

Useful to the Master - Part 1

WORDLY CHATTER 2Timothy 2:14-19

STIMULATE

** Now that we have concluded the "**RENEWING OUR MIND**" series, the next step is in finding out how we can be useful to the Lord in the daily application of our new "Godly, Prepared, Loving, Peaceful" mindsets. From our last study we learned that what we think about is very important to how we act. What do you suppose is our greatest enemy, or to put it another way, where is the battle going on to try and prevent us from becoming "**Useful to the Master**"?

The philosophy of men and Satan's lie behind it, is constantly attacking the truth of God's word. The realm of our thought life, under constant assault from the doctrines of demons, is the battle field where actions are formed, either to be useful for Christ or useless in the cause of advancing His kingdom. (cf. Colossians 2:8)

MOTIVATE

** As we embark upon this new series we are going to learn what it is that hinders us from being useful to the Lord and how can we be "equipped for every good work" as we strive to live for the glory of God. Our four part series will break down as follows:

WORLDLY CHATTER - 2Timothy 2:14-19

WISE CORRECTION - 2Timothy 2:20-26

WIDESPREAD CHALLENGES - 2Timothy 3:1-9

WORSHIPFUL CONDUCT - 2Timothy 3:10-17

** For today, are Christians supposed to argue with false teacher's (or their followers) about the philosophies of men or doctrines which prove to be in opposition to the truth of God's word? What possible harm could come from entering such debates? For the answer, join me in Paul's second letter to Timothy, chapter 2 and verse 14. Let's learn together what he had to say to his son in the faith about a believer's conduct in the battle for Truth.

Read passage - (V.14-15) (V.16-19)

Opening Prayer

Worldly Chatter

INVESTIGATE

As a background to our series, Scripture is quite clear that God is truth! Let's hear what scripture has to say about:

The Father - "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17)

The Son - "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6)

The Holy Spirit - He "is the Spirit of truth" (John 14:17).

By contrast, scripture affirms that Satan is a liar and the father of lies (cf. John 8:44). His very nature is to lie and deceive. Jesus even predicted that His beloved church would be attacked by Satan's false teachers in the last

days. He said, "false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect (Matthew 24:24).

The apostle Paul warned the Ephesian church elders (where Timothy is now ministering [1Timothy 1:3]) against these Satanically inspired false teachers. (cf. Acts 20:28-32)

Paul wants Timothy (and us) to take the proper stand against Satan's lie with the Truth of God's precious word. That is why he repeatedly admonished him regarding doctrine.

All see -. 1Timothy 1:3-4, 1Timothy 4:1-2, 1Timothy 4:6, 1Timothy 6:3-5, 2Timothy 1:13-14 and 2Timothy 4:1-4

So the battle rages on, but what are we to do? For the answer, let's get into our passage for today.

V.14 ** What kind of things was Timothy to remind the Ephesian Christians about?

All that Paul had just said in this chapter. He has just told Timothy to avoid becoming entangled in the world's system by:

- 1) maintaining a wholehearted devotion, that is trying to please the lord (V. 3-4);
- 2) competing according to the rules, obeying God's word (V. 5);
- 3) working hard, being diligent to handle the word of God accurately (V. 6).

****** Why is it important for Timothy to remind Christians about these things?

Because our daily practice slips into forgetfulness and we need the regular encouragement that Godly reminding affords. (cf. 2Peter 1:12-15)

****** After Timothy has reminded the Ephesians about "these things", what else was he to do?

"solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words..."

****** How do we know that this was a serious charge?

The Greek term used here for "solemnly charge" [diamarturomai] is a strong verb, used here as an imperative participle, which carries the idea of a stern warning. This warning is being given in the very presence of God! As Paul confronts the evil of false teachers, he wants his readers to understand that God is involved in protecting His truth.

****** Is Paul talking about the dangers of arguing over the petty issues of life?

No, the context of the following passage makes it clear that the subject matter is the truth of God's word versus the philosophy of men.

****** What will happen if we engage in word wrangling with false teachers or their followers?

It is useless and only leads to the ruin of the hearers. (cf. 2Peter 3:15-16)

Just a note: The "hearers" fall into two camps, the unsaved who are turned away from the truth and the saved who are harmed by causing confusion, doubt, discouragement, and disobedience.

****** What additional problem occurs when we argue the word of God against the philosophies of men?

It lends credibility the Satan's lies. "No matter how Biblically sound their arguments may be in themselves, Christians who debate with unbelievers inadvertently allow Scripture to be considered on the same level as human wisdom." [John MacArthur]

There is no argument here. God is true, men are liars! (cf. James 3:15, Romans 3:4)

V.15 ** By contrast, instead of arguing against all of the error put forth by false teachers, what are we to do?

"Be diligent...to handle "accurately the word of truth". (All see - 1Peter 3:15)

** Do we do this for the approval of others or even to please ourselves?

We work hard at being accurate with God's truth so that we might be approved by Him!
(cf. Galatians 1:10, 1Thessalonians 2:4)

Our greatest desire is to hear from Christ, "Well done, good and faithful servant"
(Matthew 25:21).

V.16 ** If we were to become engaged in "worldly and empty chatter", to what would that ultimately lead?

"...to further ungodliness..." Not only are the actions of false teachers ungodly, but engaging them in debate will cause even more ungodliness!

V.17 ** If we fail to avoid these arguments, how will that effect their impact?

"...their talk will spread like gangrene." Fast and devastating, leading to amputation or death!

** Why is that? Why does the world open itself up to the Satanic lies of false teachers?

Because men love their sin and are at war with God, so they would rather hear the doctrines of demons than the truth of God's word regarding salvation.
(cf. James 4:4 and 1John 4:1 & 5)

** Is this threat of false teachers hypothetical?

No! There were two infamous characters in their midst at the present time who were doing these demonic deeds.

Hymenaeus - Who had been put out of the Ephesian church over one year prior to this writing, along with his partner, Alexander. (1Timothy 1:20)

Philetus - The replacement for Alexander, now a year later, in spreading their false doctrine.

V.18 ** What is the first thing that we notice about the personal history of such men?

They "have gone astray from the truth..."

** What does that mean about their spiritual history?

They had been around the truth, perhaps even embraced it intellectually, but then departed for fleshly appeasement. They have become apostates and it would be better for them if they had never been born! cf. Hebrews 6:4-6, Matthew 26:24

** What was at the heart of their heresy?

They were teaching "that the resurrection has already taken place". They were saying that the resurrection was spiritual at the moment of your putting faith in Christ. By denying bodily resurrection, they were destroying the very foundation of the Christian faith--denying both the reality and the implication of Christ's resurrection. (1Corinthians 15:1-24)

** What impact was their heresy having on Christians?

It was upsetting "the faith of some"! Like children who are easily fooled, we Christians can be lead astray into confusion and disobedience if we do not handle accurately the word of truth.

V.19 ** Rather than being shaken or upset, what is a better description of the church or body of believers in Christ?

"...the firm foundation of God..." This is the church! This is who we are, by the grace of God!
cf. 1Timothy 3:15

** What does that foundation do?

It stands!!! Mark that in your thinking. The truth of God's precious word causes us to stand firm against any power or lying doctrine of demonic origin. (cf. Ephesians 6:13) We have nothing to prove, the truth is the truth no matter how creative Satan gets in the diversity of his lies.

** Rather than arguing against the Satanic doctrines of false teachers, we accurately present the truth of God's word to any who will listen and obey. How do we know that we have a seal of approval for this cause?

"The Lord knows those who are His". Paul may have been referring to what our Lord said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand" (John 10:27-28). Or, he may have been quoting from Numbers 16:5 when some Israelites were about to rebel against the Lord and His appointed leaders Moses and Aaron.

** What is the second proof of our seal of approval?

Not only does the Lord know we are His, but our lives are devoted to abstaining from wickedness. Again, possibly from that same Numbers 16 passage (V.26-32), Paul shows that we who belong to the truth, live our lives in submission to its authority. The greatest wickedness in this context is the demonic doctrine put forth by the false teachers. As Christians we handle accurately the word of truth and have nothing to do with Satan's lie.

EXTRICATE

** What harm could come from engaging in "worldly chatter", which gives a platform for the proclaiming of demonic doctrines?

"...it will lead to further ungodliness..." (V.16)

"...it will upset the faith of some..." (V.18)

DELINEATE

** What double seal of approval do we have that causes us to stand firm as we handle accurately the word of truth?

- 1) Our relationship to Christ, "The Lord knows those who are His".
- 2) Our obedience to the truth, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness".

EVALUATE

** Are you willing and prepared to give an answer to anyone who asks of you to give an account for the hope that is in you?

Yes, if you have sanctified Christ as your Lord!

ACTIVATE

** Begin this week to change the way that you speak with others. Make your speech seasoned with salt as you proclaim the truth of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Closing Prayer