

STAND FIRM

2 Timothy 2:14-26

Cut it Out

2 Timothy 2:14-19

False teachers ruin the faith of some (2 Tim. 2:14-19).

God uses True, Kind, Patient, Godly teachers to restore the faith of some. (2 Tim. 2:20-26).

Paul contrasts those who quarrel about words and those who are diligent to show themselves approved.

“Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words.” (2:14)

Part of being a teacher is reminding believers of things they should know and charging them to avoid arguments about things they do not know.

Stephen Cole points out that the false teachers liked to display their “knowledge” on peripheral matters that did not lead to godliness, but only to pride over “being right.”

1 Corinthians 8:1 says knowledge puffs up but love edifies and 1 Timothy 1:5 says that the goal of a teacher’s instruction should be love.

“In the end disputing about words seeks not the victory of truth but the victory of the speaker.” Tom Constable

False teachers want the approval of men. Approved workmen only seek the approval of God.

“Which does no good, but only ruins the hearers” (2:15 ESV)•Arguing with false teachers can often cause people to stumble.

Illustration: My experience with church of Christ friend. •“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”

Instead of debating false teachers, Timothy is to make every effort to present himself to God as approved, with no shame, and accurately handles God’s Word.

Approved Worker - Martin Luther once said that prayer, study, and suffering make a pastor.

Not Ashamed - James 3:1 says teachers receive stricter judgments so preparation for any type of teaching is essential.

“An approved worker diligently studies the Word and seeks to apply it to his own life. An ashamed worker wastes his time with other ‘religious duties’ and has little or nothing to give his class or congregation” (Warren W. Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary, vol. 2, Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996, 247).

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

Rightly Dividing is, “ovr qotomew lit. as cutting a straight road through difficult terrain make a straight path; fig. in the NT, w.ref. to correctly following and teaching God’s message hold to a straight course, teach accurately (2T 2.15).”
–Friberg Lexicon–

Hebrews 5:12 teaches that mature Christians should be teaching someone: whether our children, our spouse, etc.

“But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness.”

Irrelevant discussions and debates distract from the Word of God and lead to ungodliness.

Social media algorithms are built to divide us and get us angry and debating.

Application: Do we pay more attention to social media discussions or God's Word?

Illustration: My experience

"And their talk will spread like gangrene" (2:17a ESV)

Much as gangrene spreads, infects, and kills other tissue, so false doctrine spreads and infects the body of believers, the church. This infection must be exposed and removed. Only the "sound [healthy] doctrine" of the Word of God can keep a church healthy and growing (Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 247).

Experience with Dr. Brook's former church over the King James Only Debate where they believe the KJV is inspired and corrects the Greek (shared with his permission).

Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18 who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some.

These false teachers departed from the biblical truth and even denied a future, bodily, resurrection. This has upended or upset the faith of some in the church.

Application: While Paul discourages debating false teachers, he does not hesitate to call them out.

But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."

While Timothy may get discouraged that false teachers depart from the truth and take some with them, God has put the seal of the Holy Spirit because He knows who are His true followers. As a result, all those who claim the name of Christ should depart from sin and sinful teachers like Korah (Num. 16:5,26).

Do you know you are His? Have you believed in the gospel?

Despite false teachers and opposition, God's true church built on a firm foundation will never be destroyed (Mat 16:18)

“Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable.

21 Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.”

Paul uses an illustration of the containers/utensils from a house and the quality of the materials. Those with greater purpose have greater value and use for the Lord.

The dishonorable use seems to refer to people like Hymenaeus and Philetus who were in the church but then departed from the truth. Church members should cleanse themselves from people like this to be more holy and useful to God.

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The vase belonged to the Famille-rose or “yangcai” type of Chinese porcelain, known for its vibrant colours and expert level of craftsmanship. The highly complex painting was extremely labour-intensive to achieve a luxurious and multi-layered effect.

This particular vase features an extraordinary handscroll scene with meticulous detail of deer, cranes, mountains and forests.

“So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels.”

Paul admonishes Timothy to flee foolish passions (in context it probably refers to these foolish/ignorant controversies/quarrels but could also apply to other types of lusts) and instead pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil²⁵ correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth,²⁶ and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will (2 Tim. 2:24-26 ESV).

Instead of debating his opponents from a place of anger, Timothy is challenged to correct and teach his opponents from a place of gentleness and patience with their evil words and actions so that God will grant them repentance leading to knowing the truth.

Application: When we debate with the unbelieving world or former Christians who departed from the faith, do we do so with gentleness in hope that they will come to repentance or to our perspective?

Sometimes it is not our logic but our gentleness that helps people come to their senses and escape the devil's traps.

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My experience with my neighbors.

