

## REFLECTIONS ON 2 TIMOTHY

### CHAPTER 1

1-2 Paul was aware of the ministry of his calling. The things he did were influenced by the position to which he had been called. We need to be cognizant of our calling and operate accordingly.

A discipleship arrangement existed between Paul and Timothy. Paul provided guidance to this young pastor and all that he shared was based on what God had given to him.

3-5 Paul had not abandoned the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob but served in the same kind of faith. Some had accused Paul of abandoning the faith of his forefathers. The God Paul served was the same as had called Abraham.

Paul could see the fruit of his labor in the ongoing ministry of Timothy. He was thankful to God for Timothy's faithfulness and sincerity and Paul could see in Timothy the value of godly influence in the home.

6-7 Paul encouraged Timothy to use all the resources he had especially the spiritual gifts for ministry. Many time people in Christian work get so involved in the daily grind of things to do, people to see and places to go that they forget to tap into the spiritual power that God has placed in them. Sometimes people with whom we must deal require us to love them when they are not lovable and we need the love that God put into our hearts by the Holy Spirit to be loving toward them. To really accomplish all that our ministry jobs entail requires that we lived orderly lives and concentrate on the priorities even when we would rather be doing something else. Self-discipline (NIV) is rendered "sound mind" in the KJV and according to Gill's commentary means "prudent conduct and behavior; in sobriety, moderation, temperance, purity, and honesty."

8-10 Few of us have close friends who have been arrested for their Christian faith. How would we react to such a situation? Would we be embarrassed because they were arrested? Are we sometimes apologetic for those who are labeled as fanatics by the world? If the world is not opposing what we are doing for Jesus, then we must not be encroaching on their territory. We are to be about the business of rescuing and redeeming and restoring that which is under the control of the devil and bringing those people and things under the control of the kingdom of God. Our lives are to make a difference in the world. We were not called to just blend in and not be changers of the world. Our life is to be useful for God's purposes because that is why we were saved.

11-12 Paul was not a self-appointed person but had been called of God for his ministry. Each of us has jobs to do in the kingdom of God. Paul had three jobs. He was a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher.

Many times we think that if we will just do what is right and be in God's will that we will have it great. But Paul found that he was suffering because he did what God called him to do. We don't see much suffering in our country by Christians but in other parts of the world, many are paying a high price for their faith - even death. However, if we know Jesus and have our trust in Him, then He will vindicate us and it will be worth it all in the day of judgment.

13-14 We should be learning from faithful Christian leaders who have gone before us. We can use their teachings as examples and when we apply the truth of sound teaching in faith and love, then the kingdom of God will be advanced. God has provided resources (spiritual gifts) and responsibilities (offices in the church) to each of us to help build up the Body of Christ. We also have the Holy Spirit to work in and through us to be effective in whatever our ministry is.

15-18 We tend to have an idealized picture of how great everything was in the first-century church. It was not perfect because it was made up of people. Some could be counted on and others (most) could not. It is sad to read that "everyone" in the province of Asia had deserted Paul. The kindness of one person was remembered by Paul. Onesiphorus did not let the fact that Paul was in prison stop him from being helpful. When he was in Rome, he made sure he visited Paul. These seem like such little things but the little things mean so much to those who are suffering for the cause of Christ.

### CHAPTER 2

1-2 We can find our strength in "taking the moral high ground" (being strong in the law) or we can find our strength in the fact that we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and it is Christ Who is living His life through us (strength in the free, undeserved gift of God - grace).

God did not intend that pastors be the only teachers and proclaimers of the word. A pastor is to teach leaders (reliable men) that they may teach others. In doing so, he multiplies his ministry.

3-5 Hardship, suffering, and persecution are the realities of following God in a fallen world. When the

Israelites entered the Promised Land of Canaan, they had just begun to fight. The enemy was entrenched and effort had been expended to drive them out. We are also in a battle and though God had given us the victory, the implementation of that victory has to be worked out. We are called to the work that God had foreordained that we should do. We have not been called to sit in the pews.

6 According to John Gill's Expositor, "the words may be rendered, and which seems more agreeable to the context and to the apostle's argument, '*the husbandman must first labor before he partakes of the fruits*'; so a minister of the Gospel must first labor, and endure hardships in this life, before he sits down in the kingdom of heaven, and takes his rest, and enjoys the crown of glory, which fades not away, which the chief Shepherd shall give unto him."

7 The word God gives to us is rich and full and is such that we cannot get all the benefit from it by causal reading. We need to meditate and reflect on it. We need to think about it in relationship to everyday application in life and let it come alive to us and work the transformation God wants to accomplish in us.

8-10 Previously Paul had encouraged Timothy to take the things he had heard of him and teach them to others. The incarnation of God the Son in Jesus, His death and all that is related to it and the fact that He was the fulfillment of the prophecies related to the "son of David" is an example of the teaching that should be passed on to others.

The full extent of this message is so revolutionary it landed Paul in a Roman prison. However, God used even this to extend the gospel. Many of the letters of Paul (that makes up much of the New Testament) were written from prison.

11-13 Paul gave Timothy other examples of the doctrine he preached that Timothy was to pass on to others. A central (but often overlooked) truth is that there can be no resurrection without first dying to self. Many want to go directly to Resurrection morning and skip the ordeal of the Cross.

Another important tenet is that God requires us to not only have faith but to be faithful. This is the idea to which James referred when he wrote "faith without the works of faith is a dead faith." Not being faithful is perhaps the most common way in which people "deny" or "disown" Jesus.

14-15 One of the top priorities for pastor-teachers is to teach people to get their priorities straight. In other words, we need to put first things first. When a pastor starts concentrating on things other than the word of God and gets into politics and power struggles with other people, then the congregation suffers and the spiritual life in the church dries up.

Part of the reason for **straying** away from the word of God in teaching is that the pastor-teacher is **staying** away from the word of God during his study. Paul's remedy for that is given in the instruction to "study to show thyself approved unto God." So many pastors of traditional churches are more concerned about what the largest contributor thinks than they are about what God thinks. Our teaching should be pleasing unto God. I'm more concerned about a person missing out on God's blessings or spending eternity in hell than I am interested in that person feeling good about the message.

I would think that some pastors would be embarrassed by the errors they put forth in the pulpit. I have heard preachers make statements that are absolutely contrary to the word of God. I have heard some give messages that completely miss the point of a passage of scripture. Again, the reason is lack of concentration on and in the word during their preparation time. Too many times, a person goes into a pastoral ministry as a profession rather than being called to it. As a consequence, his teaching ministry will suffer (as well as everybody that listens) because he does not have the spiritual insight to "rightly divide the word of truth."

16-19 I have known of churches that are so concerned about who is the anti-christ that they try to determine by numerology if every world leader has a name that could be represented by the numbers 6 6 6. Others have spent untold hours trying to figure out when the Jews are going to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem because that (to them) will signal the start of events leading up to the Second Coming. Some groups will argue that there is no hell. Others claim that only 144,000 Jews will be in heaven. Concentrating on such issues to the neglect of the necessity of knowing God and being transformed into the image of Jesus Christ and living under His Lordship so that we are being purified and made ready to live with Him forever prevents us from achieving the potential that God has for us.

20-21 The presence of sin in the life of a Christian hinders his usefulness to God. Every Christian should want to be all that God wants him to be. We should want to be useful and pleasing to God. If we are not, then we miss the fullness of the blessings of our salvation in Christ Jesus.

22-26 The call to ministry carries with it great responsibility for righteous living. A pastor should run away from certain things because temptations can be very strong. On the other hand, there are many good virtues to cultivate in one's life. Righteousness is simply right standing with God. It is a result of having been declared righteous by God because of the redemption bought for us by Jesus and of letting Jesus live His righteous life through us. Faithfulness implies integrity and being trustworthy. Love (Charity in KJV) is self-sacrificing love which, when applied to life's

situations with integrity and with the wisdom that comes from the presence of God in our lives, will bring peace to us and those with whom we interact.

If there is to be strife in a church, then it should be about something truly significant rather than over issues that do not really matter. The question that we should ask in such situations is "Does God really care about that?" If it doesn't matter to God, then it shouldn't matter to the serious Christians in the church.

We should not take sides in such foolish arguments but keep concentrating on the truth. In this way, those that have gotten themselves entangled in such matters can eventually see the light and escape from the trap that the devil set to sidetrack the real work of the church.

We don't want to miss the point that each of us has responsibility to teach others about Jesus and God's plan of salvation for every person. We should also help each other grow into the fullness of Christ Jesus by sharing with and teaching each other.

### CHAPTER 3

1-5 Such people and conditions as described by Paul were present in his day. Notice he told Timothy to have nothing to do with them. We look around us and see evidence in the world of such things. However, these problems were being manifest in area of religion. The greatest abuses, to date, were likely during the reign of terror of the Papacy from the sixth through the eighteenth centuries.

6-7 Heresy looks for someone who is trusting. Paul mentions women as being likely victims of heresy since they tend to be more open, trusting and accepting of people.

8-9 Throughout Biblical history there have been examples of people who presented themselves as possessors of the truth and who oppose what God is doing. Moses found such people in the government of Egypt. These magicians tried to duplicate the signs and wonders done by Moses. They were partially successful with their false miracles; however, all they did was to help harden Pharaoh's heart.

In the present day church, many would liberalize the message to make it palatable to the appetite of the world. This easy believe-ism attracts those who want to have the benefits of salvation in eternity but to live according to their own whim in this life.