



# “THE VALUE OF BEING USED BY GOD”

2 Timothy 2:24-26

**Theme:** *God uses surrendered people to accomplish His work in saving souls.*

Introduction: As Christians, we are constantly scrutinized by both friends and foes. Our actions are constantly in the gaze of Christ Jesus, who chastises and rewards us with joy and peace. We are constantly under the observation of other believers who seek to provoke us to greater love and good deeds. We are also under the scrutiny of unbelievers trying to figure out what makes us tick—the reason we are so different from them in our outlook, attitudes, and actions.

One of the great struggles is the occasions when we have “conduct unbecoming of the believer” —those things that violate what all three groups would identify as violations of what is expected. Broad categories of “unbecoming conduct” include integrity and honesty, moral uprightness, and humility and service.

In our text today, we see that when believers see themselves as slaves of Christ and then order their lives accordingly, God can and will use them to turn sinners from the error of their ways. Converting people from opposers to the Gospel to embracers of the Gospel takes a credible believer who patiently engages people with humility and reliance on the power of God’s Word to convert the soul.

**Read the text** ... Our text demonstrates that *“God uses surrendered people to accomplish His work in saving souls.”* There are three points to consider: 1) The Perspective on the Ministry, 2) The Priorities in the Ministry, and 3) The People in the Ministry. Let’s begin ...

## I. THE PERSPECTIVE ON THE MINISTRY – 2:24A

### A. The Pattern for the Position

1. Paul indicates that those in ministry are classified uniquely as – *“the Lord’s bond-servants”*
2. The phrase *“bond-servant”* [δοῦλος] – is a favorite self-designation of Paul’s – emphasizing that this is a “selling of oneself into slavery” or voluntarily entering into a condition of serving another for life – cp. ***Romans 6:18.***
  - a) *“bond-servant” emphasizes the lack of freedom of the individual rather than the service being rendered.*
  - b) *Thus, Paul focuses here on the fact that our conduct as servants must properly reflect our obligations to pursue the interests of our Master, Christ Jesus.*
3. It literally reads: “a slave of the Lord” – a phrase conjuring the role and example of Christ Jesus Himself – cp. ***Isaiah 42:1-7.***
4. As such, pastors are not free to exercise themselves in any way they

desire, but they are limited to what is consistent with the desires and example of the Lord Jesus we serve.

## B. The Privilege of the Position

1. Another emphasis that must be made is that a person cannot simply will himself into this position—it is one that results from a calling by the Lord, the *“Lord’s bond-servant.”*
2. To many, the ministry is only a career option – able to be chosen and subsequently discarded at the will of the individual *“servant”* – as if it is something they are willing to “try.”
3. Such is not the concept of the ministry in the Scriptures – instead, it is something that is seen as a bestowal of a tremendous privilege and results in a lifelong obligation – cp. the following reference:
  - a) *God personally places us – cp. [1 Timothy 1:12](#).*
  - b) *God personally holds us accountable for the way we fulfill the ministry – cp. [1 Corinthians 9:16-17](#); [Hebrews 13:17](#).*
  - c) *God personally stirs the heart for ministry – cp. [Jeremiah 20:9](#).*
4. Thus, the proper perspective on one’s position as the *“Lord’s bond-servant”* is that you are chosen and called by God to enter into a lifetime effort to reflect Christ - the consummate “Servant of the Lord” - by doing *what* He wants, *when* He wants, *where* He wants, as *often* as He wants, in exactly the way He wants – cp. [Jeremiah 3:15](#) & [1 Peter 5:2-4](#).

## C. The Price of the Position

1. So many of us develop resentment for the demands and duties in ministry.
2. A considerable price is paid when a man surrenders himself in obedience to the mandate and pattern of biblical ministry.
3. The ministry places a person into a position of “stricter judgment” as one who officially speaks for God in teaching the Word – cp. [James 3:1](#).
4. When one enters the ministry, we cannot offer any disclaimers that we are *“not a role model”* (like Charles Barkley attempted several years ago).
5. Instead, we must accept the responsibility of offering ourselves as a role model that portrays Christ Jesus explicitly – cp. the following passages:
  - a) *I exhort you therefore, be imitators of me - [1 Corinthians 4:16](#).*
  - b) *Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ - [1 Corinthians 11:1](#).*
  - c) *Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us - [Philippians 3:17](#).*
  - d) *You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit - [1 Thessalonians 1:6](#).*
6. Thus, our responses, priorities, passions, perspectives, principles, practices, and personal choices must all reflect the pattern of Christ Jesus

and our servitude to Him.

## II. THE PRIORITIES OF THE MINISTRY – 2:24B-25A

### A. Civility – “... *must not be quarrelsome* ...”

1. When addressing the process of ministry, Paul sets the atmosphere in which ministry must be performed.
2. Because of the passion that exists within the heart and soul of the servant of God, we cannot be unrestrained but must be clearly like Christ in our interaction with others—especially those who are in opposition.
3. Paul describes this spirit as one of civility or courtesy expected from those entrusted to shepherd His people.
4. He rules out for us methodologies that are so commonly characteristic of human leadership that, when present, demonstrate that we are ***not*** representing Him.
5. He emphasizes the need for civility through a prohibition stating that those properly representing Christ cannot be “argumentative” – “***The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome ...***”
  - a) *Most literally, this reads: “It is not necessary to quarrel” (Robertson) – that is, the truth of God’s Word is not facilitated by an abusive, harsh, argumentative approach to those who differ and oppose.*
  - b) *Essentially, because of the emphasis on the proactive processes described below, the ministry of the Gospel is dependent upon two things:*
    - (1) the sufficiency of God’s Word – if we believe in this, we won’t be forced to argue ...
    - (2) the portrayal of Christlikeness – if we have this, we are credible.

### B. Compassion – “... *but be kind to all* ...”

1. Instead of being argumentative and harsh, we are to exhibit great compassion for people, treating them lovingly with charity.
2. The term “***kind***” [ἡπιος] means gentleness or outward mildness in handling someone – used only one other time in the NT in **1 Thessalonians 2:7**, describing the tenderness of a mother with child.
3. Notice “... ***to all*** ...” – not just those we enjoy are easily relate to.

### C. Charge – “... *able to teach* ...”

1. In the midst of this kindness, the charge that we possess and the methodology that God expects is that we are constantly engaged in teaching (and preaching) God’s Word.
2. The idea of being “***able to teach***” implies that God has gifted them with the skill of handling the Word, which should be the basis for ministry.
3. The emphasis here on concentrating on God’s Word in preaching and teaching clarifies this as the primary duty of spiritual leadership—cp. **1**

**D. Composure – “... *patient when wronged* ...”**

1. In order to gain a hearing, one must be kind and gentle, and to maintain a hearing, one must show great composure in the most adverse circumstances – “*patient when wronged.*”
2. This describes a person being treated horribly and can endure evil without reacting or responding in kind.
3. This describes the servant of the Lord as one who can maintain an attitude of patient forbearance without resentment toward those in opposition.
4. The term [ἀνεξίκακος] comes from [ἀνέχω] “put up with” and [κακός] “socially or morally reprehensible; evil” – and describes the ability to carry a relationship even when the opposing person is perpetrating evil against you.

**E. Caution – “... *with gentleness* ...”**

1. This is not to be done condescendingly – but “*with gentleness*” – [πραΰτης] lit—humility or not seeking to exert one’s significance by pressing against others.
2. We ought to be the most confident of people as we teach God’s Word – able to cut down a person with the double-edged sword of the Spirit.
3. However, the Lord would not have us go that way. Instead, we are to possess “power under control” and approach people of disagreement or antagonists with meekness, knowing that they are often the very ones for whom our ministry is most urgent.
4. The ability to control oneself amid harsh treatment is the greatest evidence of one’s confidence in the sufficiency of Scripture.

**F. Correction – “... *correcting those who are in opposition* ...”**

1. However, meekness does not constitute weakness or intimidation by those in opposition.
2. “*correcting*” [παιδεύω] – lit. refers to assisting in the development of a person’s ability to make appropriate choices, discipline or train.
3. We are to use the Word of God to refute those who oppose it in a kind, gentle, meek, and loving way.
4. “*opposition*” [ἀντιδιατίθημι] – conveys that they have deliberately chosen to oppose or have set themselves up in opposition.
  - a) *This can refer to genuine believers in the church who have been duped by false teachers and taken the “wrong side.”*
  - b) *This can refer to those leading others astray as false teachers who are not genuinely believers.*
5. Regardless of which group Paul has in mind, the approach would be the

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same—rely on the power and sufficiency of God’s Word to turn them toward submission to God and His Word.

6. Thus, we are called once again back to the text as God’s prescribed ministry process – not to quibbling, harsh, argumentative, assertive, and brash insistence on our own perspective.
7. Instead, we are called to meekly, humbly, tenderly, gently, and yet insistently bring those in error back to the Word of God – line upon line, precept upon precept.

### III. THE PEOPLE IN MINISTRY – **2:25B-26**

#### A. **The Prospect of Repentance by Sinners – v. 25b**

1. What do we hope to achieve through this dogged and faithful appeal to God’s Word and its teaching?
2. We are told here that the great hope of ministry is that God's Spirit will convict through the presentation of God’s Word—*“if perhaps God may grant them repentance.”*
3. God’s Spirit does not work independently of His Word; thus, our great obligation is to center our ministries on the Lord Jesus Christ and the teachings of His Word.
4. When this is the case, we can trust that God will, according to His Sovereign purposes, work to convince people of sin and cause them to turn from it.
5. The term repent here is *metanoia* and conveys a change of being—not just sorrow, but sorrow that stems from a comprehension of guilt that leads to a desire to turn away from sin and embrace pardon and cleansing —**2 Corinthians 7:10**.
6. This initially describes the grace for conversion – a change of thoughts and opinions, desires and volition, which involves the conviction that the former direction of life was unwise and wrong and alters the entire course of life.
7. Yet, we also see that it can be true that false teachers can mislead a believer who may need to be delivered from the captivity of the false teaching.
8. The elements of genuine repentance include:

**a) *The Intellectual Element:***

- (1) There is a change of view, a recognition of sin involving personal guilt, defilement, and helplessness.
- (2) It is designated in Scripture as “the knowledge of sin” – ***Romans 3:20; 1:32.***
- (3) If the emotional element and volitional element do not accompany this, it may manifest itself as fear of punishment [and an attending attempt to do “damage control”], while there is as yet no hatred of sin.

**b) *The Emotional Element:***

- (1) There is a change of feeling manifesting in sorrow for sin committed against a holy and just God – ***Psalm 51:2, 10.***
- (2) If not accompanied by the volitional element, it is merely the “sorrow of the world” that manifests itself in remorse and despair – ***2 Corinthians 7:9-10; Matthew 27:3; Luke 18:23.***

**c) *The Volitional Element:***

- (1) This is a change of purpose, inward turning away from sin, and a disposition to seek pardon and cleansing – ***Psalm 51:5, 7, 10; Jeremiah 25:5.***
  - (2) This element always includes the previous two components and is, therefore, the most essential aspect of repentance.
  - (3) This element of repentance is described in Scripture by the term “metanoia” - ***Acts 2:38; Romans 2:4.***
9. Such a change in a person's heart is not the consequence of man's persuasiveness but the power of God being unleashed through the Word of God.

**B. The Prospect of Rescue from Satan – v. 26**

1. When this occurs, the sinner—even the most antagonistic—is led **“to the knowledge of the truth.”**
2. **“knowledge” [ἐπίγνωσις]** – conveys more than an awareness of information – it extends to a thorough and deep spiritual comprehension of truth provided using God's Spirit.
3. Hence, such a personal comprehension is impossible as a person is quenching the Spirit of God while in opposition to God.
4. The ultimate joy of gaining such knowledge is its practical impact on the sinner—**“and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil.”**
  - a) *Jesus said it best in **John 8:31-32** where he talks about His disciples abiding in His Word and knowing the truth.*
  - b) *Knowing the truth results in “the truth will make you free.”*
5. **“... that they may come to their senses” [ἀνανήφω]** – lit. refers to

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*“becoming sober again,”* – indicating that believing errant theology can be like a spiritual intoxication, causing a lack of good judgment or a loss of self-control.

6. Thus, as people are brought under the ministry of the Word, God’s Spirit convicts them of sin, and they repent—the aftermath of which is that they possess a personal, spiritual knowledge of the truth that sobers them up and allows them to escape the snare of the devil.
7. *“snare” [παγίς]* – describes trapped or brought under the control of another person.
8. Hence, the great prospect of ministry is that whereas they were senseless in the delusions and deceptions of Satan so that they were *“held captive by him [Satan] to do his will,”* they are freed and brought into a condition whereby God is truly magnified.
  - a) *If Paul is describing the false teachers, hence unbelievers, he is setting the sights on those who can be rescued from condemnation.*
  - b) *If Paul is describing errant believers, he is seeking to recover them.*
9. Notice that there is no commentary on the skill of delivery or forcefulness of personality of the one presenting the Word.
10. The sufficiency is of God and His Word.

## So What?

1. Do I see myself as a slave of Christ or merely as a volunteer?
2. Can I call people to follow Christ as I do? (that is, of what am I a role model?)
3. What are some ways I demonstrate impatience when others wrong me?
4. Do I find myself arguing with people who disagree with me or kindly sharing God’s Word?

*God uses surrendered people to accomplish His work in saving souls.*