

2 TIMOTHY

Lesson 2 w/Answers

2 Timothy Chapter 2

We continue our study of 2nd Timothy, as Paul continues to encourage Timothy in light of the challenges he is facing in Ephesus. We will see from Paul's teaching that, if we are to join in the battle to win lost souls to Jesus, then we are also joining in the suffering that comes along with the work of spreading the Good News.

Suffering is clearly something that many Christians don't like to acknowledge, but the plain truth is that the world hated Jesus, and they will hate us for the same reason, i.e., that the Gospel proclaims (1) that all have sinned, and (2) that there is only one way to be saved—faith in Jesus. This is "good news" that the world cannot tolerate. Rather, it will try to distort the truth of the Gospel by proclaiming that there is more than one way to be saved, or that Jesus wasn't born of a virgin, or that Jesus never died on the cross, and so on. But the truth is that they are lost, living in a lost and dying world, and headed to an eternity of pain and suffering if they do not accept Jesus.

Paul reminds Timothy of this and actually uses it to encourage him in his work at Ephesus. Paul provides instruction to Timothy that, even today, we can apply in our lives. As followers of Christ, we will face challenges—and perhaps even hardships similar to those surrounding Timothy. However, with Paul's instruction, we can be better prepared to face our challenges and be victorious for Christ, just as Timothy did.

Read 2 Timothy Chapter 2 and consider the following:

1. What is one responsibility that we all have as followers of Christ, as Paul instructs Timothy to do in the opening verses? (2 Timothy 2:1-2)
 - a. ANSWER 1: We are to pass on what we learn, and not just keep it to ourselves. When we are being taught, it is for a reason: to grow in that knowledge and to share it with others, so that they may also be strengthened and encouraged.
 - b. ANSWER 2: We are also to be discerning in who we entrust as teachers. In referring to everything that Timothy has heard Paul teach, Paul tells Timothy that he is to "entrust (Paul's teachings) to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others." Just as Jesus taught us that we are not to cast our pearls before swine, we are to ensure that only reliable and qualified people are entrusted with the teaching role; so that when we are taught, we can pass that truth on to others.
2. In 2 Timothy 2:3-8, Paul uses three types of people to illustrate each lesson he is passing on to Timothy. Identify the person, and the lesson, that Timothy is to learn from studying each of them:
 - a. ANSWER 1: A good soldier. A soldier is trained to focus on his or her commander or unit leader. In fact, they are to be so focused on the orders given and the objective to be achieved, that he or she blocks out all else that might hinder them from being successful. Staying focused on the objective and paying careful attention to our leader will also help us be successful, thereby avoiding needless arguments, politics, and other civilian matters, and concentrating on our mission—just like a good soldier. This is the instruction that Paul gave Timothy in this example.
 - b. ANSWER 2: An athlete. Here, Paul is pointing out to Timothy that cheating, compromising, and being deceitful are not ways that an athlete competes. We are to follow the laws of the land, and we are to present the Gospel in a clean and pure manner, with no malice of thought. If we do this, if we follow the rules, then the Holy Spirit will do the rest. Souls are not saved by our effort or hard work; they are saved by God through faith in his Son Jesus. Our job is simply to present the Gospel, no matter the circumstance and no matter the consequence. Run the good race, stay the course, and be faithful—just as an athlete does in any competition.
 - c. ANSWER 3: A hardworking farmer. Patience is one of many key traits of a hardworking farmer, and we can learn much from studying such a person. Paul is telling Timothy that his hard work will produce fruit and crops; and that, because of his hard work, he will be rewarded—just as a farmer receives a share of his crops.
3. Paul provided us the above three examples so that "the Lord will give you insight into all this." We, as well, can learn much from studying these three people; and through this study, the Lord will give each of us insight that will strengthen and encourage us in the work that He has planned for us to accomplish. Paul then used another example of someone who endured for the Gospel. Who did he cite, and what are we to learn from this example? (2 Timothy 2:8-9)
 - a. ANSWER 1: Paul cited Jesus, and his suffering and endurance. Paul referred to Jesus' having been raised from the dead as the reason that Paul himself endured like a "chained" criminal.
 - b. ANSWER 2: Paul also pointed out that, even though he was chained, the Gospel was not—and that encouraged Paul.

4. Paul goes on to show Timothy how he, Paul, endured everything—but none of that mattered; because he endured all of it for the "sake of the elect." His driving concern was that all of God's children would hear the Gospel. Further, in 2 Timothy 2:11-13, Paul lays out four simple truths that he wants Timothy to remember. List these below:
 - a. ANSWER 1: If we die with Christ, "we will also live with him."
 - b. ANSWER 2: "If we endure, we will also reign with him."
 - c. ANSWER 3: If we deny Christ, he will deny us. And those among us professing to be Christian—but who are in fact enemies of Christ—will be denied salvation because of their lack of faith.
 - d. ANSWER 4: If we are faithless, it does not change the Gospel, or Jesus. He will always remain faithful, even when we are not.
5. Next, Paul addresses the best way for Timothy to deal with false teachers. Nowadays, we don't seem to pay much attention to false teachers. I think we tend to see them as an early New Testament phenomenon. But the Bible is clear that they are with us today, and will grow in number as the return of Christ approaches. Note that in Paul's instruction to Timothy about this, he does not tell Timothy to become a good debater or crafty speaker who can counter all of the claims of the false teachers. Rather, Paul takes a different approach. What are his instructions, and why are they effective? (2 Timothy 2:14-19)
 - a. ANSWER 1: Timothy is to warn God's people against quarreling over words. He tells Timothy that it is of no value, and it only ruins those who listen. I have personally experienced this exact thing, and I'm sure that you have as well. Endless arguments about the meaning of a specific word, phrase, or verse accomplishes nothing; other than introducing confusion and endless controversy. It is amazing how quickly believers can get caught up in speculating about an endless number of meaningless things that have been taken completely out of context; or they have inserted meaning where there is none. As Paul points out, arguing with these people is pointless; as these arguments and "discussions" have no value, and only serve to "ruin those who listen."
 - b. ANSWER 2: Paul instructs Timothy to, "Present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." Notice that Paul says Timothy is charged to present himself to God and not to man. If we stand before God as an approved worker, equipped in the knowledge of the Gospel, then we have the only approval that we need; man's approval is not required.
 - c. ANSWER 3: Paul also advises Timothy that believers are to avoid "godless chatter." Gossip and meaningless conversations are to be avoided. Paul explains that this is "because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly." We forget that a good source of false teaching within the church is idle chatter, gossip, the spreading of rumors, and so on. He tells Timothy, and us, to avoid this type of conversation and these types of people; because they will become more and more ungodly. Rather than being grounded in sound doctrine and the Gospel, they will follow after meaningless genealogies, fables, old wives' tales, and so on. Progressively, they will no longer even tolerate proper teaching and will avoid them at all costs. As examples, Paul cites Hymenaeus and Philetus as two who "have departed from the truth." He also gives us insight into some of the specific false teaching of the day at Ephesus, where it was said that the resurrection (meaning Christ's return) had already taken place, thus destroying the faith of some.
 - d. ANSWER 4: His final instruction is to "turn away from wickedness." Just as he earlier told Timothy to present himself as an approved worker grounded in the Gospel, he is telling Timothy to also avoid wickedness. We are to be pure in God's eyes, washed in the blood of Jesus, and not involved in wickedness of any sort. In the following verses, Paul will give Timothy some specific guidance about living a holy life; but in this section of his letter, Paul is showing us that combating false teaching requires us to live a holy life.
6. Having instructed Timothy that "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness," he now tells us how to do this. In 2 Timothy 2:20-24, Paul gives Timothy and us specific guidance on how to live a holy life; but first, he gives an illustration to Timothy regarding why living a holy life is important. Read these verses (20-24), note why Paul tells us to live a holy life, and how he instructs us to actually live it.
 - a. ANSWER 1: In 2 Timothy 2:20-21, Paul uses the illustration of a home with both clean and unclean vessels, some made of gold and silver, and some of wood and clay. He teaches us that we should remove the unclean vessels—in fact, avoid using them altogether—and to clean our household so that it contains only clean vessels made for special purposes. In this way, we will be "useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work." Paul was warning Timothy, and us, that unclean vessels contaminate. As such, we are to avoid them; and we are to avoid the contamination of false teachers and keep ourselves holy, so that God will use us to do good works. Paul especially wanted Timothy to avoid these teachers and to keep himself holy, in order to accomplish the work that the Lord had set before him in Ephesus.
 - b. ANSWER 2: Additionally, if we are to live a holy life, Paul instructs us to "flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace." Relatedly, Jesus teaches us in Matthew 6:33 that we "should seek first his kingdom and his righteousness." Paul now emphasizes that to Timothy. After all, how could we not live a holy life if our first and only desire is to seek Christ's kingdom and his righteousness? In seeking after his kingdom, we also seek his righteousness. Correspondingly, our faith is strengthened, and we live in love and peace—the peace that passes all understanding. This is the essence of living a holy life.
 - c. ANSWER 3: Finally, Paul reiterates his instruction to Timothy regarding the importance of avoiding "foolish and stupid arguments." These are to be avoided because "they produce quarrels;" and we are not to be quarrelsome nor resentful towards anyone.

Paul concludes this section by pointing out to Timothy that those who are quarrelsome and in opposition to the Gospel are to be gently instructed, because they are currently in Satan's trap, and thus are being held captive to do his will. It is important today for us to remember that, within the church today, there are likely to be those in the devil's grip, arguing for doctrine that are lies and half-truths. It is just as important for us to remember Paul's instruction to teach these people gently, but firmly, in the knowledge of the truth; in hopes that they will awaken, see the truth, and be saved.

Combating false teaching and unholy behavior within the church body is always a difficult challenge, but just as with Timothy, Paul wants us to know that the struggle is worth it. We are not to give up, nor are we to compromise our salvation. Living a holy life is, and should always be, our primary goal—a goal we can only achieve by living through Christ in us.

May God richly bless you as you read and study His Holy Word with us.

In Christ,

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