

# **The Character of the Ambassador**

## ***Becoming a Useful Vessel Through Disciplined Living***

*2 Timothy 2:14-26 and 1 Timothy 4:6-10*

*January 28, 2018*

### **Paul's Message to Timothy: (2 Timothy)**

1. Paul is nearing the end of his life, in 2 Timothy he is in a cold cell (4:13), in chains (2:9), and with no hope of deliverance (4:6).
2. Paul's message is designed to pass on his mantle to Timothy.
3. Paul encourages Timothy in five areas:
  - a. To be faithful in his duties (1:6)
  - b. To hold onto sound doctrine (1:13-14)
  - c. To avoid error (2:15-18)
  - d. To accept persecution for the gospel (2:3,4; 3:10-12)
  - e. To put his confidence in the Scriptures (3:15-4:5)
4. Paul wants Timothy to be an Ambassador, a representative, and a useful vessel.

### **An Ambassador is a Useful Vessel (2 Timothy 2:20-21)**

1. An Ambassador was a herald, one who was a mouthpiece for the king.
2. As such, an ambassador was a conduit, a channel, a funnel, a vessel, ...one who delivered the message of their superior.
3. Vessel (Greek: skuos) "a household container, serving platter, pitcher"
4. Some vessels were honorable, and some were not.
  - a. Honorable vessels: silver and gold, they served the banquet.
  - b. Dishonorable vessels: earthenware, they took out the waste.
5. A useful vessel "is set apart, as holy".
  - a. The ambassador is sanctified and set apart for ministry.
  - b. Sanctification precedes useful service.
6. "Great house" = the church and "the master of the house" = Christ.
  - a. Some ambassadors in the church are prized, by the master.
  - b. Some ambassadors in the church are not prized, by the master.

### **Characteristics of a Useful Vessel (2 Timothy 2:14-26)**

1. A useful vessel has a discerning mind. They are not quarrelsome but patiently preach the truth. (2 Timothy 2:14)
2. A useful vessel must have a clean heart. Approved (Greek: dokimos) "approved, genuine, steadfast" (James 1:12) Timothy is told to flee youthful lust. (2 Timothy 2:22).
3. A useful vessel must hold to Biblical fidelity. Since we are vessels we must remain clean instruments in the Savior's hand. Don't allow the world's pollution in. A useful vessel avoids irreverent babble, "empty chatter". (2 Timothy 2:16,22) Don't act like the world (Romans 12:1,2).
4. A useful vessel needs to be set apart. Gold and silver vessels must fellowship together and remain unstained by the world. (2 Timothy 2:21) (Psalm 1)
5. A useful vessel must have a gentle manner. The ambassador must be kind. The Lord's "servant" (Greek: doulos) "slave, servant, one who serves at the pleasure of its master." The ambassador is to "patiently endure evil" (2 Timothy 2:4)

6. A useful vessel is humble. An ambassador has knowledge and power that is devoid of pride and full of grace and truth. Living for the Lord with no thought of self. (Proverbs 16:5,18)
7. A useful vessel must be able to confront. “Oppose” (Greek: antidiatithmi) “oppose oneself, be opposed.” The root word means “an opponent in a lawsuit”. An ambassador must be able to oppose error with truth, so that their opponent will “come to their senses” (Greek: anahpho) “sober up”.

**An Ambassador Trains Himself for Godliness, Through Disciplined Living  
(1 Timothy 4:6-10)**

1. Godliness: “the sum of religious virtues and duties, bringing to its possessor blessedness, here and hereafter.” (Unger’s Bible Dictionary, p. 411)
2. Paul tells Timothy that the way to Godliness is through disciplined living. (1 Timothy 4:7)
3. There is no option about being godly or holy, it is a command for the ambassador. (1 Peter 1:16; Leviticus 11:44,45)
4. How can the ambassador discipline himself toward godliness?
  - a. It is a disciplined life style, it does not happen overnight, or with no effort.
  - b. It is a daily denying of self, we are to “take up our cross daily”. (Luke 9:23)
  - c. It means “putting off the old man” and “putting on, new life in Christ.” (Ephesians 4:17-32; Colossians 3:1-17)
  - d. God gives us the incredible ability to live habitually. (Hebrews 5:13,14)
  - e. We can either learn godly habits through disciplined living or develop fleshly and worldly habits. (2 Peter 2:14)
  - f. Discipline means we examine our habits. Are they godly habits? Or fleshly habits we have learned and continue to practice without thinking? (Lamentations 3:40)
  - g. Can we unlearn old bad habitual sins? Yes, through the power of the Holy Spirit (Phil. 2:13), who produces in us Spiritual fruit. (Galatians 5:22,23)
  - h. Biblical change requires spiritual discipline and endurance (Heb. 12:7-11)
  - i. Godliness comes not through human effort, but through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, through His Word. (2 Timothy 3:16)
  - j. Godliness is based on obedience to God, not according to how we feel. (1John 2:3-6).

**The Ambassador’s Goal is to be a Reflection of Christ.**

“A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.” Luke 6:40