



ENTRUSTED: GUARD THE GATE
2 TIMOTHY 2:14-26



CONNECT

Have you ever done a job that you were really proud of and that you just couldn't wait for someone to see?

WORD

2 Timothy 2:14-26 (ESV) - ¹⁴Remind them of these things, and charge them before Go not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers. ¹⁵Do 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. ¹⁶But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, ¹⁷and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, ¹⁸who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some. ¹⁹But 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." ²⁰Now 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. ²¹Therefore, 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. ²²So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. ²³Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. ²⁴And the Lord's servant **1** must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach,

patiently enduring evil, ²⁵ 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.

WHAT

What does the Bible say?

After reminding Timothy of the essential points of the gospel, Paul adds that Timothy must always remind his hearers of these things. Timothy's job as a pastor was to keep his congregation always focused on the gospel. The church is constantly tempted to get its focus off of the message that really matters, and is tempted to become an entertainment center, a social service agency, a mutual admiration society, or any number of other things. But this temptation must be resisted, and the church should constantly remember the gospel.

At the same time, there were things that Timothy must not focus on. The church must stand for the truth, but it must not become a debating society. We can get distracted by endless discussion or strife over things that don't have central importance. This is a serious matter and there is much to lose. If we take the focus off the message of God, and put the focus on human opinions and endless debates, it will result in the ruin of the hearers.

Next Timothy is encouraged again to be brave and strong and to keep focused; to pay attention to his own life and ministry. Timothy's goal was not to present himself approved to people, but to God. He wasn't to regard the job of being a pastor as a popularity contest but instead as a call to faithfulness to God. Timothy wasn't to worry so much about presenting other people approved to God (though there was a place for this in his pastoral ministry). His first concern had to be to present himself approved to God.

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Paul likens this to a worker who wants to do the job right. It is embarrassing to do a job poorly and then to have your work examined. The Bible warns us that the work of each Christian

will be examined at the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10). Therefore we have another motivation to work diligently for the Lord, so we will not be ashamed when our work is done. Paul then goes on to give Timothy some sound advice on how he can insure that his work will be found worthy.

Later, Paul tells Timothy what he should avoid so that his work will not become spoiled. He tells him how to cleanse himself. The first aspect of cleansing that Paul mentioned to Timothy: youthful lusts, describes the sort of desires and temptations that are especially prominent when someone is an adolescent or young adult. Sexual temptation, illicit pleasure of the flesh, and a longing for fame and glory often mark one's youth.

But, cleansing can never be a matter of just avoiding bad things. It must also be the pursuit of good things. Therefore there are both things that we must flee from and things we must pursue. To be cleansed, we must do everything we can to be right in our personal relationships with others. Cleansing needs to extend to how we treat others.

SO WHAT

What is the relevance to my life?

- What really stood out to you in today's message and lesson? What would you like to discuss further with the group?
- How does the "hard work" of ministry compare with that of a carpenter or farmer? In what ways would shoddy ministry work show itself? In what ways does hard work pay off in ministry?
- Why does it seem that false teaching spreads more easily and quickly than sound doctrine?
- What should Christians do in light of the presence of false teaching?
- What undesirable "youthful passions" have you seen in yourself or in others? How do disciples respond to these things that sets them apart and makes them different?

- What kind of disputes are worthwhile for Christians to engage in? What kind are not worthwhile? Give examples.
- What is the difference between gentleness and timidity? How can Christians balance meekness and humility on one hand with boldness and confidence on the other?
- Can winning an argument also win souls? What is the role of Christian apologetics (reasoned arguments to justify Christianity) in reaching people for Jesus?

NOW WHAT

How do I apply the word to my life?



How does this lesson change the way you think about doing ministry? Why did God choose this moment to bring this lesson to you?



What has God laid on your heart with this lesson? How does Paul's letter to Timothy change the way you feel about your relationship with God?



What does God want you to do differently this week as a result of this lesson? What specific plan will you put in place to follow God's plan for you?

How can we help you and hold you accountable? How can we pray for you? What can we do to show our love for you this week? Who do you know that needs to hear this lesson? Who can you share it with?

