

Title: Lesson 8 Do Your Best!

Text 2 Timothy 2:14-19

Have you ever worked hard at something, only to realize later that all your effort was wasted because you were focused on the wrong thing?

A student studies for the wrong test.

A builder follows the wrong blueprint.

A traveler takes the wrong road.

In each case, the problem isn't effort—it's direction.

Paul is telling Timothy, *"Make sure your effort is pointed in the right direction."*

Work hard!

Work rightly!

Live zealously!

Live faithfully!

Paul writes these words from a Roman prison cell.

His execution is near, but his concern isn't for himself—it's for Timothy.

The young pastor is surrounded by false teachers, distracted believers, and a culture full of deceit.

From that dark cell, Paul's message is crystal clear: *"Timothy, don't lose focus. Stay faithful. Do your best."*

And that's the heart of this passage—and really, the heartbeat of faithful ministry:

Main Idea: Do your best to live faithfully in a world full of falsehood!

That's not just a command for Timothy, it's for every believer who wants to please God in a confused and contradictory world.

He gives us four ways to ensure this will happen!

1. Don't Get Caught Up in Pointless Arguments (v. 14)

2 Timothy 2:14 ESV

Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers.

What are the things that is Timothy to remind his congregation of?

2 Timothy 2:11–14 ESV

The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; ¹² if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; ¹³ if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself. ¹⁴ Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers.

Paul begins, “*Remind them of these things...*”

What things?

The gospel truths he’s just affirmed in verses 11–13 — the faithfulness of Christ, the reward of endurance, and the danger of denial.

Timothy’s job was to keep those gospel anchors in front of his people again and again.

The verb “*remind*” (ὕπομίνησκε) is a present imperative — keep on reminding.

Spiritual stability requires constant repetition of truth...

Then Paul adds, “*Charge them before God not to quarrel about words.*”

The phrase “*charge before God*” (διαμαρτυρόμενος) carries courtroom weight — it’s a solemn oath under divine scrutiny.

Paul is delivering a divine warning not just a casual suggestion.

The expression “*quarrel about words*” (λογομαχεῖν) literally means “*to fight about words.*”

This isn’t healthy discussion — it’s verbal warfare over speculation, doctrine twisted by false teachers.

Paul’s admonition is simple: **Don’t get caught in that trap!**

Why? Because the result is **ruin** — *katastrophē*, the same term Peter used for the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (2 Pet 2:6).

2 Peter 2:6 ESV

*if by **turning** the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly;*

Quite literally, God **ruined** these cities because they rejected him!

Paul, in this 2 Timothy passage is using the word not literally but instead, metaphorically.

2 Timothy 2:14 ESV

Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers.

Do you see this?

It is literally **catastrophic** to get caught up in fighting false teachers in their web of deceitful words.

They are just a bunch of pointless arguments!

That's why Paul makes Timothy swear this "before God."

This is significant.

He's saying, *"Timothy, don't let your people trade truth for arguments."*

The goal isn't to win debates; it's to win and guard hearts.

False teachers don't want dialogue; they want dominance.

Engage them long enough and you'll find yourself defending the gospel on their terms instead of declaring it on God's terms.

Paul is protecting the church from that slow spiritual collapse that comes from endless controversy.

Jehovah's witness story on Gidley. "What do you do with Jesus?"

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Be careful not to major on minors or chase every theological skirmish online or in person.

Most of those battles don't lead to godliness, they lead to pride, anger, and confusion.

When it comes to false teachers, remember that behind false doctrine lies a demonic agenda.

You're not just debating ideas; you're entering spiritual conflict.

Unless God opens that heart, your logic won't.

So be discerning.

Proclaim truth boldly, but don't get sucked into fruitless fights.

Guard your mind, guard your time, and guard your heart.

Be careful!

So, if we're not supposed to quarrel with deceivers or waste time in pointless arguments, what *are* we to do?

How do we protect the truth without getting tangled in the weeds of error?

Paul answers that in verse 15 — by showing us what faithful handling of truth looks like.

If verse 14 warns us what *not* to do, verse 15 shows us what *to* do.

2. Dedicate Yourself to Rightly Handling God's Word (v. 15)

2 Timothy 2:15 ESV

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.

“*Do your best*” translates *spoudason*—to make every effort, to be zealous.

The idea is spiritual **sweat**.

Timothy must work hard at accurately cutting straight the Word of God, like a craftsman cutting a straight line.

After all, Paul was a tent maker, and he needed to cut the patterns of the fabric of the tents straightly and accurately so as to have the tent fit together properly.

So it is with handling the Word of God.

Timothy was a pastor and a preacher.

His job was to cut straight the Word of God, so it fits together well and makes sense from the small parts to the overall message it communicates.

He needed to present himself!

Think about this for a minute.

Timothy wasn't just to sit back and wait for God to make him a great handler of His Word, no, he was supposed to work his tail off handling the word

Rightly dividing the Word of God is a sacred calling that demands both reverence and rigorous effort.

Paul's charge to “*do your best*” means there are no shortcuts in the pulpit.

It requires a process of study that engages the mind and stirs the soul.

The faithful preacher begins with **prayer**, asking the Holy Spirit to illumine the text and guard his heart from pride or presumption.

Then comes **observation**—reading and rereading the passage until the words take root, noting key verbs, repeated phrases, and the logical flow of thought.

Interpretation follows, where the preacher examines the grammar, syntax, and historical setting, consulting the original languages and trusted commentaries to refine one's understanding of the Scriptures.

After that comes **theological reflection**—tracing how the passage fits into the wider redemptive story and aligns with sound doctrine.

Only then does he move to **application**—drawing out principles that transform hearts, not just inform minds.

Finally, he moves to **communication**, crafting the message in a way that is clear, compelling, and Christ-centered.

Each of these steps takes time, humility, and prayerful persistence.

It's not the work of a professional polishing a lecture, it's the devotion of a shepherd feeding hungry souls.

Every sermon that rightly divides the Word is the product of hours on one's knees, eyes fixed on Scripture, and a heart burning to hear from God before daring to speak for Him.

Paul reminds Timothy that he's not performing for people, he's presenting himself to God.

Every pastor and teacher must remember that their audience is first divine, not human.

Those of us who handle the word must be...

Faithful - [1 Cor 4:1-2](#)

1 Corinthians 4:1–2 ESV

*This is how one should regard us, as **servants** of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ² Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found **faithful**.*

Under God's Scrutiny - [Rom 14:12](#)

Romans 14:12 ESV

So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

James 3:1 ESV

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

Not an Approval Junkie - [Gal 1:10](#)

Galatians 1:10 ESV

For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Handling His Word is no joke because God's truth is no joke!

We must take His truth seriously.

Seriously enough that we cannot tolerate error!

Why? Because error is catastrophic to the soul!

Imagine convincing someone that rat poison was good for them—that it would make them stronger—and you were so persuasive they believed you and ate it.

You wouldn't just be wrong; you'd be deadly wrong!

That's what false teaching does to souls.

When we mishandle God's Word, we're not simply misinformed, we're spreading spiritual poison.

Truth gives life; error destroys.

That's why Paul says, *"Do your best."*

Handle the Word with precision, because eternal lives are at stake.

Just as you would never tolerate someone handing your child poison and calling it medicine, don't tolerate spiritual poison being served from a pulpit.

Pastors and teachers must *get it right*—because God will hold us accountable for what we teach.

James 3:1 makes that soberingly clear: *"We who teach will be judged with greater strictness."*

That means study isn't optional, accuracy isn't negotiable, and truth isn't flexible.

We must labor over the Word until we've cut it straight.

But the congregation bears responsibility too.

You must *demand* that your teachers get it right.

Don't settle for shallow sermons or clever words.

Measure every message, every lesson, and every podcast against Scripture.

Like the Bereans in Acts 17:11, *"search the Scriptures daily to see if these things are so."*

Your soul depends on it.

When truth is rightly handled, it brings life and stability; when it's twisted or neglected, it destroys.

The most loving thing a pastor can do is preach faithfully, and the most loving thing a church can do is insist on nothing less.

Church, never stop expecting **me**, and every **teacher** here, to handle God's Word with care, because your souls are worth the effort, and God is worthy of the accuracy.

So, don't get tangled in foolish arguments, cut them off by cutting the Word straight.

Handle God's truth with care and conviction.

But there's another danger Paul warns about: not just arguing with falsehood but being *drawn into* it.

That's where he goes next—into the deadly pull of godless chatter that corrupts the soul.

If verse 15 calls us to precision, verse 16 warns us about corruption.

3. Don't Be Intent on the **Irreverent** (vv. 16–17)

2 Timothy 2:16–17 ESV

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.

Paul uses two very interesting words in this verse...

βεβήλους (bebēlos) = “profane,” “worldly,” “unholy,” “not set apart.”

It's the opposite of something sacred.

Paul used it in [1 Timothy 4:7](#) — “*Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths.*”

κενοφωνίας (kenophōnia) = “empty chatter,” literally “empty sound.”

It describes talk that sounds spiritual but is void of truth and substance.

Together, *irreverent babble* means *speech that is both spiritually empty and morally dangerous*.

It is talk about God that does not honor Him and talk about truth that isn't true.

Paul contrasts the worker who cuts straight (v. 15) with the babblers who cuts crooked (v. 16). One builds; the other corrodes.

In other words, if verse 15 is a call to precision, verse 16 is a warning against corruption.

Irreverent babble desecrates the sacred.

It treats God's truth casually, using His name and His Word as conversation pieces instead of divine revelation.

It is “*empty*”—all sound, no substance.

It's talking theology for the thrill of debate, not for the transformation of lives.

It leads to ungodliness.

The word “*will lead*” is future active—meaning, once it starts, it keeps progressing.

False and frivolous teaching is never static, it degenerates, taking hearers further and further from holiness.

It spreads like infection (v. 17).

Paul compares it to **gangrene**—a vivid image showing how unchecked error spreads death through the body of Christ.

Hymenaeus and Philetus were teaching that the resurrection had already happened.

They were mixing truth with error, and the result was deadly.

Properly interpreting and presenting the Scriptures, whether in a casual conversation or a full-blown sermon is crucial and more important than I can articulate.

A proper hermeneutic—a **literal, grammatical, historical approach** to Scripture is a spiritual safeguard.

It's the line between **truth** that sanctifies and **error** that corrupts.

When Paul commands Timothy to “*rightly handle the word of truth,*” he's calling him to interpret Scripture as God intended.

Literal: taking the words in their normal sense unless context clearly calls for a figure.

Grammatical: paying attention to structure, tense, and syntax because inspiration extends to every word.

Historical: stepping into the author's world before bringing the text into ours.

As Dr. Roy Zuck so wisely explained, this approach “*discovers the meaning God intended, not the meaning we invent.*”

When preachers abandon it, the result is *irreverent babble*—talk that sounds deep but is doctrinally shallow.

But when we interpret rightly, we honor God's voice and feed His people truth that transforms.

Sound hermeneutics produce sound holiness.

Sloppy interpretation breeds spiritual infection.

And, according to verse 18, these false teachers, *Hymenaeus and Philetus*, were upsetting the faith of some.

When Paul says the false teachers were “*upsetting the faith of some*,” he uses a word that means ‘to overturn completely.’ These men were flipping people’s faith upside down. False teaching doesn’t just confuse minds; it collapses confidence. It takes what’s stable and turns it to chaos.”

False teaching is like a computer virus.

It slips in quietly, maybe through something that looks harmless, but soon it corrupts the entire system.

The only firewall that can stop it is truth—the pure, undiluted Word of God.

And once that firewall drops, the infection spreads fast.

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Guard your mind.

Don’t fill it with teachers, podcasts, or books that distort the gospel—no matter how polished or popular they sound.

If someone shares unbiblical ideas, respond with grace and Scripture—not sarcasm or silence.

Help others learn to discern truth from error by pointing them back to God’s Word, not to personalities or platforms.

Ask yourself: Am I feeding on truth or being entertained by noise?

Because what fills your ears will eventually shape your heart.

False teaching infects, but truth protects.

So, Paul closes this section by reminding Timothy that no matter how dark the deception, God’s truth stands firm.

4. Stand on God’s Unshakable Foundation (v. 19)

2 Timothy 2:19 ESV

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.”

The “*foundation*” here likely refers to the truth of the gospel and the church that is built upon it.

This is Paul's point in his first letter to Timothy.

1 Timothy 3:14–15 ESV

I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, ¹⁵ if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.

And this *“firm foundation stands, bearing this seal”*

What is the significance of the **seal**?

When Paul says God's firm foundation has a *seal*, he's reminding Timothy that the true church is marked and owned by God Himself.

In the ancient world, a **seal** meant ownership, authenticity, and security.

You'd stamp a seal on something that was valuable and protected by the authority of the one who owned it.

Paul says the church bears God's **seal**—and that seal has two inscriptions.

The first says, *“The Lord knows those who are His.”*

That's divine assurance. No matter how many false teachers arise, God never loses track of His true people.

He knows them, guards them, and will keep them to the end.

But the other side of the seal says, *“Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.”*

That's our responsibility.

Those who belong to the Lord must live like they belong to Him.

The seal is two-sided—God preserves His people, and His people pursue holiness.

One proves the other.

That's why Paul can say with confidence, *“God's firm foundation stands.”*

The church is not crumbling under the weight of deception—it is sealed, secured, and sanctified by the Lord Himself.

Though false teachers come and go, God's truth remains immovable.

And we, His followers are to stand on His foundation with full and secure confidence.

Why can we do this?

Five Amazing Reasons We Can Stand on God's Foundation

Because It Is His Work

Matthew 16:18 ESV

...I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Christ Himself is the builder and cornerstone of the church ([Eph. 2:20–22](#)).

The strength of the structure depends on the skill of the builder, not the weakness of the bricks.

False teachers may infiltrate, but they can't overthrow what Christ has established.

The Church's permanence doesn't rest on our performance but on Christ's promise.

Because It Is Rooted in His Word

Psalms 119:8 ESV

⁸ *I will keep your statutes; do not utterly forsake me!*

Isaiah 40:8 ESV

⁸ *The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.*

The foundation of the church isn't based on opinion.

Its foundation is the unchanging Word of God.

When the world mocks or minimizes, God's truth remains fixed.

Scripture doesn't adjust to culture; culture will one day bow to Scripture.

What is built on the Word cannot collapse under the weight of the world.

Because It Is Sealed by His Sovereignty

John 10:27–28 ESV

²⁷ *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.* ²⁸ *I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.*

Romans 8:30 ESV

³⁰ *And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*

The seal of divine ownership guarantees permanence.

God has set His mark on His people, and no false teacher, false gospel, or false accusation can erase it.

The Church endures because God guards it.

Because It Produces Holy Living

1 Peter 1:15–16 ESV

¹⁵ *but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”*

Psalm 1:6 ESV

⁶ *for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.*

The proof that the foundation stands is seen in the holiness of those who stand on it.

God’s people don’t just profess truth—they *practice* it.

A holy life is evidence of a secure foundation.

The same grace that saves us secures us and sanctifies us.

Because It Will Endure Forever

Matthew 7:24–25 ESV

²⁴ *“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.*

1 Corinthians 3:11 ESV

¹¹ *For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

The storms of deception, persecution, and moral collapse will come—but Christ, the Cornerstone, cannot be moved. Every life and every church built on Him will stand both now and in eternity.

What begins with Christ will end with Christ—because He is both the foundation and the finisher of our faith.

How Firm a Foundation

First published in 1787 in A Selection of Hymns (John Rippon’s hymnal).

The author was listed only as “K.”

Now, I don’t know who “K” is, but in the area of song writing and good theology, he had it going on!

Check out the first verse...

How Firm a Foundation (294)

*How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?*

Because God’s foundation stands firm, let’s live like people who stand on it.

The Lord knows those who are His—that’s our **confidence**.

And those who are His must depart from iniquity—that’s our **calling**.

So, believer, examine your life.

Are you standing strong or slipping into compromise?

God didn’t save you to sit on the sidelines.

He sealed you to stand on solid ground.

Rest in this—your salvation is secure because it’s anchored in Christ. But don’t mistake security for passivity.

The same God who preserves you also calls you to purity.

This week, **stand firm on His truth, speak boldly for His name, and live holy in His sight**.

When the world shakes, stay steady.

When others drift, stay grounded.

Because the foundation you stand on isn’t moving—it’s Christ Himself.

So when everything around you feels unstable, remember the old hymn that still rings true:

“How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!”

Conclusion

That’s the anchor of this whole passage — **God’s Word is our foundation, and Christ is the Cornerstone**.

False teachers will rise, truth will be mocked, and culture will shift, but the church of the living God will not crumble.

Our task is simple but sacred:

Do your best to live faithfully in a world full of falsehood.

Handle the Word carefully.

Guard the truth courageously.

Live out the gospel consistently.

And when the storms of deception beat against your faith, stand tall on the unshakable foundation of God's truth.

Because when the noise fades and the lies fall silent, those who stood firm on His Word will still be standing, with Christ, on the Rock that never moved, on the truth that never changed, and on the grace that never failed.