that he had already seen his beloved mentor face. "To know" does not necessarily mean "to do." Be complete in your knowledge, and then get up, get out, and perform!

Lord God, thank You for the amazing abundance of Bible availability we have in today's world. Where people just a few generations ago may have had one Bible in their house, we have multiple translations at our fingertips – including the original languages. We also have digital copies, audio Bibles, commentaries, study tools, and on and on and on and on! We are the blessed generation who can feed on Your word until sated, and then we can overindulge a bit more. But do we? Help us to do so! Amen.

...persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra— what persecutions I endured. And out of *them* all the Lord delivered me.

2 Timothy 3:11

In this verse, Paul continues with his list of things which Timothy "carefully followed." He had followed Paul in his doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, and perseverance. Paul now says that he also followed him in "persecutions."

The word signifies "pursuit," and thus to hunt, or bring someone down like an animal. In this, persecutors try to suppress the convictions of another. This is seen happening to Paul throughout Acts. He would speak, and others would try to shut him down. Timothy, traveling with Paul, experienced this personally. Next are noted his "afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured."

As we can see, the words "persecutions" and "afflictions" are different things, but they occurred together at the places mentioned. The word "afflictions" is an internal one. The persecutions led to the afflictions. The Greek word specifically refers to "the capacity and privilege of experiencing strong feeling" (HELPS Word Studies).

This includes suffering, agony, etc. Paul, accompanied by Timothy who also suffered in these afflictions, did so when persecutions came to him “at Antioch, at Iconium, [and] at Lystra.”

Timothy is first noted in Acts 16:1, and some of these things occurred prior to this. This means that either Timothy saw these things because they occurred in the area in which he lived, or he heard about them, and yet he was still willing to endure with Paul despite them. Either way, Paul’s words mean that Timothy either actively or passively endured these things with him. He then stresses the thought again with, “what persecutions I endured.”

Paul was one who bravely spoke out the truth of Christ, and thus he became a target of those who rejected this same truth. They persecuted him, they chased him, and they harmed him physically and mentally. Timothy saw this, and he also suffered in these same things to some extent.

But Timothy also saw something else. It would seem that Paul would be overcome and completely silenced, or even destroyed. But instead, Paul joyfully proclaims, “And out of them all the Lord delivered me.”

During each trial, the situation seemed helpless. During Paul’s travels, there were riots, there were beatings, he was stoned, he was imprisoned, and etc. Each time, it seemed like he was a goner. And yet, each time, the Lord delivered him. It is obvious that the Lord would continue to use him until he had run the race set before him, and nothing would thwart that.

His confidence in this is noted to encourage Timothy as well. The trials would come, but when they did, Timothy was to stand on the fact that if the Lord wanted him to endure, he would do so. Until his mission was likewise complete, he would continue on.

Life application: Would you deny that the Lord has a set time for your death (or rapture)? Obviously not! To deny that would mean that He is not omniscient. And so, whatever trial you are facing will either be one which you will endure through, or it will be one which will be the end of your trials.

As it is completely in the Lord’s hands, then why worry at all? He will either be the one to ensure you get through it, or He will be the one to bring you home to His glory. Rest easy... He is there directing the events of your life.

Lord God, it is You who directs the events of our lives. You have a set time in which You will call each of us home. And so why should we get stressed and distressed when we face trials? You already have determined to get us through them, or to use them to bring us to Your arms of rest and safety. Either way, You are sovereign over the moments of our lives. Help us to accept this, and to rest comfortably in this knowledge. Amen.

Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

2 Timothy 3:12

Paul has been speaking of his own sufferings and persecutions. He has noted that Timothy shared in them with him, and that he understood all that he was relaying intimately.

But now, knowing that his letter will be read and dispersed to the church, he ensures that all who read it will understand that the sufferings are not unique to him. Instead, they are to be the standard for all of God's faithful. And so, he says, "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus."

Notice that he does not say, "all saved by Christ Jesus." There are saved, and then there are saved who desire to live holy, godly lives. Paul doesn't question salvation, but he directs sanctification. Further, he makes godliness exclusive by saying, "live godly in Christ Jesus." As is noted by the famous German scholar –

"There is no godliness out of Christ Jesus." Johann Bengel

Godliness is exclusive to life in Christ. People can act out a form of godliness in any religion, even Christianity, but they may deny either the Source of the godliness, or its power. This is noted by Paul in verse 3:5. Without Christ, true godliness cannot be attained. Paul then says that for the category of believers who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus, that "they will suffer persecution."

Godliness is, by its very nature, at enmity with the things of the world. When people see someone pursuing righteousness in Christ Jesus, they perceive their own ungodliness, and they take offense at it. This has always been the case, and it is increasing almost geometrically in today's world.

This is so much so that pastors of churches are taking down crosses, amending their message to be more "seeker friendly" (which simply means that they don't want to offend), changing the nature of the worship services, etc. These men may be saved, but

they do not desire to live godly in Christ Jesus, and they do not desire that their own congregants strive for godliness or holiness as well.

But for those who do, suffering persecution is to be expected. It can even be expected from these anemic, weak, insipid, and ineffective pastors and congregants. Promote holiness on social media, and quite often, it is another Christian who will bring on the attack. Such is the nature of encouraging godliness in Christ Jesus.

Life application: Are you experiencing persecution for your stand on righteousness? Good job! Keep it up.

Lord God, Your word says that those who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. This is for sure. It is even true as fellow Christians strive against those who desire to preach holiness, ensure holiness is maintained, and to speak against ungodliness. Your word states what we are to strive for, and so give us strength to not be weak in the face of those who are seeking political correctness, Christianity-lite, or easy theology which avoids possible confrontation concerning Your glory. Amen.

But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.
2 Timothy 3:13

Paul now contrasts “all who desire to live godly” from the previous verse to those he will now describe. He says, “But evil men.”

They are just the opposite of those desiring to live godly. The word is *ponéros*, a common word indicating evil, wicked, malicious, etc. In Matthew 7:11, Jesus equates it to the common state of man –

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”

Paul here, however, speaks of those who are not only evil because of a fallen, sinful, nature, but who have no desire to live in a godly manner. Instead, they are “imposters.”

The word used, *goés*, is found only here in the Bible. It is used to speak of a juggler or a sorcerer. Thus, he is someone who deceives. In ancient Greek, it signified a howler. Thus, it is “a fraud who ‘sounds off’ like a whining enchanter. This person uses [his] verbal spells and incantations to give the (false) *impression* [he] can do miracles” (HELPS Word Studies).

This is actually a beautiful description of the modern charismatic teachers who use deception in, or to perform supposed miracles and the like. Paul says that they, and others like them, “will grow worse and worse.”

Using charismatics as our example, they start out with a bit of cheating in their presentation of explaining God’s word, or in the application of it. From there, they go further by claiming a miracle. From there, they go further and claim not only the performance of a miracle, but an ESP-like ability to determine that someone in the audience has a certain affliction, calling them up to be healed. In supposedly healing them, they go further still – from one deception after another. The Greek literally reads that they “shall proceed to the worse.”

Each cunning display of deception requires something more in order to keep the sensational alive. They claim that God speaks to them, and that God works through them. They are thus deceiving and being deceived.

They deceive their audience, and the audience drinks it in like water coming down upon a dry desert. But in their deception, they actually begin to believe that they have divine powers and become deceived themselves. They believe that they are conduits of God, doing His work. And yet, they are evil followers of the devil’s devices.

Life application: Peter Popoff claims to be a charismatic faith healer. He would claim that he could feel someone in the 4th row had a heart defect. Then he would claim to heal the person. Eventually, someone found out that he had wireless transmission to an earplug telling him who to target, what affliction he had, etc. He is a charlatan.

And yet, people still follow him and send him loads of money. He is typical of countless charismatic faith-healers. They are deceivers, and they are being deceived. And yet, the audience continues to follow these people like sheep being led to the slaughter.

Lord God Almighty, give us wisdom in our walk with You. Paul warns against those who are “deceiving and being deceived.” This shows us that we can be a part of the equation. If we are willing to be deceived, then we will be deceived. May we rather be willing to diligently study Your word, walk away from deception, and be grounded in sound theology. Help us from being caught up in that which is unhelpful and unproductive. Amen.

But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, 2 Timothy 3:14

Paul spoke of the “evil men and impostors” who would “grow worse and worse” in the previous verse. Now he contrasts them and their wayward path. He said of them that they were “deceiving and being deceived.” Instead of this, he says now to Timothy, “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of.”

Unlike those losers of verse 13, Timothy is to stand fast on the word of God, live out proper doctrine, and act in a holy and openly godly manner. He is to continue walking this path, teaching it to the next generation, and they are to follow suit with this throughout the ages ahead. His walk is to be one which trains their walk. It is to be a doctrinally sound path which does not deviate from the truth of the gospel. Paul then says, “knowing from whom you have learned them.”

The words here are words of surety. Timothy was instructed properly, Paul is aware of this, and he now admonishes his young protege to continue in that sound teaching. However, there is dispute among the source texts as to whether the word “whom” is singular or plural. It is the difference of a single letter, *tinōn* or *tinōs*.

To be dogmatic here is probably not the best option. This is especially so when thinking of the possibilities of who “whom” is then referring to. If singular, is he speaking of himself? Or is he speaking of the Lord through his word?

In the coming verse, Paul refers to the Holy Scriptures. They are given by the Holy Spirit through men of God (2 Peter 1:21). If it is plural, then maybe he is referring to both the Holy Spirit and himself, or himself and Timothy’s grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice (see 2 Timothy 1:5).

Any of these is possible. A parent who knows the word, and who has also called on Christ would not purposefully teach incorrect doctrine. Paul wouldn’t refer to himself in this manner unless he was truthful and sound as an apostle and instructor. And the Holy Spirit, being God, is certainly the greatest Source of instruction if we pursue His word while being receptive to His leading.

No matter which word Paul actually used, the precept remains true. Timothy was properly instructed, Paul knew this to be true, and he admonishes him now to follow faithfully on this sound path of proper doctrine.

Life application: What is stated here is that we are to follow the correct path of doctrine that we have been taught. Unfortunately, there are things that we were originally taught which are just plain wrong. It is almost universal that people will continue in their

doctrine once it is set, and very few will ever change their position. But this is a bad path to follow if what they have been taught is unsound.

We must be willing to rationally evaluate each precept we have learned, and then to compare it with what the Bible says. It is never good to blindly follow a teaching without being well versed in how that teaching aligns with a sound interpretation of Scripture.

Lord God, there are innumerable views on certain points of doctrine which stem from Your word. But that doesn't mean Your word is uncertain. It is we who form opinions without carefully evaluating things in context. Give us sound teachers who will state what is correct, and then give us the wisdom to even check what they say. In the end, our ongoing relationship with You comes down to our application of Your word. Isn't that worth our time and study? Help us to desire this close and personal walk with You. Amen.

...and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 2 Timothy 3:15

Paul now reminds Timothy of where and when he began to learn concerning the truth of God. He says, “and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures.”

The word translated as “childhood” rather means from infancy. It signifies a baby, or a child in arms. Before Timothy could walk, his mind was being enlightened with Scripture. So much so that he came to know it. It wasn't as if he heard it once and then mom began to teach him about basket weaving. Rather, he was taught it to the point of it being infused (known) in him.

It must be understood that at the time of Timothy's instruction, the “Holy Scriptures” consisted only of what is now known as the Old Testament. The New Testament didn't exist. Timothy was instructed on this body of writings alone, and yet Paul then says that it is these “Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation.”

The verb translated as “which are able” is a present participle. Though Paul and other apostles are writing about the work of Jesus Christ, and though these writings are now a part of Scripture, Paul's words here show us the enduring nature of the Old Testament to lead us, and to make us wise for salvation.

They point to Jesus just as the New Testament points to Jesus. In Jesus, salvation is found. One should read the Old Testament, compare it to the Person and work of Jesus, and say, “I need Jesus.” This is true with the New as well. Either way, the entire body of

Scripture points us to our need for Christ Jesus. As Paul clearly states, it is this salvation which is “through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

One cannot hold to the Old Testament writings and be saved apart from Jesus Christ. There is no such thing as “dual-covenantalism” to be found in Scripture where one can be saved by adherence to the Old Testament law. That merely pointed to the need for the One who embodies the Law, Jesus Christ. As Peter states to the leaders of Israel in Acts –

“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12

Life application: The entire body of Scripture points to our need for Jesus Christ. There is no salvation apart from Him, and we only diminish His work by attempting to be justified by the law, or by observing certain rituals as a part of the now obsolete Law of Moses. In Christ, the law is set aside, annulled, obsolete, and nailed to the cross.

All of these are terms used in the New Testament to show that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness for all who believe. Let us rest in Him and His completed work, and let us never waffle on the doctrine of grace which is found in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Heavenly Father, Your word says that Christ Jesus is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. We cannot add to grace, and so why should we try? Help us to rest in Christ alone, without adding in precepts of a now obsolete law which could never save anyone. May we trust in Christ, and in Christ alone for our complete restoration with You. Thank You, O God, for Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 2 Timothy 3:16

This is certainly a “memory verse” if there ever was one. It should be committed to memory for those times when it will be needed. At the very least, where it should be memorized, so that one can easily refer to it in order to obtain the exact quote.

In the previous verses, Paul noted to Timothy that the Holy Scriptures “are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” Now, speaking of that same marvelous body of writings, Paul says, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”

It is to be remembered that at the time of his writing this, only the Old Testament Scriptures existed. This truth carries on for New Testament writings, but it is clearly and unambiguously showing that the body of writing we call the Old Testament is God's word.

The Greek word translated as "inspiration of God" is *theopneustos*, or literally "God-breathed." It is a term which was most probably coined by Paul, and which speaks of the sacred and holy nature of Scripture which contains the power to sanctify believers. It is of divine origin, having been breathed out by God in what is known as the process of inspiration.

In the Greek, Paul uses the word in the singular. This then shows that "*each part of speech (every inflected word-form, 'reflex')* used in the Bible is *God-breathed*, i.e. *inscripturated* (written) under divine *inspiration*" (HELPS Word Studies). That is a technical way of saying that every iota of what was received by prophet or apostle is of divine origin. Peter explains this process in his second epistle –

"knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,
²¹for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were moved* by the Holy Spirit." 2 Peter 1:20, 21

As a point of doctrine, the words, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," are more accurately translated as "Every Scripture inspired by God..."

The reason for this subtle but important change is that it then does not exclude any writings beyond the Old Testament which were already in existence as transmitted by the apostles. It further does not exclude anything that would later come from the hand of the apostles.

In this then, there would be the need to ensure that exactly what was contained in those writings be maintained exactly as they had been received. His words here are to be considered in that light, and they were to be kept as a protection against changing what had been received from the apostles' hands.

The words were God-breathed as they were received, and they remain God-breathed when being read. They are the word of God at all times. After noting the inspiration of Scripture, Paul next says that this body of writings "is profitable for doctrine."

This means that they are to be used to teach the uninformed, correct the misguided, and renew the mind which has forgotten. These breathed-out words are to be what the believer uses to set his doctrine within the church. They are to be the final authority for church doctrine as well.

The church cannot add to them, take from them, or amend them in any way. They are breathed out by God, and they belong to Him – being granted to us to use for our doctrine, but not for our manipulation. Paul then says that they are also “for reproof.”

The word used is found only here and in Hebrews 11:1. It signifies “inner conviction.” It *“focuses on God confirming His inbirthing of faith”* (HELPS Word Studies). If we hold to Scripture as God’s breathed-out word, God should internally persuade us through it of His intent for our life-practice and doctrine. Along with this, it is to be used “for correction.”

In this, Paul uses a word found only here in the Bible. It signifies “to make straight.” Thus, what is straightened becomes suitable once again because it has been restored to its original and correct position. In other words, there is a defect in man. The Bible is to be used to straighten that out.

Further, even after coming to Christ, there are certainly defects in doctrine. The Bible is to be used to straighten them out as well. We can straighten ourselves out through the word, and we can also use the word to hopefully straighten others out. From there, Paul says that it is also to be used “for instruction in righteousness.”

The word for “instruction” speaks of the training and education of children. Therefore, the Bible is to be used as an instruction that will lead the believer to full maturity in their faith, doctrine, and practice. Just as a child needs to be disciplined and schooled in order to become a rationally thinking adult, all believers must grow in the word – applying it to themselves – until they are adults in the faith. But Paul notes that this instruction is to be “in righteousness.”

The Bible is often used by people as a means of divination as they look to determine the future. It is used as a secret code book to determine the mysteries of God. It is used by some as a place to find comfort during trials, but then put back on the shelf when the trials end.

These and other uses miss the primary intent of Scripture. We are to have our noses in it, we are to open our minds to it, and we are to meditate upon it in order to understand

righteousness, and then to apply that to our lives. God is the fount of all that is righteous, and we are to learn about Him in this capacity. Then we are to take this attribute of Him when it is rightly understood and emulate it.

Life application: Paul's words of this verse are so important for us to remember, and to carry with us always. What we have in the pages of Scripture is the true and inspired word of God. Let us cherish it, care for it, exalt it, and pursue what it says all the days of our lives.

Lord God, Your word is breathed out by You, and therefore it is exactly what we need for our lives. Nothing else can substitute it. Anything added to it is superfluous. Anything taken from it will leave us with a void. Help us to understand this, and to carefully hold to it as Your sacred and precious word, given to us to find righteousness and happiness as we live out our lives in Your marvelous presence. Amen.

...that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:17

Paul's words here continue the thought of verse 16 concerning Scripture. It is given by inspiration of God, and it is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. And the end goal of that is "that the man of God may be complete." The intent of the term "man of God" is debated. Is it speaking of ministers of the gospel, or is it speaking of all believers in Christ. The answer is "both."

First and foremost, the term is taken from Old Testament symbolism (which is reaffirmed in 1 Timothy 6:11), and it is speaking of the man chosen by God to receive and pass along God's word, meaning the prophet in Old Testament times. That transfers to the minister of the New Testament who has received, and then evaluates and instructs in that word. In the instruction of that word, those who hear it then also become "complete."

The word Paul uses is unique in Scripture. It gives the sense of "ready because prepared." If we think of a pump which is ordered to replace another pump, it may come needing to be wholly or partly assembled, or it may come prepared to function. It simply needs to be installed and it will work properly. This is the idea of the word.

In having Scripture as given by God, and by knowing it, rightly dividing it, and rightly applying it, the man of God is ready to function. He is in a state of "right now" readiness, and thus he is "thoroughly equipped for every good work."

The Greek word here is well translated. It gives the sense of all parts working together, correctly and harmoniously. In this verse, it is in the passive voice. This then stresses the end-impact of Scripture on the believer who is receptive to what is furnished. As HELPS Word Studies says, “Indeed the Bible *thoroughly fits* (‘furnishes’) each believer to live in *full communion with God.*”

In this, Paul is obviously applying the term “man of God” to Timothy, and to those who will follow him in the ministry. But he is also in anticipation that their state of being “fully equipped,” will then be passed on to those they tend to. That is an obvious part of “every good work.”

It is Scripture which makes this possible. As it is obvious that up until just a few hundred years ago very few people had their own copy of the Bible, it is referring to those who have charge of Scripture, and then pass that knowledge on to others.

Even today, where everyone can easily obtain the Bible, their lives will not always allow them time to become fully equipped apart from special teaching by those who are in full-time ministry. And more, there are always those who are ill-equipped to be in the ministry because of a lack of training or incorrect doctrine, and yet who go forth teaching that which is false.

Life application: Each of us is ultimately responsible for the doctrine we hold to. However, we need to learn it from somewhere. It is the rare soul who will pick up the Bible and become complete and thoroughly equipped in doctrine. There is a need, then, to listen to teachers, carefully evaluating them to see if what they teach is in accord with the word.

Let us attentively listen, and then carefully evaluate what we hear. Let us reject that which is wrong, and hold fast to what is sound.

Glorious and awesome God of all power and wisdom! You have given us the greatest treasure in the pages of Scripture, and yet we are often not attentive to either studying it or applying it to our lives. What a great mistake this is! When things go wrong, we quickly blame You for the trouble, but the truth is that if we had applied Your word to our lives, things would go well. May we as individuals, and as collective groups, learn to put You and Your word first in our lives. Help us in this, O God. Amen.

CHAPTER 4

I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2 Timothy 4:1

The opening words, “I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ,” are the same words that Paul used in 1 Timothy 5:1. This charge is a bit shorter in named witnesses, however, as it leaves off the words “and the elect angels.” But it is longer in how it describes Christ Jesus in the second clause.

The word translated as “charge” bears more weight than the translation implies. It is rather, “solemnly charge.” It being a compound word comprised of “thoroughly” and “witness.”

Thus, it is a solemn charge or an earnest testimony. Paul’s words then hold great weight as presented to Timothy. This is all the more seen by including both “God” and “the Lord Jesus Christ” as witnesses.

He is making the most solemn charge possible by calling the infinite God, and His designated Mediator who comes from Him, to witness his charge to Timothy. From there, he then describes the work of Christ by saying, “who will judge the living and the dead.”

Christ Jesus is the One who holds the power over death. And so, whether alive at His coming, or already dead on that Day, it makes no difference. The souls of all men will be brought before Him for judgment. This will be “at His appearing and His kingdom.”

In a careful study of the words of Paul, we see that his statement here is a general one which actually covers several events. There will be a rapture of believers, after which they will be judged, but not for salvation or condemnation. It will be a judgment for rewards and loss of rewards.

There will also be the first resurrection which will occur after the seven-year tribulation period which will come upon the earth. And then finally, there will be what is called the Great White Throne judgment at the end of the millennium. Each judgment is in the Lord’s hands, and He will display perfect righteousness as He judges.

It is before God, and His designated Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ, that Paul will next make his solemn charge.

Life application: If we look at our life and actions daily, considering them as a part of our judgment ahead, we will be more likely to live in a holy and circumspect manner. If we just take each day as an opportunity to please self, then when our time of judgment does come, we will have much to be ashamed for. Let us look ahead, and live out our lives as the Lord's word directs us to do.

Heavenly Father, we tend to forget that a time of judgment awaits all of us. We get busy with life, desirous of attaining success, fame, or wealth, and we put the day on which we will stand before You out of our minds. Help us not to be so short-sighted. Instead, give us wisdom to contemplate our days, pursue You in them, and live in a manner which will be rewarded with favor. Help us in this, O God. Amen.

Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 2 Timothy 4:2

Paul's "charge" of verse 1 is now given. Like in the Greek, it is quick and abrupt... "Preach the word!"

The word "therefore" of verse 1 was based on Paul's note about the Holy Scriptures of verses 3:14 – 3:17. His charge then is an emphatic call to take those precious words and to proclaim them like a herald. As he said in Romans 10:14-17 –

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

"How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace,
Who bring glad tidings of good things!"

¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" ¹⁷ So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

A person cannot call on Jesus unless he hears about Jesus. The source which tells of Jesus is the word of God. Likewise, a person cannot learn about Jesus unless they go to that same source. And so, both faith and doctrine come from someone's efforts in preaching the word.

This is Paul's exhortation for Timothy then, "Preach the word!" It is what he had spent his life since his conversion doing, and he was now passing the mantle on to Timothy to

carry forward to a new generation. He next tells him to, “Be ready in season and out of season.”

In this, Paul uses the same root word, *kairos*, to explain his thought. It signifies, “the opportune time,” or “the favorable moment.” “In season” is *eukairos*. The prefix *eu* signifies good. Thus, it would be “a good opportune time.” The term, “out of season” is *akairos*. The prefix signifies a negative. Thus, it is “not the opportune time.”

Paul is exhorting Timothy to be ready to preach the word regardless of the circumstances. If the house is on fire, it may not be a great time to stop and tell people the news, but Timothy is to be ready, even then, to do so. There is never a time that he should not be set and prepared to share the message of Christ. From there, he gives rapid-fire advice concerning the preaching. First, he says, “Convince.”

The idea here is “to expose.” Thus, it would be to convince with sound, solid, and compelling evidence. In this, it will prove that which is wrong, and correct it to that which is right. When the discussion is over, there should be no doubt concerning the truth and trustworthiness of the preaching. Next, he says, “rebuke.”

The idea here is to warn in order to prevent something from going wrong. As an example, a preacher may say, “You are walking an unsound path which can only lead to disaster. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the path which will bring restoration and fellowship with God. Call on Christ, and be reconciled to God through Him!” He then tells him to “exhort.”

This signifies encouragement. It is, in essence, to offer up evidence which will stand up in the court of God. Timothy is to use the Scriptures to encourage in those he preaches to those things that will keep them on a sound, reasonable, and acceptable path. Finally, Paul notes that he is to do each of these things, “with all longsuffering and teaching.”

Timothy is being reminded that he, and all preachers, are to teach with patience and a gentle attitude. There is to be a spirit of perseverance while thick skulls slowly allow information to sink in. Sometimes, it will take saying the same thing again and again (and again). But the minister is to be ready and willing to just keep going with this slow, faithful, methodical, and repetitive instruction.

Life application: The main job of a preacher is to preach. It is the beginning of the faith for some, and it is to be the growth of the doctrine in them as well. It is only by the word of God that people will come to know Christ, and then to develop in Him.

This doesn't mean a tract cannot convince someone of coming to Christ, but the information on that tract must match the word of God, or it is not the true Christ who is being presented. Thus, a false salvation will be the result. Everything must come back to Scripture.

Lord God, where are we going to learn about what You expect of us? We may think the answer is, "At church." But if what the church is teaching is not based on Your word, then what we have learned is not correct. In the end, our salvation, and our doctrine need to go back to Scripture, or we have believed a lie. Keep us from assuming that going to church means we are OK with You. Rather, accepting Your word, and living in accord with it, is what we need. And so, give us true teachers of Your word for our lives. Amen.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers*; 2 Timothy 4:3

The word "For" is given to show Timothy why he needed to preach the word, and to be ready at all times to convince, rebuke, and exhort. The time of judging the living and the dead (verse 4:1) will come, but people don't want to think about such things. They push it out of their minds and instead pursue another path. Instead of caring about what God expects, Paul says that "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine."

His words show the depravity of man in the presence of God quite well. He is speaking of people who are Christians, or who supposedly are Christians, who simply want to hear what they want to hear. When they go to church and hear a message they don't like (sound doctrine), they get upset and leave, vowing to never return again.

This is obviously something that is much easier in a town with many varied churches. At some points in history, the state ran the church, and the message was kept unified. There was little chance of "church shopping."

In some towns, even today, there may be only one church. The same is true in such a case as that. One is left with either attending a church or not attending at all. However, with the advent of the internet, people can ignore these things and find what they want online. Paul says that there is a reason for not wanting to hear sound doctrine. It is because they want to come to God, "according to their own desires."

What this means is that they have rejected the word of God, and thus the God of the Bible. They have created a god in their mind that will suit whatever fancy they follow.

Some people hate the order outlined in Scripture that defines men as those who are to be leaders in the church. And so, they, according to their own desires, find a church that is led by women.

The same is true with countless pet peeves. Some are sexually immoral, and so they will, according to their own desires, find a church that condones a sexually immoral lifestyle. Pick any immoral activity or false doctrine and there is a church that will meet the desire – drugs, abortion, reinserting the law, salvation with no expectation of holiness, the prosperity gospel, etc. Paul says they will follow such perverse teaching “*because they have itching ears.*”

They have it in their minds what they want to do with their lives, not what God instructs them to do. Their ears itch to hear that what they desire is acceptable. And so, they shop for someone to meet what they desire. However, such an attitude is completely at variance with God’s will.

One must take in the whole counsel of God, accepting that He is the Creator and that we are the created. It is God who sets the parameters for salvation, righteousness, holy living, and so on. But because they don’t want to conform to God’s standard, Paul says that “they will heap up for themselves teachers.”

The more voices who will validate what they desire rather than what God expects, the more reassured they become. The idea is, “Surely all of these wonderful teachers can’t be wrong!” Instead of going to the source, meaning God’s word, they rely on whatever the false teacher says. In this, they can continue to live out their lives as they see fit, and feel comfortable that there will be no condemning voice from their spiritual leader.

It must be contemplated that the direction of the church will generally follow the direction of the surrounding culture, or vice versa. The church may cause the people to turn to God, or the morals of the culture may cause the church to fall away from the truth. This is why those who hate God abhor Jesus Christ.

Those who despise the truths contained in Scripture work both in the church and in the surrounding society to attack the word, question its reliability, tear apart the message of Christ, and exalt any false teaching that will diminish true Christianity in the process.

Life application: The ideologies found in communism, socialism, fascism, the progressive left, and a host of other ideologies which form political movements are based on principles which are contrary to the word of God. When people from these ideologies

can get into church leadership positions, they will naturally work to destroy the truth of Scripture through false teaching.

The same is true with people who may be apolitical, but who want to exercise whatever false belief suits their mores. When people with such values get into church leadership positions, those who follow the same false ideologies will flock to them. Paul showed us, right at the beginning of the church age, exactly what could be expected.

Let us pay heed and be extremely careful to hold closely to the word of God, never deviating from its precepts.

Lord God, help our national leaders to understand that right and proper morality stems from You, and that those sound principles are found in Your word. May those who are willing to call on Your name, through Christ Jesus, be bold in their adherence to that which is right, holy, and honorable. This is especially important now. Those who truly hate what Your word directs are found in abundance and are eager to quiet what is moral and proper. Be with Your people, guide them in righteousness, and may we remove those who promote immorality and divisiveness. Turn our national heart back to You. Amen.

...and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

2 Timothy 4:4

Paul now describes the result of what will come upon those who will not endure sound doctrine, who have itching ears, and who thus heap up teachers for themselves. He says that “they will turn *their* ears away from the truth.”

The Greek literally reads, “the hearing *they* will turn away.” The word is “used of the inner (spiritual) hearing that goes with receiving faith from God” (HELPS Word Studies). This is the same word used in Romans 10:17 where it notes that faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of God. And so, what Paul is saying is that they turn their spiritual ears from the eternal, beautiful, and life-giving truth of Scripture, and they turn “aside to fables.”

The Greek word is *muthos*. In it, one can see where the English word “myth” is thus derived. This then is reflected in Paul’s words of Romans 1:25 where people exchange “the truth of God for the lie.” It is also seen in 1 Timothy 1:4 where he urges Timothy to not “give heed to fables and endless genealogies.”

This is a constant problem, even with saved Christians today. Conspiracy theories are held to as if sound and reliable. Evolution is accepted as truth. People believe that the earth is flat, they accept that one version of the Bible is divinely inspired and all others are of the devil, they accept Jewish tradition over the words of Scripture, and they constantly watch videos which predict (for the ten-jillionth time) the day of the rapture.

There is little discernment among a vast swath of the Christian community because of turning from the truth, and turning aside to fables.

Life application: The more Bible you put in your life, the less time you will have to accept fables. Be wise and discerning with your time. Read! Study to show yourself approved! Don't listen to those who would pull you into their box, and then close it around you. Pursue Christ, fix your eyes on Jesus, and live out the word in a holy, reasonable manner.

Lord God, help us to be kept from fables and conspiracy theories which have no basis in reality. Help us to not assimilate anything which is contrary to Your word, and to even carefully evaluate those things which may not be contrary to it, but which would distract us from a close and personal walk with You. Help us in this, O God. We are so very easily distracted. Guide us always. Amen.

But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. 2 Timothy 4:5

Paul now returns to Timothy as a contrast to those described in verses 3 & 4. In verse 2, he had said, "Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching."

It was then that he described why he should do that. It was concerning those described in verses 3 & 4. Beginning with the word "But" here is to contrast them, and to complete the exhortations now that the description of those people has been provided. Therefore, he says, "But you be watchful in all things."

The word translated as "watchful" literally means, "to be sober." Here he is using it figuratively to indicate having a presence of mind that involves clear judgment, to remain rational, and to steer clear of intoxicating influences such as passion, greed, and the like. He is to act this way in "all things."

No part of his walk should be overlooked, but he was to remain circumspect in all ways. Paul then tells him to "endure afflictions."

It is a single Greek word first used in 2 Timothy 2:9. It gives the sense of continuing on through painful hardships which may seem to be a setback to the progress being made, but which really aren't. Nothing occurs apart from God's knowledge, and so even the evils we suffer are given to instruct us, mold us, and refine us – if we will so allow them to work as such. After this, Timothy is admonished to “do the work of an evangelist.”

This simply and exactly is asking Timothy to “preach the gospel.” It is what he was told to do in verse 2, and it is reexplained to him here. An evangelist was to proclaim sound doctrine, teach properly, and stick to the truth – exactly the opposite of what those described in verses 3 & 4 were looking for.

In other words, even if the world calls out for meaningless, misguided messages of mushy ministers, Timothy was to continue to evangelize with soundness. It hearkens back to Noah whom Peter calls a “preacher of righteousness” despite the entire world following a different path.

Timothy was to follow in that same path as Noah. He, and all who follow him, should be willing to put the true gospel forth at all times. Finally, Paul says to him, “fulfill your ministry.”

The word here “is used of God's power bringing the believer to *maximum* potential, ‘matching’ their true knowledge of Him” (HELPS Word Studies). Timothy is exhorted to bear the work of God to its fullest extent. Every fiber of him was to be exerted, even to maximum capacity.

Life application: Though these words are directed to Timothy, and thus to all ministers, should any believer in Christ do any less than pursue the path directed by Paul? This doesn't mean that everyone should leave their lives to become ministers, but that everyone can use their lives as if ministers.

We should all be looking for opportunities to share the word, endure the afflictions associated with that, and fulfill our calling in Christ. Onward!

Lord God, we are saved by what Jesus did. As this is so, how can we hold back sharing this good news with others? If we truly believe we are saved, that means we were saved “from” something. A person drowning in the ocean isn't concerned about a new car. Rather, he is concerned about life and breath. Many are in an ocean of sin, leading to death. Help us to be willing to share the news that can get them out of it. To Your glory we pray. Amen.

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 2 Timothy 4:6

Here we have a strong contrast between “But you” of verse 4:5 and “For I” of this verse. Paul has exhorted Timothy to be watchful, to endure, to carry on his work, and to fulfill his ministry. However, Paul’s words now reveal the contrast. Whereas Timothy is to move forward, Paul was now at his end. He says clearly enough, “For I am already being poured out.”

The KJV says, “For I am now ready to be offered.” That translation falls short in two ways. First, the verb signifies that he is already being offered, not “ready” to be offered. Further, the verb is not well defined. The word is *spendó*, and it signifies to be made a drink offering, and thus “poured out.”

The symbolism is that of the life being drained as a complete offering on the altar of sacrifice. There are all kinds of offerings, some resulting in death, some not resulting in death.

The symbolism of the KJV does not convey, at all, the appropriate intent of Paul’s solemn words. What he says here now is more strongly worded than he had previously implied to those at Philippi –

“Yes, and if I am being poured out *as a drink offering* on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.” Philippians 2:17

There is no “if” here in Paul’s words to Timothy. He is being poured out “as a drink offering.” His life is to end, and indeed his circumstances show that it is already in the process. His life to the Lord will be returned upon the altar of sacrifice to Him. This libation, or drink offering, was the final part of the sacrifice.

Paul knew that he would be martyred, closing out his service to the Lord in that manner. With this act coming, he then says, “and the time of my departure is at hand.”

Here he uses a noun, *analusis*, found only here in the Bible. It signifies a loosing for departure. When animals are unloosed, such as a horse, it is for making a departure. When the anchor is loosed from the ship, it is set to sail away. When the stays of a tent are loosed at a military camp, it is for the purpose of departure.

Paul's words are clear, and his intent would be clearly understood by Timothy. In his pouring out (martyrdom), Paul's soul would be loosed from its earthly bonds. He would be freed from this present life, and he was ready for his journey to that "building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Corinthians 5:1).

Life application: If you knew that your time was coming to an end, how would you redirect your life? What changes would you make so that you were prepared to meet your Maker? Guess what, your life is coming to an end. We know not the day or hour of that event, and so we should always be ready.

Let us live our lives out as if every moment counts for eternity. Why? Because... every moment counts for eternity.

Lord God, direct our steps so that we are always prepared to meet you. We do not know the time of our departure from this life, but it is as sure to come as the next sunrise. Help us then to wisely live out our lives with this in mind. Every moment we have counts for eternity. Let us not waste one precious second of our short time in this life. Amen.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

2 Timothy 4:7

Paul has just spoken of his coming death, being poured out as a drink offering. This referred to the time of his departure. Now he reflects on the conduct of his life in Christ leading up to that point. Did he do what he was called to do? Did he fulfill his mission? His words now answer that for Timothy to reflect upon. First, he says, "I have fought the good fight."

Paul uses a metaphor to describe his conduct in Christ. He may be speaking of a wrestling match, as if engaged in direct combat with the enemy (see Ephesians 6:12), or he may be speaking of being a warrior who has been engaged in battle (see 2 Timothy 2:3, 4). Either way, he is comparing his life to that of one who was in a fight, working against the foes of the gospel, and against both human and spiritual enemies. From there he says, "I have finished the race."

Again, it is a metaphor which he uses to describe the life he was called to. He used that metaphor several times elsewhere, such as in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 –

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. ²⁵ And everyone who competes *for the*

prize is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for* an imperishable *crown*. ²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

As we can see from his words, Paul not only looked at his life as a wrestler, but as one in a race who must endure to the end. Now with the fight complete and the race finished, he says with a note of surety, "I have kept the faith."

This is similar to what he had encouraged Timothy to do in his first epistle to him –

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses." 1 Timothy 6:12

The terminology conveyed to Timothy was of the Grecian games. They were as well known then as the Olympics are for us today. In this expression, he equated Timothy to a fighter on a set team (the faith) and he encouraged him to fight that good fight on its behalf. The goal of such a fight is to "lay hold on eternal life."

This is what Paul had done, and he was now awaiting his reward, having kept the faith.

Life application: Paul is writing as a minister of the gospel to a minister of the gospel. His words are to be taken as such, but there is no reason that what he says, unless limited to an ordained minister, cannot be applied to one's own life.

We all have a fight to fight in Christ. We all have a race to run in Christ. And, we all have faith that was exercised in coming to Christ. We should keep that faith, and cause it to grow until the very end.

Lord God, help each of us to not fritter away the few short days of this life You have granted to us. Give us wisdom to contemplate that sure end which we all will face, and the judgment which is set to follow that end. Give us wisdom to accept Your pardon for our sins, granted through Christ, and then give us wisdom to fight the good fight, run the race to the finish, and keep the faith which we have professed. Surely with these things, You will be pleased with our conduct. Amen.

Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. 2 Timothy 4:8

The word “Finally” here gives the sense of “henceforth.” Paul isn’t so much summing up his thoughts as he is saying, “From this point on, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness.”

He is acknowledging that what he has worked for has been attained. His work is complete, and the Lord has the crown of righteousness set aside for him. His words look to the thought of the Grecian games. For the one who successfully worked through the games, there was a crown kept in hand for him.

The same is true for the believer. A crown is laid up for him. Charles Ellicott says, “It is called ‘the crown of righteousness,’ it being the crown to which righteousness can lay claim—that *is*, the crown awarded to righteousness.”

Paul then says, “which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me.” He ties the righteous nature of Christ in with the bestowal of this crown of righteousness. Only one who is righteous can truly determine who has conducted life’s affairs righteously. Being God, His character is one of absolute righteousness, and thus He can and will judge righteously.

For Paul, he is certain that he has conducted his affairs in a manner that will lead to his receiving this crown of righteousness “on that Day.”

The term, “on that Day,” is speaking of the day when the saints stand before Christ Jesus’ bema seat for judgment. It is not a judgment for salvation or condemnation, but one for rewards and losses.

The judgment for salvation of believers was accomplished at the cross. The judgment for rewards and loss will be at this bema seat. It will be a judgment which is completely impartial, and perfectly fair.

From there, Paul says that the reception of this crown of righteousness is not limited to him alone. Rather, it is “not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

This is an important addition because the word “crown” has a definite article in front of it. It is “the crown of righteousness.” Because of this, one might say, “Gee, Paul got the only crown of righteousness.”

But such is not the case. It is for “all who have loved His appearing.” It is a crown to be bestowed upon everyone who falls into this category. It is not “a crown of righteousness” (see incorrect KJV), but “the crown of righteousness.”

It is the same crown of honor to be bestowed upon all who love the appearing of Christ. It is His righteousness, once and forever bestowed upon the faithful soul who has trusted in Him, and anticipated His return. A taste of this is seen in the taking of the Lord’s Supper.

There Paul writes, “For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.” We take the Lord’s supper in anticipation of His coming. We do not worship a dead Savior. Instead, we remember the death of the Savior. From there, we anticipate the return of this resurrected and forever-alive Savior when He comes for His people. This is what is worthy of the bestowal of this crown of righteousness.

Life application: Have you called on Jesus, but let go of the eager anticipation of His return? If so, you should reconsider what it meant to you to have trusted Him and been saved by Him. Re-nourish your early faith in Christ, remind yourself of the depths from which He pulled you.

Remember the difference between your life before that day and after that day. And then look forward to a change that will outshine that first change by a million-fold. What has happened in you was glorious. What is yet to come for you is exceedingly so. Re-ignite within you the fire of anticipation in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lord God, I once was lost, but then was saved by You. The change from who I was to who I am now was immeasurable. Once we were enemies, but through Christ, we are reconciled. And yet, the change which has taken place is only a glimpse of the glory which lies ahead. O! May we eagerly anticipate that Day when we come before You in the crown of righteousness which is to be granted to all who have loved Christ’s appearing. Amen.

Be diligent to come to me quickly; 2 Timothy 4:9

The word translated as “Be diligent,” is used in verse 2:15 while encouraging Timothy to “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God.” It gives the sense of hastening, and that is the sense borne out here. Paul wants Timothy to “hasten to come to me quickly.”

There is an urgency in the words, and it is an urgency repeated in verse 4:21. One main reason for this urgency is found in verse 13, which will be explained then. But there are secondary reasons which will be noted as well. For now, this is a short request which seems completely out of place with the words of a man who has just said that “my departure is at hand.”

However, it also shows us the authenticity of the epistle. Nobody claiming to be Paul, and who has stated he was about to die, would then implore the person he is writing to leave behind his church and come for a visit. But Paul would.

When Paul says, “my departure is at hand,” it is indicating that he feels his imprisonment will end in his execution. However, he was – as a Roman citizen – entitled to a trial, appeals, etc. This could be a long, drawn-out thing. Though his departure was at hand based on his circumstances in prison, that same place of incarceration may be his home for a while.

And so, with the desire to see Timothy, and to assist him with several important things in his visit to Rome, Paul encourages his young protegee to hasten to his side.

Life application: The only contradictions to be found in Scripture are those that come from a lack of study, or a presupposition that the Bible is not the word of God. When we take all things concerning Scripture in context, and without presupposition, and then study them carefully, we will always find that those things which seem contradictory are actually not at all so.

Wow Lord! It is always exciting to wake up and read Your word. It starts the day off beautifully. It is then marvelous to read the word during the day. It may lift us up from a low spot, or it may direct our feet on a path we have been considering. Yes! It is great to read Your word during the day. And of course, the evening time is a fantastic time to read Your word. As the day is ending, we find comfort and rest in it as we commit our sleep to You, pondering the treasure we have read. And, of course, at night when we wake and need to settle our thoughts... that is a magnificent time to read Your word. It

does settle our racing thoughts, and it also brings sweet sleep to us once again. Wow Lord! It is always exciting to read Your word. Amen.

for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. 2 Timothy 4:10

Paul had just said, “Be diligent to come to me quickly.” The reason for this is forthcoming, but it is more urgently necessitated because of the words of this verse. He says, “for Demas has forsaken me.”

Demas is mentioned in Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 1:24. He had obviously been around Paul for some time, and during his previous imprisonment, but now he has abandoned him.

Though we can only speculate, he was probably afraid of the persecution Paul was experiencing, feeling it may come to him as well. It was seemingly assured that Paul would be martyred, and he didn’t want to be the next one on the chopping block. Paul says that instead of staying by his side Demas had forsaken him, “having loved this present world.”

The word translated as “world” here, *aión*, signifies the present age in contrast to the future age. It is the time in which he is living. Therefore, this doesn’t necessarily mean he loved the world and the things in the world, but he loved his life and did not want it to end.

Obviously, if he didn’t care about the things of the world, he wouldn’t care about his life in the same way either, but Paul’s choice of the word shows that he was probably more afraid of the termination of this present life. He had believed in Christ’s resurrection. Thus, he was a saved person, but his unsurety about his own mortal life seems to show a failure to stand fast on what the resurrection meant to him personally. Because of this failing, Paul says that he “has departed for Thessalonica.”

By leaving the reason why Crescens chose Thessalonica unstated, it can be assumed that Timothy knew, or would have understood, the reason for the choice. It may have been his home; it may be that during their travels he really liked the place and wanted to go back and get established there; or he may have seen it as an opportunity to get reestablished in life in a new spot. Thessalonica at this time was one of the great Roman cities.

It thus had many opportunities for someone to live out life in the present age. Paul then says, “Crescens for Galatia.” Crescens, or as the Greek reads, *Kréskés*, is found only here in the Bible, but he was obviously known to Timothy. His name is actually Latin. Paul doesn’t say that he departed for a negative reason such as Demas did. He merely notes that he had departed. The same is true with Titus who had gone on to Dalmatia.

Dalmatia was a part of Illyricum, a Roman province which lays on the east coast of the Adriatic Sea. As nothing is said about why Demas and Titus had left, and nothing negative is indicated by Paul, we can only speculate as to the reason for their departure. It would be nice to think that both were commissioned by Paul to continue preaching the gospel in places that Paul was now unable to go to.

Life application: Paul often writes about those who had moral failings in his epistles. He also notes things about people, such as Demas today, showing that they were imperfect beings. However, there is not a single instance in his writings that he says, “That person was never saved,” or “That guy has lost his salvation.”

Paul’s writings show us, time and again, that salvation is eternal, but we will be judged based on our actions after salvation. Let us stand steadfast in our faith, not be counted as those who shy away from our duties, and let us instead go forward in the Lord’s strength, applying His word to our lives always.

Heavenly Father, it sure is wonderful to know that You are ever-present in our lives. There is no time that You are on vacation or unavailable to us. Throughout the span of our lives, and wherever we go, we can seek Your face. And more, we can come to You with our needs, desires, and hopes. It is a wonderful thought that we are always in Your presence. Glory to You, O God. Amen.

Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. 2 Timothy 4:11

Luke is none other than the author of the Gospel which bears his name, and also the book of Acts. He is thus either the only Gentile to author some of the Bible, or – if Job was written by Job – one of only two. This can be determined from Colossians 4 where Luke is excluded from being one of the “circumcision” noted in Colossians 4:11.

Though some argue against it, they do so in vain. He was neither a proselyte to Judaism nor was he a Jew. He was, and he remained, a Gentile. He stuck with Paul through many adventures as indicated by the book of Acts, normally seen during the “we” sections.

Luke would say “we” to indicate that he was personally with Paul and others at those times. Paul had Luke with him there in Rome during this incarceration as well. He then directs Timothy to, “Get Mark and bring him with you.”

This is speaking of John Mark (Acts 15:27), the writer of the gospel of Mark. This note to bring Mark along is especially tender because in Acts, he had been the traveling partner of Paul and Barnabas on one of their mission journeys. However, he had left to go back home before completion of the work.

Acts 15:36-39 details an argument between Paul and Barnabas over taking Mark with them again. The Greek word used indicated that it was a very strong argument. This led to them splitting up. Paul took Silas and departed, traveling through Syria and Cilicia. Barnabas took Mark and they traveled to Cyprus.

It appears that even if the argument between Paul and Barnabas never died down, which is unknown, there was at least reconciliation between Paul and Mark. As Paul says, “for he is useful to me for ministry.”

It is unknown how, or in what capacity, this was so. But Paul ensures that Timothy understood this now. Timothy stood in much the same relationship to Paul as Mark once had. By acknowledging Mark as useful, it shows that reconciliation was both possible and a good thing. It is a lesson for Timothy to remember as he assumed the mantle of the next generation of leaders within the church.

Life application: It is never mentioned if Paul and Barnabas reconciled or not. However, it is probably so. If Paul and Mark did, then unless Barnabas had already died, it is a pretty good indication that they did also. Mark was Barnabas’ cousin, and so the family news would be well known.

Such is only speculation, but it should be a reminder to each of us that reconciliation, if possible, is always the preferred option. We will be facing our fellow Christians for all eternity. How much better then to let enmity die before we do!

Lord God, it is rather easy to break off friendships in today’s world. The “unfriend” button is so tempting to click, even over small disagreements. But the reasonable thing to do is to not take offense at every little thing which bothers us. We have become a world full of offended people, instead of those who are willing to overlook faults. Help us in this, especially with those who are our fellow believers in You. Amen.

And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. 2 Timothy 4:12

The Greek more correctly reads, “But Tychicus...”

Paul has asked for Timothy to join him. He then said that Demas had forsaken him, that Crescens departed for Galatia, and that Titus had gone to Dalmatia. He then noted that Luke was still with him. After that he noted that Mark should be brought along too, being useful to the ministry. With all of that understood, he then says, “But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.”

Others had forsaken, voluntarily left, or voluntarily stayed, but Tychicus was personally sent by Paul. This may partially explain why Paul especially wants Timothy to bring Mark. Tychicus had filled a needed role as a friend and a faithful brother, but Paul felt it more necessary that whatever business was needing to be accomplished in Ephesus was more important than keeping him in Rome. Mark would be able to assist Paul in the lack left in Tychicus’ absence.

Tychicus is mentioned in Acts 20:4, Ephesians 6:21, Colossians 4:7, and Titus 3:12. In Ephesians 6, Paul calls him “a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord.” He speaks similarly well of him in Colossians.

Life application: How easy it is to sever friendships in this world. People who portray themselves as faithful friends are often faithful when the wind is blowing from the south, but when it switches 1 degree towards the east, they depart. It is the rare soul, like Luke or like Tychicus, that remains faithful.

We’ll all be remembered for how we live out our lives. What will the record of our life state concerning our allegiances to our friends, our family, our employers, and our church?

Lord God, the Bible is filled with notes of the faults and failings of people throughout history. It is also filled with notes of those who were faithful to their God, their friends, and to those around them. Each life is recorded to reveal to us how we can and should conduct our own lives, because we also will be remembered by You and judged for the life we lived. Help us to remember this truth, and act faithfully towards others, and especially towards You. Amen.

Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments. 2 Timothy 4:13

Paul now makes a specific request for Timothy to accomplish. He says, “Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come.”

It seems like a simple thing to request, easy to translate, and without any need for conflict in interpretation. And yet, it is none of these. The word is found only here in the New Testament, *phelonés*. Some say it is the same as the Latin word *paenula*, a cape which fell down below the knees.

Others say that it is a *phailone* which speaks of a carrying bag. This is how the translator of the Syriac understood it. Others come to one of these two same conclusions using different Greek words, either a cloak or a carrying case. Some have even combined the two, thus signifying a cloak used for carrying.

It is truly hard to be dogmatic with a word used only once, and which has so many possible roots. If it is a cloak, the request is not at all unreasonable. If winter were coming, a cloak of this type could mean life or death for a man bound in a cold Roman prison.

There would even be an urgency to it. It may have been hot when he left, and he thought he would not need it immediately. However, with an extended time in prison, the need arose for his garment. Sleeping in one’s garment is actually a concept found in the Old Testament –

“If you ever take your neighbor’s garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down. ²⁷ For that *is* his only covering, it *is* his garment for his skin. What will he sleep in? And it will be that when he cries to Me, I will hear, for I *am* gracious.” Exodus 22:26, 27

This general thought is repeated in Deuteronomy 24:13 as well. On the other hand, it is hard to imagine Paul, a man who was so well traveled, and who would constantly move from one climate to another, would go along his route without a cloak that was needed when it was cold. And so, the second option is also quite possible. If so, he had a traveling case that he left behind in the care of “Carpus at Troas.”

This is the only time Carpus is mentioned in the Bible, but he was obviously someone who could be trusted by Paul. Whether cloak or carrying case, Paul had entrusted something important to him. The idea of it being a carrying case is then bolstered by the words to Timothy that he was also to bring “the books, especially the parchments.”

These would have been Paul's cherished copies of Scripture, possibly including early copies of the gospel of Matthew, Mark, and even Luke. They could have source material for all of Luke's interviews and the like. There could have been the writings of Greek philosophers, at times quoted by Paul during his travels and in his epistles. Whatever they contained, a carrying case would make complete sense for Paul to request.

The word "books" is translated from *biblion*, meaning a papyrus roll; a paper. The word "parchments" is translated from a word unique in the New Testament, *membrana*. One can see the modern word "membrane" as coming from it. It signifies a sheep-skin; a parchment.

Whatever was written on these parchments, be it Scripture, or letters from churches, or whatever else, they were especially important to Paul. He wanted them possibly even as a witness during any trial he would face.

Life application: Is the Bible so important to you that you would request it to be brought to you if you were restricted to a hospital, a prison, or some other type of place? Or would you ask for your favorite movie to be brought to you?

The most valuable possession that anyone could possess is often treated as something cumbersome or useless to their needs at such times. In fact, exactly the opposite is true. Treasure your Bible, long for its presence in your life, and let it fill the times when you so most desperately need it.

Lord God, if we have an extended stay in the hospital or some other place of confinement, what is it that we would ask our family or friends to bring us? If our first request is not the Bible, then we are erring in our priorities. The most precious treasure of all is often the thing we relegate to a much lower status than should ever be. Help us to have our priorities straight. Help us to hunger after Your word first and foremost. Amen.

Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. 2 Timothy 4:14

This bad guy at first seems to be the same one referred to in 1 Timothy 1:20, but it is more probable that he is the individual identified in Acts 19:33. This is because he is identified as "the coppersmith."

The other Alexander, in 1 Timothy 1:20, is not so named. Paul seems to be making a distinction between the two. However, if he is the same as in 1 Timothy, it doesn't mean he isn't saved, or that he has lost his salvation.

Rather, exactly the opposite is true based on the same terminology being used in 1 Corinthians 5. Handing someone over to Satan is a corrective measure, not a note of condemnation.

But, with the assumption that he is identified in Acts 19 and not in 1 Timothy, he is a person who was chosen to speak against Paul. He was a Jew and not favorable to faith in Christ as the fulfillment of their laws.

As such, he would be one that instead of simply trusting in the grace of Jesus Christ, and allowing others to do so, continuously worked to have others brought back under the law of Moses – an annulled, obsolete, and set aside law. It is a law that was “nailed to the cross” according to Paul in Colossians 2:14. Paul says that this wayward soul, “did me much harm.”

The Greek reads “did me much evil.” Based on his coming words, it seems clear that he testified against Paul in a legal sense. Whatever other things he did against Paul, it was enough for him to say, “May the Lord repay him according to his works.”

Paul is not seeking personal revenge, but the Lord's righteousness. In harming the apostle, the apostle's message was hindered. The gospel message is the means of salvation for all men.

Therefore, if a Judaizer creeps in and steals people away from the grace found in Jesus Christ, his repayment is justly due. If not saved, they will receive their just condemnation. If saved, they can stand at the back of the line in heaven when rewards are handed out. If they persisted in their aberrant doctrine, they will be repaid with a frown and a handful of nothing. There will be only loss.

Life application: It cannot be stressed enough that those who teach adherence to the Law of Moses, in part or in whole, are to be utterly rejected. There is one gospel, and that is that Jesus Christ has fulfilled the law. We are not under law, but under grace. To reapply the law to one's life, doctrine, and practice, is to set aside the grace of Jesus Christ. It is in essence, “Nice try Jesus, but I can do better.”

Heavenly Father, it has become fashionable for sects of Christians to teach observance of some, or all, of the Law of Moses in their daily lives as a part of somehow adhering to Your commandments. But Jesus has fulfilled the law and initiated a New Covenant in His own blood. Shall we say to You, "Nice try God. Jesus did OK, but I can do better"? Or should we rest in the finished work of Jesus? Help us to see rightly and to apply what has been accomplished to our walk before You. Help us to live in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words. 2 Timothy 4:15

It was noted in the previous verse that Alexander may have been the same individual as in Acts 19:33, a man who was selected to speak against Paul. This is probably so, because he was in Ephesus in Acts 19, and Paul is writing to Timothy who is also in Ephesus. Paul says to Timothy that, "You also must beware of him."

He did a great deal of harm to Paul, speaking against him, and maybe even testifying against him in court. If so, he would have argued that faith in Christ was not a legitimate part of the legally recognized Jewish faith. Thus, it would be *religio illicita*; an unlawful religious expression. This seems likely because Paul then says, "for he has greatly resisted our words."

Paul warns against this individual because he didn't just speak and then shut up. Instead, he spoke and continued to speak. He actively resisted the gospel message. The words Paul speaks of him make it highly unlikely that he is speaking about the same Alexander noted in 1 Timothy. Rather, it was another Alexander, quite likely the one in Acts. The name was a common one at the time.

Life application: If you speak out for Christ today, you are bound to have people resist your words. This is so much so that some may make up entire blogs about you on the internet. A simple name search may pull up lie after lie about an individual. Throw in other believers who disagree over points of doctrine, and you might suddenly appear to the world as the greatest heretic.

Are you willing to defend your belief in Christ even to this extent? Or will you quietly remain shut up about the only news that can bring salvation to the lost of the world?

Gracious and merciful heavenly Father, You have given us this one life to live before we face our day of judgment. For the lost, they failed to make the right choice about Jesus. For those who are saved, we will stand and give an account for what we were willing to

say and do in His name, and for what we failed to say and do which is in accord with Your word. Help us to consider this, and to use our time wisely – speaking out about Jesus. If we are persecuted or shunned because of it, who cares! We have eternity to not care about such trifling things. Give us boldness and wisdom in this. Amen.

At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. 2 Timothy 4:16

Paul has just finished speaking of Alexander the coppersmith, and the harm that he did against him. It is apparent that this means he openly spoke against Paul, accusing him of violating the law through his gospel presentation. He then added in the words, “May the Lord repay him according to his works.” With that understood, he now says, “At my first defense.”

This is often assumed to be a defense made in Rome, and from there he is being held for a second defense. That seems unlikely though. What seems more likely is that he was accused somewhere, found worthy of further trial, and then sent to Rome. This occurred in the past when he was held in Caesarea for a hearing. During that hearing, he appealed to Rome based on his Roman citizenship. From there, he was sent to Rome for a ruling on his situation.

Rome is the place of final appeal for trials of Roman citizens. The same is probably true here as well. Unfortunately, Paul states that during his defense, “no one stood with me.”

This is a common theme in the Bible. Job had troubles, and he was all but abandoned (see Job 19:13-17). In the psalms, being left alone in times of troubles, being repaid with evil for having done good, and etc., is noted several times, such as in Psalm 35:12-16, Psalm 41:9, and Psalm 55:12-14. Zechariah 13:6 shows that the Messiah would be wounded in the house of His friends, and such prophecies are clearly seen as fulfilled in the gospels. Paul endured this treatment as well. He says that instead of being defended, “all forsook me.”

This continues to show that the defense Paul made was at a different place and time. He has already said that Luke is there with him. And so, wherever his defense was, the people of that area were not faithful to stand with him.

However, it needs to be understood that if they were to stand with him, it could have meant their own imprisonment or death. By this time, things were taking a sour turn for Christians, and to stand in defense of one would mean being looked at with suspicion as

one of this group, or one sympathetic to it. Paul understood this and he then says, “May it not be charged against them.”

Because of the serious nature of standing with Paul, he felt it was a thing not to be counted as unworthy of the title of Christian to not stand with him. They could remain effective Christians by having their freedom. They may have had families to support as well. If they had come to Paul’s defense, the lives they lived might very well have been denied them.

With this in mind, the scholar Bengel notes the structure of the Greek here. It reads, “Not to them may it be charged.” The words “to them” are thus in the emphatic position.

Though he sees no guilt in those who did not come to stand with him, he sees guilt in those who intimidated them to not do so. Surely he is thinking of Alexander in particular, and also to the whole system which caused this situation to arise. Paul sees their guilt as worthy of being charged.

Life application: Paul’s words do not indicate that he was completely abandoned. As noted before, Luke was there with him, and Timothy’s presence was being requested. However, in his time of need, he was not supported by those around him.

We all must choose when, and under what circumstances, we are willing to step forward and provide assistance to those in need. It may not always be clear when it is appropriate and when it isn’t, and so we should seek the Lord through prayer and act when we feel truly led to do so.

Lord God, You are all-knowing; we are limited in knowledge. Help us to seek Your infinite understanding of matters that arise through prayer and petition. Those things which are unknown to us, but important to act on if needed, cause us stress until we know which way to turn. And so, hear our prayers for guidance, and then lead our feet to act in accord with Your will. Help us to always turn to You, and to trust that You are guiding according to the infinite supply of wisdom You possess. Amen.

But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. 2 Timothy 4:17

Paul had just stated that during his first defense, “no one stood with me.” Now he qualifies that. Nobody was there to physically be present with him, but he knew that the Lord was there. As he says, “the Lord stood with me.”

The idea of standing speaks of the presentation of his defense, where the accused would stand and speak. Though nobody else rose to stand and speak with him or for him, the Lord was there. This was a promise given by Jesus to His disciples –

“But when they arrest *you* and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.” Mark 13:11

Paul certainly knew these words of the Lord, and he trusted it was so. What was given to him were the words of the Holy Spirit which were being relayed through him. Thus, Paul next says, “and strengthened me.”

The word used is the root of our modern word “dynamo.” Paul was imparted the ability to withstand the trial, and he was empowered to see it through to the glory of God. This was, “so that the message might be preached fully through me.”

The word chosen here in this case signifies God’s power to bring the believer to maximum potential. As Paul spoke also to unbelievers, it was a word sufficient to relay to them the fullness of what is needed to know and accept the gospel for salvation. The Lord personally used Paul as His mouthpiece to accomplish this, and the purpose was “*that* all the Gentiles might hear.”

There were Jews there testifying against Paul. They knew his message, and they had decided against the truth of the gospel. But Paul, being the apostle to the Gentiles, was ready at all times to not only try to convince his brothers according to the flesh (meaning the Jews), but also the Gentiles.

He spoke to the highest ruling council in the Roman empire words of life and words of salvation. All heard, and all had the choice to accept or reject what they heard. Paul simply acted as the messenger of this gospel message. Finally, he notes, “Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.”

Here we have a theme coming from Scripture itself, and one which Timothy would have been well aware of. Daniel was delivered from the mouth of the lions because of his

faithfulness before God. Further, David wrote these words in the 22nd Psalm, a messianic psalm –

“Deliver Me from the sword,
My precious *life* from the power of the dog.
²¹ Save Me from the lion’s mouth
And from the horns of the wild oxen!
You have answered Me.” Psalm 22:20, 21

The word “deliver” in verse 20 of the Greek translation of the psalm is used by Paul, and then the words “out (the) mouth of (the) lion,” are the exact words used in verse 21. Scholars have sought to identify who “the lion” is that Paul refers to. Some say it is Satan, some Emperor Nero before whom he stood, while others say that it was the amphitheater where Paul stood before Nero, thus being inclusive of all who sat during his trial.

However, it seems unlikely that he is setting a defined limit of reference. Rather, he is speaking of all of them, and all other times he was faced with possible doom. In other words, the singular is given as an all-encompassing statement that God had delivered him from the lion of opposition in any and all forms by which he attacks.

Life application: Mark 13:11 is cited above. Please understand the context of the words, and know that though we are Christians, it does not necessarily follow through that the words of Jesus there apply to us. He was speaking of His disciples who were going to face troubles and trials, and who would need the words appropriate to those instances.

Today, we have the word of God in its fullness. It is breathed out, and it is what we are to use. The Holy Spirit has spoken, and now we are to use what He has transmitted through His chosen apostles, to make our defense before God.

Lord God, Your word is complete, and with it we have all we need to stand in defense of Your will for us. Help us to remember to use this precious gift from You as we speak to others about what Christ Jesus has done, and about the saving message which is found there for all of the world’s people. It is Your word, and it is sufficient. Thank You that we possess this marvelous treasure! Amen.

And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve *me* for His heavenly kingdom. To Him *be* glory forever and ever. Amen! 2 Timothy 4:18

Paul is rather clear here with his words, and they need to be considered in the context of his situation. He is in a Roman prison, and he has already spoken of himself as a goner, at least in this physical life. His words of verse 6 are specific, "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand."

The sacrifice of his life is all but complete, and the sacrifice of his death is at hand. And so, he is not at all speaking of being delivered from prison or execution when he says, "And the Lord will deliver me." Instead, he adds in the words "from every evil work."

He doesn't say, "from death." His trial, though legal under Roman law, is not based on any true wrongdoing. He has been accused of wrongdoing (an evil work), and he is facing execution because of these accusations (another evil work).

These, and any other associated evil works, will not be the end of Apostle Paul though. He confidently states that he will be delivered from them. Further, he says that the Lord will, "preserve *me* for his heavenly kingdom."

This again shows that he is not speaking, at all, about this earthly life. He is confident that the end of this existence will simply lead to another one, a heavenly one. There is no fear or timidity in his words, but rather bold confidence.

It then cannot be said that the Lord would deliver Paul from himself, such as keeping him from being woeful and miserable about what is to come, or that he might embarrass the Lord through allowing his faith to stumble. No such thought is seen here. Instead, his faith is strong, his acceptance of death is noted, but his confidence in triumph over that is steadfast.

With his sure note of faith stated, he then gives forth a resounding cry of exaltation – "To Him *be* glory forever and ever."

The hope which he possesses leads to a heartfelt doxology of praise. It is God who created, it is He who sent Christ Jesus, it is He who accomplished all the work necessary for our salvation, and it is He who has then guaranteed that the saints will rise and live forever in His presence. He is the glorious God, the omnipotent Sovereign, and the Restorer of life. Surely He is worthy of praise!

In completing his words of praise, he then finishes with, "Amen." The word signifies, "So be it." Paul's words are confident and filled with anticipation of what lies ahead.

Life application: Paul's words should reflect our state as well when we face the enemies of disease, persecution, unjust judgment against us, or even death. We should simply acknowledge that these enemies hold no sway over us, and we should be thankful for the assured promises which lie ahead, despite any such trivial, temporary trials.

Lord God, what thing can steal our long-term joy? Yes, we have bad days and difficult times, but no matter what happens to us, because of Jesus, we are securely in Your hands. Disease, financial troubles, unfair judgment of our faith in Christ, or even death itself cannot separate us from You. And so, despite any temporary trials which rob our temporary joy, nothing should truly take away our faith and our long-term joy. Help us always to keep this perspective. We have a promised and assured good end in store for us. Thank You for Jesus who has made this possible. Amen.

Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. 2 Timothy 4:19

Paul now makes a special request that Timothy "Greet Prisca and Aquila."

These two are noted in Acts, Romans, and 1 Corinthians. This is the only time that she is called Prisca rather than Priscilla, it being a shortened form of the name. This type of shortened nickname is seen elsewhere in the Bible, such as when Silvanus is called Silas, etc. At times, Priscilla is named first, and at times Aquila is named first. This is a clear indication that Paul's words of Galatians 3:28 were considered relevant even at the earliest times of the church age.

There he notes that in Christ Jesus "there is neither male nor female." However, it must be understood that this is speaking of salvation in Christ, not that males cease being males, or that females cease being females. Further, it is noted that within the family unit, there is still the order that the husband has authority over the wife (see 1 Corinthians 11:1-16).

It is important to understand all such matters by applying proper context to such verses. Paul's addressing Prisca (Priscilla) first is not a usurpation of the order of things. Placing Priscilla first in the narrative in Acts, or in the greetings in Paul's letters, is simply a way of acknowledging that all Christians are on an equal level concerning salvation, and thus members in Christ.

From a simply historical note, Paul first met these two in Acts 18. They had been expelled from Rome, along with all of the Jews, by Claudius. Paul and Aquila shared the

same trade, tent making. Upon their expulsion from Rome, Aquila and Priscilla took up residence in Corinth. It is there that they met Paul.

They are later found with Paul in Ephesus (1 Corinthians 16:19), and eventually went back to Rome where Paul greeted them (Romans 16:3). This verse in 2 Timothy is their last mention in the Bible. Along with a request for greeting these two, Paul then says, “and the household of Onesiphorus.”

The household of Onesiphorus was mentioned in 2 Timothy 1:16 for the first time. Paul now asks that they be greeted again here, and it is the last time Onesiphorus is mentioned in the Bible as well.

Life application: As always, context is king when interpreting Scripture. Some have attempted to say that women are given an equal footing in all things based on the naming of Priscilla first on several occasions when she and her husband are mentioned. That is a giant stretch to make in order to justify what is clearly forbidden elsewhere.

It is true that in Christ, all are on an equal level concerning salvation. It comes to all equally. However, this does not mean that all are capable or authorized to perform the same tasks, including within the ministry.

Let us not rip verses out of context in order to formulate our doctrine. Instead, may we carefully handle Scripture in order to be pleasing to the Lord, and sound in our walk with Christ.

Lord God, it is so very good to walk in Your presence and to share in Your Spirit because of our Lord Jesus Christ. We were so far from You, but through the giving of Your Son, You have brought us near once again. Praises to You for the great love which You have lavished upon us in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick. 2 Timothy 4:20

This is a relatively simple verse. It seems to have nothing doctrinally significant in it, and yet it actually carries great importance in at least one major point. Paul has just asked for greetings to be extended to others.

He now gives additional words concerning two people that Timothy obviously knew. Without these words, Timothy might wonder what happened to them. And so, Paul begins with, “Erastus stayed in Corinth.”

The name "Erastus" is mentioned two other times in the Bible. It is derived from the word *eraó*, meaning "to love." Thus, the name means "Beloved." The name was first seen in Acts 19:22. There Paul sent Timothy and Erastus from Ephesus into Macedonia while he stayed behind in Asia. Then, in Romans 16:23 an Erastus is mentioned as "the treasurer of the city," meaning Corinth.

It is unknown if this is the same Erastus in both situations, or if the same name is given to different people. However, if he is the same as the one mentioned in Romans, then Paul is noting that he remained at his home in Corinth. From there, he says, "but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick."

The name "Trophimus" is also seen three times in the Bible. It is from the word *trophé*, meaning "food" or "nourishment." Thus, it may mean something like "Well-educated," or "Brought up." Some extend this even further to "Foster child."

The name is first mentioned in Acts 20:4 where "Trophimus of Asia" is noted. Then again in Acts 21:29 he is called "Trophimus the Ephesian." He had traveled to Jerusalem with Paul. This is most likely the same person in all three instances.

Here Paul says that he had left Trophimus while he was sick in Miletus. The word used for "sick" is one that can mean either physically sick or morally weak. In this instance, it is certainly speaking of a physical sickness. Another time the word is used in this manner is when speaking of Epaphroditus in Philippians 2:25, 26.

In those verses, Paul noted the physical sickness which almost ended in the death of Epaphroditus. In these two men, and their physical sicknesses, along with the physical sickness of Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:23, we are taught what should be a readily discernible truth concerning healing. But it is one which is overlooked by false Charismatic faith healers.

It is God who heals, not false teachers who wave their hands over others and supposedly restore them to health. In three instances, the apostle himself could not heal the sickness of others. If nothing else, these instances are given to show us that not all sicknesses can be claimed into healing. It is a false teaching.

The deceitfulness of these people is an affront to the truth of God which is found in Scripture. The apostles only healed on certain occasions, and only in order to substantiate their apostolic authority. These gifts ended with the termination of the apostolic age.

Now, Christians are to pray for healing of others, but are never to act in a presumptuous and sinful manner by claiming healing. Such notions are to be rejected by those who hold faithfully to God's word, and to the notion of God's sovereignty over all things, including the affliction of His people.

Life application: Doctrine matters.

Most glorious heavenly Father, we are the work of Your hands, and at times we sure need Your hand of divine support. Due to our fallen nature, pains come, sicknesses arise, weakness prevails, and our physical limitations can overwhelm us. In these times, we can come to You to find strength through the suffering, and You are there. Thank You for Your ever-present hand of help and strengthening which will carry us through to our final, glorified state. Until then, we will rest in You and in anticipation of that wondrous day ahead. Amen.

Do your utmost to come before winter.

Eubulus greets you, as well as Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren.

2 Timothy 4:21

Paul had asked for Timothy to come to him quickly in verse 9. He then asked him to bring his cloak in verse 13. He now says, "Do your utmost to come before winter."

Putting the three together, it appears that Paul may have needed the cloak to stay warm while in prison. Rather than impose on someone else to purchase him a cloak, and knowing that Timothy was on his way anyway, it seems that his bringing this valuable possession would save burdening others, and save his life from a miserable winter.

After this, he then passes on greetings from others. In verse 19, he had asked for his greetings to be passed on to some. Now he does the passing on of them. Paul is very orderly in his thoughts as he writes to his young protege. Each of the names of this verse is found only here in the Bible. He starts first with, "Eubulus greets you."

The name is Greek, coming from two words which mean "good" and "to plan with full resolve." Thus, he is Good-willer. He then notes three others. The first is Pudens. The name is Latin and signifies "modest."

Next is Linus whose name is that of a mythical minstrel. It perhaps comes from *linon*, the string of a musical instrument which is of flax or linen. It is believed that he became the first in a long line of bishops in Rome. Charles Ellicott notes that the date of his

consecration corresponds with the year of Paul's martyrdom, and so it is possible that Paul personally ordained him as one of his final acts.

And finally is mentioned a female, Claudia. It is the feminine form of the Latin name of a Roman emperor, Claudius. Paul then finishes with, "and all the brethren." The first four were probably close to Timothy and wanted personal greetings sent on. However, the entire congregation at Rome desired to be remembered to Timothy. It is a touching note of familiarity for Paul's young protege to cherish until he would again see all of their faces.

The greetings of these individuals which are passed on to Timothy demonstrate that Timothy should not be in fear of coming and thus being considered an enemy of Rome because of his association with Paul. Rather, these others had obviously visited Paul, talked with him, and even known that he would be writing to Timothy. In this, they sent greetings along.

All of it shows that even though Paul was on trial for his life, this did not necessarily transfer suspicion to others.

Life application: How good and how pleasant it is when brethren dwell together in unity. *Lord God, it is a marvelous thing that believers in Christ can fellowship together, even around the world via the internet. We really live in a blessed age in this respect. New acquaintances are made, friendships are established, and churches have the ability to reach out and share in You even around the entire globe. How wonderful to imagine the even greater fellowship which lies ahead for us! Certainly, marvelous things are in store for the redeemed of the Lord! Thank You for this sure hope that we possess. Amen.*

The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen. 2 Timothy 4:22

Though similar to other final benedictions by Paul, this one is unique. It is divided into two independent thoughts. It conveys much the same as elsewhere then, but the division is what makes it unique. Two examples to see the difference are:

Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

-Galatians 6:18

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen. Philemon 1:25

Here he blesses Timothy first with "The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit."

It is a beautiful hope and trust that Christ Jesus would personally remain united to him at all times, guiding him and comforting him through all situations. No matter what need arose, no matter what trial was to be faced, Paul desired that the Lord would be with him.

It is reflective of the words of the Lord found in Hebrews 13:5 which state, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." This is Paul's first petition. It is immediately followed up with, "Grace be with you."

Paul would normally say something like, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you" (1 Corinthians 16:23). However, he has already included Jesus' name and position of authority in the previous words. And so, he states this final sentence in a more simplified form. Grace is unmerited favor.

Paul prays that Timothy, and indeed all who read this letter, understand that God is gracious, and He indeed will bless His people with grace. He prays Timothy will always receive this, being blessed with blessing continually as he lives out his life in the presence of the Lord. To close out this marvelous epistle, he then says, "Amen."

The word means, "truth," or "so be it." Paul has spoken, he has completed his thoughts, he has made his benediction, and now he asks that what he has conveyed may be as it was relayed. Timothy has been blessed, and we can trust that the blessing will come to pass according to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. May it be so.

Life application: In our world of a million emails and posts a day, it is rather easy to close our thoughts without any salutation at all. However, from time to time, we should stop and add in a blessing such as Paul has here.

It is a nice touch in conveying that the person, or people, we are addressing have meaning to us, and that we desire that they be blessed with the blessing of the Lord. Let us remember this, and endeavor to follow through with it from time to time.

Lord God, You are marvelous in all ways! Thank You for Your grace which You lavish upon us each day. We deserve nothing from You, and yet You have given us all things in Christ Jesus, even to overflowing abundance. We thank You for the sure and eternal promises which are found in Him, and we praise You ceaselessly for what lies ahead! Praises to You now and forevermore. Amen.