

MR. D'S NOTES ON II TIMOTHY



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a commentary

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OUTLINE OF II TIMOTHY

I. LIVE ABOVE IT (The world) 1.1-2

II. LIVE LIKE IT (The upbringing and teaching) 1.3-18

III. LIVE THROUGH IT (The suffering) 2.1-26

III. LIVE BECAUSE OF IT (The Scripture) 3.1-17

V. LIVE ACCORDING TO IT (The doctrine) 4.1-22

II TIMOTHY

An overview

Paul introduces himself and immediately reminds Timothy of a few things that were mentioned in his first letter: Paul is an apostle, because of God and Christ and that grace mercy and peace come from God.

His prayers for Timothy are mentioned – seemingly as an encouragement to the young representative. Paul reminds him of his spiritual heritage – a reminder that we all need from time to time so that we can realize the importance of others in our lives.

Further reminder is given concerning Timothy's abilities/gift which he is supposed to be using for God. Paul has reminded Timothy of his ability and spiritual roots to encourage him to not be ashamed of his ministry nor Paul's imprisonment. This is followed by a reminder of our position in Christ which further relates to being bold in our witness.

Further, he states his own confidence in all that he is as a believer/apostle, and that he is neither ashamed of his ministry nor his present circumstance. A final encouragement for Timothy to hold fast to what he has in Christ is given.

Verse fifteen mentions Paul's loss of some acquaintances and the goodness of another. Based on the straying of some and quality of others, Timothy is encouraged to commit what he has learned to others that they might teach others to do the work of the Lord – the overall purpose of life for the believer – disciple others that they might disciple others.

Verse eight of chapter two introduces the thought of suffering, but also the believer's proper response to it – walking with the Lord and continuing to do His work.

Fourteen to eighteen mention the false teaching that is still around and the results of that same false teaching – the misleading of people. However, those that are built on the foundation of Christ will succeed and be honored by their Lord (19-21). Good works and righteous living is the key to walking with Him (22-26).

In chapter three Paul moves to the fact that in the last times things will become quite corrupt and many sins will be rampant resulting in some falling by the way. He continues in verse ten to remind Timothy of Paul's example in life and that persecution/suffering will come, but that if we live Godly, all will be as it should be.

Paul ends the chapter with that great passage relating to the importance of the Scripture and its inspiration. It is the key to all Godly living and is the key to preparing believers for good works.

Again in chapter four Paul gives Timothy a heavy charge to live Godly and to hold onto/teach sound doctrine. This is the basis of all Christian living/work. He continues on to share with his son in the Lord that he thinks his end is near and gives him some instructions concerning the near future.

He ends the book with greetings and a reminder of some that had caused him grief and asks Timothy to come to him for the stated purpose of bringing his cloak, books, parchments and

Mark. The request of these items even in light of his coming death, pictures one that is busy about the Lord's work right to the end of this life.

What a picture for the believer in this day. Withstand the false doctrine, withstand being persecuted and enduring suffering, withstand the falling away of those you've taught, withstand those that leave you, withstand all for Christ's sake and continue to walk with Him in his ministry for you to the end of this life.

I was told of a young student asking a missionary what kind of retirement plan the mission offered. The old missionary thought for a moment and said, "Well they let you be buried by the mission station." This is our calling – serve Him till he comes for you.

GENERAL INFORMATION CONCERNING

THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

(Dating the books is approximate at best.)

MATTHEW

AUTHOR: Matthew

WRITTEN TO: Jews relating Christ as the King of the Jews

DATE: 50-60 A.D.

LOCATION OF WRITING: North Israel or Syria

MARK

AUTHOR: Mark

WRITTEN TO: Romans relating Christ as servant

DATE: Some suggest 62-68 A.D. but likely earliest of the books.

LOCATION OF WRITING: Rome

LUKE

AUTHOR: Luke

WRITTEN TO: To Greeks relating Christ as the perfect Man.

DATE: 60-64 A.D.

LOCATION OF WRITING: Caesarea

JOHN

AUTHOR: John

WRITTEN TO: Hebrew Christians relating Christ as the Son Of God
DATE: 85-90 A.D.
LOCATION OF WRITING: Antioch or Alexandria

ACTS

AUTHOR: Luke
WRITTEN TO: Theophilus and interested believers
DATE: 60-62 A.D.
LOCATION OF WRITING: Rome

ROMANS

AUTHOR: Paul
WRITTEN TO: Christians at Rome
DATE: 56 A.D.
LOCATION OF WRITING: Corinth

I CORINTHIANS

AUTHOR: Paul
WRITTEN TO: Christians at Corinth
DATE: 56-57 A.D.
LOCATION OF WRITING: Ephesus

II CORINTHIANS

AUTHOR: Paul
WRITTEN TO: Christians at Corinth
DATE: 57 A.D.
LOCATION OF WRITING: Macedonia

GALATIANS

AUTHOR: Paul
WRITTEN TO: Those in area of Galatia
DATE: 55-56 A.D.
LOCATION OF WRITING: Ephesus

EPHESIANS

AUTHOR: Paul
WRITTEN TO: Church at Ephesus

DATE: 62 A.D.
LOCATION OF WRITING: Prison at Rome

PHILIPPIANS

AUTHOR: Paul
WRITTEN TO: Church at Philippi
DATE: 63-64 A.D.
LOCATION OF WRITING: Prison at Rome

COLOSSIANS

AUTHOR: Paul
WRITTEN TO: Church at Colossae
DATE: 60-62 A.D.
LOCATION OF WRITING: Prison at Rome

I THESSALONIANS

AUTHOR: Paul
WRITTEN TO: Church at Thessalonica
DATE: 51 A.D.
LOCATION OF WRITING: Corinth

II THESSALONIANS

AUTHOR: Paul
WRITTEN TO: Church at Thessalonica
DATE: 52 A.D.
LOCATION OF WRITING: Corinth

I TIMOTHY

AUTHOR: Paul
WRITTEN TO: To Timothy at Ephesus
DATE: 64-66 A.D.
LOCATION OF WRITING: Macedonia

II TIMOTHY

AUTHOR: Paul
WRITTEN TO: To Timothy at Ephesus

DATE: 67 A.D.
LOCATION OF WRITING: Prison at Rome

TITUS

AUTHOR: Paul
WRITTEN TO: To Titus at Crete
DATE: 64-66 A.D.
LOCATION OF WRITING: Macedonia

PHILEMON

AUTHOR: Paul
WRITTEN TO: To Philemon at Colossae
DATE: 61-62 A.D.
LOCATION OF WRITING: Rome

HEBREWS

AUTHOR: Paul? Apollos? James?
WRITTEN TO:
DATE: 65-70 A.D.
LOCATION OF WRITING: Unknown

JAMES

AUTHOR: James
WRITTEN TO: Scattered Jews
DATE: 45-50 A.D.
LOCATION OF WRITING: Jerusalem

I PETER

AUTHOR: Peter
WRITTEN TO: Scattered believers
DATE: 63 A.D.
LOCATION OF WRITING: Babylon (Either Babylon or figurative of Rome)

II PETER

AUTHOR: Peter
WRITTEN TO: Scattered believers

DATE: 66 A.D.
LOCATION OF WRITING: Uncertain

I JOHN

AUTHOR: John
WRITTEN TO: Churches in Asia Minor
DATE: 90 A.D.
LOCATION OF WRITING:

II JOHN

AUTHOR: John
WRITTEN TO: The church
DATE: 90 A.D.
LOCATION OF WRITING:

III JOHN

AUTHOR: John
WRITTEN TO:
DATE: 90 A.D.
LOCATION OF WRITING:

JUDE

AUTHOR: Jude
WRITTEN TO: Gaius
DATE: 90 A.D.
LOCATION OF WRITING:

REVELATION

AUTHOR: John
WRITTEN TO: Churches of Asia
DATE: 96 A.D.
LOCATION OF WRITING: Isle of Patmos

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II Timothy 1.1-5

A FAITHFUL SERVANT IS PRAISED

A little introduction to the book might be good as we begin.

The book was written to Timothy by the apostle Paul from Prison around 67 A.D.

I would like to just quote Scofield's note for you. "Quite different in atmosphere from the first letter to Timothy, it is less formal than the other two Pastoral Epistles and far more personal. In the earlier letter to Timothy, Paul expresses, as though he were a free man, his hope soon to be with his "son in the faith." Here in the second letter alone he speaks of the time of his departure being at hand (4:6). Paul was not only in prison, but he had been abandoned by most of his friends (1:15; 4:16)."

APPLICATION:

1. I know a few pastors that know this feeling – worked their heads off for years and about to croak and everyone leaves them – alone and not a friend to share their burdens with.

Years ago we had the privilege of meeting and becoming friends with an old pastor and his wife. He was in his late 70's I'd guess – he had been through all the battles, he had pastored through the storms and now he was set aside because he was too old to even teach a Sunday School class – or so the churches thought.

He was very quiet, withdrawn and didn't have much enthusiasm at all. They had few friends – only some family nearby.

Nothing to really excite their lives. To gain some money they had to sell his model T truck that he had wanted to restore for years and now with the time he had no money nor ability to do the work.

HOWEVER, start a conversation about the Bible and he would light up like a Christmas tree and really become involved.

Question: Why do we let our pastors come to that sort of situation? Something for you to ponder – how can you remedy this in your own church in the future?

2. Timothy was in Ephesus. He had been charged with setting up church leadership, he had been charged with cleaning out false doctrine, he had been charged with weeding out the false teachers, he had been charged with many things – Paul wanted him to assist the church in Ephesus. (I Tim. 1.3-4, 6.20-21; II Tim. 3.1ff)

Question: What can we learn from this? Churches need leaders, churches need purity of doctrine, churches need protection, and churches need someone to assist with problems that come and go in an assembly.

So, problems aren't new, problems aren't strange, problems are to be expected. The key is dealing with them as they come along. This is what the leaders are to be doing.

One might wonder about the horror cases of church splits – were the leaders doing their job or were the problems just too large?

It is evident we haven't learned much in almost 2000 years of church.

As we move forward in our study remember the apostle is long into a long hard life and he is still plugging away at life – at ministry. It is easy to just quite and give up, but it takes strength to continue when you are tired, weary and surrounded by problems and not surrounded by supporters.

II Tim 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, 2 To Timothy, [my] dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, [and] peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 3 I thank God, whom I serve from [my] forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; 4 Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; 5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

1.1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

Paul was an apostle by the will of God. I would like to consider this on three levels.

1. God's sovereignty: God is sovereign in the creation - what He says kind of goes whether the earth, the stars or even man wants it to or not. Nothing happens in the creation without His okay. Man is part of that creation even though we often think we are above creation.

God was the one with the idea for Paul to be an apostle, it was His moving that saved Paul, it was His training that prepared Paul and it was His leading that guided Paul.

2. Man's free will: Having said all of the above I do not for one instant believe that had Paul said no to God that God would have forced Paul to take on that responsibility.

I'm not saying that Paul's life would have been a bed of roses walking against God's will, but he was free to do so. We all are. You might want to review Jonah for a good example of this principle.

3. Man's response to God: Paul's response to his call was one of going forward with all the gusto that he could muster. He did the post salvation job just as well and as actively as he had done his pre-salvation work of persecuting the Christians.

What is being said? God has a will for our lives - it is up to us if we follow it. His sovereignty sets that will and we voluntarily follow or reject.

I don't think Paul woke up one morning to say "Ah, since I am now saved, I think I will be an apostle." He would never have dreamed of such a thing for himself!

I don't know all ministers, but I know enough to know that many would never have picked out their

life from all the lives available to them at the time that they were called.

I have often wondered just where I would have ended up if God had not placed a call before me. I rather imagine I would still be a country western nut with a big pickup, cowboy boots, a cowboy hat to cover the bald spot and still smoking, cussing and drinking. Well, I didn't have the hat back then – didn't need it. A red neck if you will.

God places a call before some that He chooses to use. In my case when I realized what Christ had done for me there was no real option but to answer the call - He did so much for me, how could I not want to do as much as I could for Him.

Relating to Paul's apostleship, one might be interested in a couple of passages that mention the requirements to be an apostle. I might mention that Paul was a special case, and since Christ appointed him directly does not necessarily need to be bound to these requirements.

Both of the following texts mention the resurrection and many people state that this is the qualification. Both however mention also witnessing his life in some manner as well as the death and burial.

Acts 1.21 "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." Personally the last phrase isn't a requirement to be an apostle but a job description.

I Cor. 15.3 "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: 5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: 6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. 7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. 8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."

The qualification might be seen in my mind as one that had witnessed the life of the Savior and then known personally of the events surrounding his resurrection. This did not automatically make one an apostle, but made one available as a possible person to become an apostle. In short a good knowledge of Christ's work on earth and the ability to witness to that knowledge to the world would be the requirement in my mind.

1.2 To Timothy, [my] dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, [and] peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Grace, mercy, and peace - come from God - why would we ever look for them from any other source.

Many in our world look for peace in material gain, in marital bliss, or mental gymnastics (philosophy), but only God can give real true peace. The other may give a sense of peace for a time but all reveal themselves ultimately as false peace.

Note that Paul uses a very endearing greeting with Timothy. Most agree that Paul may have lead Timothy to the Lord, or at the least had a great impact on his life - they were spiritual father and son or very nearly so.

Paul knew Timothy well spiritually. He declared that Christ was "their" Lord - he knew where Timothy lived in relation to God.

Now, this business of Christ being Lord is the relationship all believers should have with God, but not all do - many there are that believe but hold God out at arms length and never make Him Lord.

Recently I read an article that set forth the premise that pastors should not preach expositively but that they should preach evangelistically. The author's thinking was that since most of the congregation is most likely lost that the pastor ought to try to get them saved. I would add that he might want to give a dose of Lordship teaching as well – those that do believe in our churches aren't living like it.

1.3 I thank God, whom I serve from [my] forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

I might be making more of this than Paul meant, but the phrase "I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience...." seems to say to me that Paul was at complete peace about what he had done all of his life - even when thinking back to his days of persecuting Christians he was with a clear conscience. This would be an amazing truth to some people that struggle with past sins - there is a time in their future of a clear conscience. It should be part of their growth – realizing all is past.

Not that he liked what he had done, but he had come to grips with it and knew that God had completely wiped that guilt away, not just covered it but eliminated it - that he had a good and complete standing with God.

Many there are that are weighed down with their past sin – this ought not be their plight – they should be finding God's forgiveness and understand what that forgiveness gives – PEACE.

He thanks God for the burden of having Timothy on his mind night and day in prayer.

He had joy in prayer, he had joy in bringing Timothy before the Lord twice a day - if not most likely much more. He knew this ministry of prayer was a privilege that he had on Timothy's behalf.

I trust that you either have now, or will have one day the joy of ministering to another through night and day prayer for them. It is a real privilege and a real need.

1.4 Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

Hummm, when is the last time your superior let loose with a statement like that? What a thrill it would be for your superior to feel that way about seeing you.

Filled to the brim, filled to the top wanting nothing is the thought of this word. Paul will be filled to bursting with joy when he sees Timothy.

Now, that would be another great day when your superior was that excited about seeing you - true this was indicative of the close spiritual and emotional bond they had together - but imagine how that must have felt for Timothy to sit down and read these comments.

1.5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

Unfeigned is a big word that really just means honest - undisguised - sincere - Timothy's faith was right out there in front of him, not tucked away in his tunic or head covering (if he wore one) - his faith was open for the world to see.

Not like some of us - we as Christians, I fear, all too often travel incognito. Nobody around us knows that we are a follower of Christ.

You know, like when you are in the break room and everyone is talking about all those things that you disagree with and you quietly sip your coffee trying to be inconspicuous so that no one asks you what you think. Probably enough said.

This same faith was in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice - indeed, they probably had a lot to do with the faith of Timothy. (Lois means agreeable and Eunice means good victory.)

What a telling passage - the importance of a woman's touch in a man's life as he grows up - at least a spiritual touch - the importance of spiritual upbringing in a person's life - the importance of the extended family being involved in the person's life.

I can't say that my mother brought me along spiritually, she did make me go to Sunday school and church - my grandmother also made me go to church when I spent week ends with her but both my mother and grandmother, like our pastor and my Sunday school teachers failed to check into my personal relationship with Christ. All in the church assumed my salvation - when a teenager, I had

no idea why Christ died on the cross and wondered of the subject from time to time.

Parents have a real responsibility to watch for their children's welfare, both in the physical/material realm, and in the spiritual realm.

I might add in here a little item of thought. I had always been taught that this passage pictured a Godly grandmother and mother raising a small son into a Godly man. I have also been taught that Paul most likely led Timothy to the Lord. There has always been a disconnect between the two facts in my mind. I think that the answer to this is that Eunice and Lois most likely raised Timothy as a good Jewish – Godly person and when Paul came to Ephesus it would be consistent if Paul lead them all or at least Timothy to their Messiah. Since we aren't told I would never jump up and down and demand this interpretation, but it does fit the facts of the Word quite well.

APPLICATION:

1. Take time right away to consider what you might do in light of this passage. You might consider at length what your spiritual heritage is – what precursors to your salvation occurred, were there people involved, and have you taken time to thank them for their part in your finding God's mercy?

Years ago I was privileged to speak in the church where I was saved. I told of the many people that had brushed my life and left tidbits of spiritual dust on my soul. I told them that many of them probably didn't know that they had any effect on me – after the service several confirmed that they had no idea that they had been used of God in my life.

2. Find someone that you can begin building a closer relationship with as a believer. Someone that is equally seeking a deeper spiritual life – someone that will take the time to build this sort of relationship. Not one based on common interest or sports necessarily, but one based on a desire to walk with Christ.

Let Paul and Timothy be your guide to find a deep relationship with someone – someone that will bring you joy when they come around.

3. Why is the grass always greener on the other side? The age old question – why do we perceive that everyone else has it better than we do?

Let us consider for a moment Paul and Timothy. We see Paul telling Timothy nice things which make me think that it must have made Timothy feel very good – to know that someone held him in such a high regard.

On the other hand we think of Paul as being this great man of God that walked the face of the earth spreading the Gospel – what a glory for man – what a way to live your life. As we compare this to our dull drudgery filled life we wonder why God doesn't use us.

Then on the other hand let us consider Paul's EVERY DAY life. He walked several miles a day over less than adequate roads when compared to our day – no sidewalks, no smooth blacktop, no green ways to enjoy, no Nikes to comfort his sore feet – just the ruff roads and ditches and weeds of the day.

So, why do we think Paul's life was so glorious? Isn't it a combination of highlights and hindsight? We see the highlights of his life; we see the bits and pieces of his life that were recorded. We don't see the pits and gullies that he had to walk through, we only see the many people he ministered to and those that ministered to him.

Also, aren't we viewing his life from the other end of things? We see what we see, but don't see the bad times. We know he had some down times – they are in the Scriptures but we tend to forget them.

It is kind of like the missionaries that come to missions conferences and tell of the great things which they have been able to accomplish for the Lord. They inspire others to go prepare for the mission field and go out into this glorious exciting occupation. Then on the field reality sets in for the new missionary – this is no picnic – it is work – it is plodding – it is one foot in front of the other.

What the missionaries don't tell you about are the days and days of slogging through rain distributing literature to gain the first contact that leads to many other visits to the person that ultimately might lead the person to the Lord. They tell of the successes and not of the day to day boring drudgery of not seeing anything happen. This is not wrong of the missionary, they like to dwell on the fun parts, they just seldom tell of the low parts.

I was speaking at a missions conference in California years ago and the pastor gave me one specific topic to speak on for one session. "What it is really like to be on deputation" was the requested topic. He specified that he wanted the negative as well as the positive sides of the issue.

I obliged him with the topic and presented it to his church. I was swamped with people thanking me for telling them what it was really like – they had no idea what deputation was really like. I told them of the long drives cross country, of the sleeping in the car, of the leaving home for a month of meetings with no money and only a gas credit card to feed the car, of the pastors that had asked you to their church because they thought you were someone else, of the long days of boredom between meetings etc.

All they ever heard was the highlights – the great things that were happening, not the day to day doing of the work of deputation – you know, like the sending out of one hundred letters of introduction and calling the one hundred pastors in a week and finding that only ten of them were even interested in talking to you and that only one of them would even ask you to speak in their church.

The reality of most missionaries is to speak in one of one hundred churches contacted. The missionary tends only to tell you of the meetings that they have had, not the day to day work of getting that meeting.

I don't demean anyone in this spin of positivity, it is human nature, it is partly the way we are wired in our minds. When we are a year or two down life's road from hard times, we tend to forget the bad and remember the good – probably God's way of allowing us not to be terribly burdened with negativity.

To bring this closer to home for us, we often look at our lives as keeping one foot in front of the other so that we continue forward. We seldom can really see the highlights of our lives. We are too caught up in our drudgery.

We probably won't get the real picture of our lives until we hear the Lord's view of them. He has the proper view point of what we have accomplished – this is the grass we need to tend not that which seems greener in someone else's life.

We shouldn't count ourselves out because we can't see that we have accomplished much – what we have accomplished can only be known by God.

We need to get our eyes off the one foot ahead of the other and concentrate on the overall view that God has – His plan for our life! It after all is His plan – His perfect plan. If you dwell on the step to step you will probably demean His plan for you.

I guess what I'm saying is quit coveting His plan for someone else's life and concentrate on His plan for you.

Week 2

II Timothy 1.6-12

6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. 7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. 8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; 9 Who hath saved us, and called [us] with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, 10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: 11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. 12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able

to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

1.6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

Some relate this gift to the spiritual gifts of the New Testament however this does not seem to be the case. First of all the gifts are not bestowed by the laying on of hands. Secondly the gift is from God, while the spiritual gifts are given as the Spirit wills. I believe this was some gift that was given so that Timothy could do the work that he was called to. The gift is also directly received from Paul's own hand as well as from others. I Tim. 4.14 mentions the gift as well. "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery."

This adds a third point, the gift was given by prophecy and again the spiritual gifts are not given in this manner.

Gill suggests that Timothy may have allowed his gift to fall into less than active use, even allowing it idleness. The thought of the stirring of this gift relates to the stirring of a fire that has lost its flame - that is dying down to a bed of coals – a fire that needs to be stirred, that needs fresh oxygen to be allowed to circulate and raise up a new and heavy flame.

Indeed, with the I Timothy exhortation I'd guess Paul saw something lacking both then and now so gives further comment to Timothy's lack of action. In fact fear seems to be related to his problem.

I have not run across any suggestions for what this gift was other than the possibility of it relating to Spiritual gifts. I would suggest that Eph. 4.11 might relate to a special class of gifts that were given to special men at the beginning of the church. If this is true, I would suspect that there is a run over into all of church time for the gifts of evangelists and pastors teachers. Eph. 4.11 "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;"

If, indeed this is the case, I would think that Paul was speaking to the gift of evangelist that he mentions in relation to Timothy in II Timothy 4.5 "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

1.7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Paul tells Timothy he doesn't have the spirit of fear, but of power, love and of a sound mind.

I'm not sure my wife would agree with the final of that trilogy as it relates to her husband, but definitely we are not to fear that which is without. God is our power, our love, and our sound mind.

Let's look at these items for a moment.

If we fear, we know it is not from God, thus we need to deal with it at once and put the Devil behind us. Maybe that relates to the break room situation mentioned earlier in the study. Don't ever fear speaking out for your Lord.

"Spirit" is the term used of the spirit of man as well as the Spirit of God - I assume that it relates to the thought that fear is what is internal - this is not from God. Fear is something that is very hard to control once it has taken hold – don't allow it that first hold!

On the other hand power, love, and sound mind are the opposite of fear in this case.

We have the spirit of power: The term translated "power" is the word we gain dynamite from. We ought not come across as power hungry nor overpowering but should show forth a confidence fitting the power within us.

We have the spirit of love: What might that mean? I personally see it as the outworking of several Scriptural texts. Jo. 13.34-35 for one example. "34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all [men] know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

No clearer statement needs to be made. It isn't a request but a command. And we ought not lose sight of the reason why we are to love - identification with Him.

We have the spirit of a sound mind: All right, so I shouldn't comment on this one. Just a few simple comments and I will get back to areas I know something about.

Have you ever seen a decision someone made and observed that they couldn't be in their right mind? Most of us have – indeed, we may have seen believers doing this.

We as believers need to be walking with the Lord in all our decisions. Once we step outside His guidance we are not necessarily operating with a sound mind - example: the young couple that tells you God is leading them to live together. **GOD NEVER LEADS ANYONE TO GO INTO SIN!**

When we identify our guidance as from God we need to know that it indeed is from Him and not from our warped sense of what He wants. Remember a sound mind will make sense - it will sound right to other believers as well as to ourselves.

1.8 "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;"

What was the testimony of the Lord? I would assume it relates to His pre-cross activities as a prisoner being brought before the courts.

Why might some be ashamed of Paul? His imprisonment. Imagine if we were in a time of persecution how quickly you would respond to your pastors call from prison to help him – hopefully we would respond – not being ashamed of being related to a person in prison for preaching Christ.

Note that Paul identifies himself as Christ's prisoner rather than Caesar's. What significance can we draw from this?

1. All bad that happens to the person walking with God – good or bad - is meant to be understood as from God. Do you agree with this?

a. Rom. 8.28 "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose."

b. Would you assume based on the Romans verse that good would come from Satan? I don't think so.

2. He knew well that he served God and does not serve man or some philosophy.

3. We should know the same as Paul, the one we serve.

4. We should also encourage other believers to this same standard. I fear one day in our own country, some believers will face prison for their faith. We are seeing more and more Christians in prison in middle eastern countries as well as in China.

Rather than be ashamed, we should be a partaker in the problems which arise from being a proper witness.

How do we do this – be a partaker - with the power mentioned just prior? Our reaction to our situation will do more to witness than our speech in many cases.

One year both my wife and I faced serious medical problems in emergency rooms and hospitals. We reacted as we always do with lightness and humor - we knew God was in control and that we could do absolutely nothing about the situation - like what can you do while having a heart attack? Say no, I'm not going to have it right now - schedule me in two weeks when it is more convenient.

As we joked with one another and with the medical staff we were given a number of puzzled looks as if we didn't know how serious things were. I think they ultimately realized that it was our confidence in God that allowed us peace.

1.9 Who hath saved us, and called [us] with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

Saved us: He saved us, we didn't save ourselves. We could do nothing toward our own salvation - He had to do it all. This is purely logical. How can a totally corrupt person do anything that is worthy of pleasing a completely just and righteous God? They can't - impossible.

Called us: A general statement that seems to cover all believers. Called us - this calling seems to relate specifically to our salvation, though the fact that His purpose is involved we might see application in the thought of each of us being called to some specific life - if nothing else, the sanctified life, but I believe even more.

I would suggest that we are all called to a specific life - one of sanctification, one of using our spiritual gift, and one of specific purpose to God's overall plan.

If you aren't living a pure life, if you aren't using your spiritual gift, and if you aren't doing what God is leading you to do in life, then you are not following your calling before God.

Not, if I may say so, a wise position to be in when we are speaking of an all powerful holy God.

Not according to works: Not our works, nor the works of relatives and saints. The Roman church suggests that one may be bought out of purgatory by the works and giving of others, but this passage teaches otherwise. No work, no matter how great and glorious can add one bit toward a person's salvation - nothing except the cross work of Christ.

According to His OWN purpose: Again, we see it is all of God. Not my purpose, not my mother's purpose, not my wife's purpose, but according to God's purpose only! What a blessing that should be.

God saved me and called me to satisfy His own desire in some fashion. I can certainly please Him if I fulfill that desire in a loving manner for Him.

He saved us, He called us - how can we do less than follow His will for our lives and accomplish those things He wants us to do in life? It can only be disobedience if we don't and it can only be pleasure to God if we do.

According to His OWN grace: Not the grace of the saints that they had left over, not the grace of the church, but HIS OWN grace.

Again, the Roman church would suggest that grace is gained from the sacraments or works that man decides to do for God. What an affront to a Gracious God.

How comforting to know God has enough grace for all of us - we don't have to rely on what others might do, nor what the church might decide to do for us.

And all this before the world began: This one boggles the minds of many. He decided before He created the world that Stanley L. Derickson would sit down and punch out a bunch of thoughts on a portable keyboard attached to a PDA (Personal Data Assistant) to upload electronically to the internet for people to see around the world. How in the world could He have known about the internet much less a computer that fits in a shirt pocket - He must be a pretty great God!

The real shocker to me is that He would have decided to use a two bit, small town hood, to do anything for Him.

1.10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

God is the one being made manifest through Christ. Can you think of a passage that might illustrate what Paul is getting at here? John 1.1 gives indication, but John 14.9 mentions it more clearly "Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou [then], Shew us the Father?"

By knowing more of Jesus we can know more about God - what a strong reason to study the Word!

"who hath abolished death" Since we all die, the text must mean spiritual death - we do not have to continue in our spiritually dead condition - we have life through His work on the cross.

"and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:" The Gospel is the only way spiritually dead mankind can know of what Christ did on the cross.

It is our generation's responsibility to get this message to man, not someone else's. This relates back to the purpose of God set before the foundation of the world. He could have set up a one hundred-foot billboard on the corner of Hazel and Academy in Salem, OR and required every man woman and child of all generations to walk by it slowly so that they could read the good news, but He did not set it up that way.

He made it our responsibility. He chose to limit Himself to such as we to accomplish His work. II Cor. 5.20 "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ..."

1.11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

Whereunto: What is Paul appointed to? The Gospel of the previous verse. This is the sum and substance of all this saving/calling of the passage, in Paul's own life - an illustration, if you will, of what he has been talking about.

First of all let us apply briefly the truth that there are preachers and there are teachers. They may be one and the same, or they may not be. Just because someone can teach does not mean he can preach, and vice versa as well.

When you know you have a great teacher, don't force them into preaching unless they are gifted and prepared for that ministry.

Let's see what a preacher and a teacher are.

Preacher is the Greek word "kerux" which means according to the lexicon "a herald or messenger vested with public authority, who conveyed the official messages of kings, magistrates, princes, military commanders, or who gave a public summons or demand, and performed various other duties. In the New Testament God's ambassador, and the herald or proclaimer of the divine word."

Teacher is the Greek word "didaskalos" which is used of one that teaches others the Word of God, it is used of Christ as well as Paul and others. One that is able and prepared to share and instruct others in the principles of the Word.

Teaching is one of the spiritual gifts. One ought not teach if they do not know they have the gift of teaching - they may impart some truth, and some information, but they will not do it as effectively as one that is gifted in this area.

We were interim-pastor at a little Bible church in a little town in Wyoming for about a year. They had two Sunday school teachers while we were there - one was gifted and one was not. The ungifted one imparted information, but very poorly and often incorrectly. The gifted man was an old farmer that had been plowing the Word as long as he had been plowing his fields. His crop of spiritual truths was as great as his crops of wheat and corn. He simply shared what God was giving to him and doing it in a simple, yet effective manner. He was gifted of the Spirit to instruct His saints effectively.

Paul was all three - preacher, apostle, and teacher. He was the proclaimer, the messenger and the purveyor of truth. No matter the need of the people or situation that he came upon he was gifted and prepared to share the gospel with all.

It is of note to me that he did not feel he was gifted as an evangelist. He was a preacher and teacher but evangelism was not a strength. This runs counter to our impression of Paul at times.

It is important to know what your gift is and to use it properly. This includes stopping the use of it in a particular place when it is no longer needed.

Several times I have seen men that were well gifted in evangelism that were able to gather a group of new believers together into a local church, however they weren't sharp enough to know that they weren't pastors. They out lived their usefulness to the assembly and ultimately drove away the

people he was supposed to be shepherding.

I have also seen men with this gift gather their flock and leave as soon as they saw that there was a need for a shepherd - these assemblies flourished.

A few men are both evangelist and pastor - they can establish a church and then shepherd it. I have also observed these men and again, the churches flourish.

Paul knew what his gifts were and used them to the ultimate level in his life. We ought do the same.

The next verse is one that we all have heard, but seldom if ever have we heard it in its own context.

1.12 "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

Because of his calling and because of the gospel he is in suffering - yet he is not ashamed. If and when suffering comes to American Christians we ought not be ashamed - we do it for the proper cause - our Lord Jesus Christ and His work on the cross for others.

"...for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

He knew his work was for Christ, he knew that Christ was able to do all that He had told him he would do, and he knew Christ could keep his work secure until that day.

Okay, folks, that is one for you. He - Christ can keep the results of your work - you don't have to - you don't have to struggle to keep those new converts on track - He can. Yes, do what you can to assist those you minister to, but allow Christ to keep them - He will do a much better job than you will.

Paul committed his efforts to Christ for safe keeping. Not your worry, not your responsibility, not your load to carry.

I have often felt for pastors that have struggled to get a work moving and then be called away to another ministry only to see some new jerk come in and run the work into the ground. Not the pastor's load - Christ will care for it. It is His plan that He is working on.

We should commit ourselves and our labors to Him for His safekeeping - I think he will do a much better job of it than we.

"that day" seems to indicate a particular day - a particular twenty-four hour period. The term

translated “day” is normally used for a twenty-four hour period rather than a period of time as in the last days.

It would make sense that Paul was thinking about the day in which the Lord will judge our works. That day is the one that all of us should look forward to. We will see sorted out before us some of the things that God has been able to accomplish through us. Unfortunately we will most likely see what He wasn't able to accomplish through us because we were not tuned into Him at all times.

APPLICATION:

1. Relating to your gift. Is your gift in active use? Is your gift one that is needed in the church and is not active? It is YOUR gift, it is GIVEN to you for use in the church, and it is a GIFT of God not to be hidden.

All believers have one or more gifts, but I fear there are few that are using them within the church. After all how can believers really be using their gifts if they are sitting in the pew without doing something within the church? They can't!

2. Almighty God gave you a gift – something that you are supposed to be doing within the local church. He – GOD – decided just what HE wanted you to do for HIS church!

Some things to consider:

a. He has confidence in you to be able to do that job – not sometime in the future, not sometime when you get around to it, not sometime when you are fully mature, not sometime when you are fully trained. He wants and expects you to be doing that ministry.

b. He does not expect you to be doing the ministry of someone else. You are to do what you are designed and gifted to do. You are not designed and gifted to be what someone else is designed and gifted to be. SO – be rightly satisfied with what you are in the grand scheme of things because it is HIS grand scheme.

It never fails, when a missionary comes through I get the feeling that the field is where I should have been and be. I think back over all those months of deputation and preparing, but it was GOD'S decision for us not to go – HE prepared us in just the right and precise way that He did for our ministry at any given point in time.

I don't need to desire to be a missionary, I don't need to desire to be a pastor, I don't need to desire to be a deacon, I only have need of doing what He has prepared me to do at this point in time. I need to be satisfied with where I am in His Grand Scheme.

Charles Napier. Who can tell me who this man is? Would it help to know that he is a movie star? Would it help you to know that he has been in almost 100 films?

This man was on the Dr. Phil show this week and is frustrated that he has not attained stardom. In my book he has - he has made many movies I have enjoyed over the years much more memorable.

Dr. Phil was basically trying to get him to understand that he has attained that which he seeks to attain.

I personally believe this is kind of an inward born nature of man - to never be satisfied with what we are doing. We can even look back over our years and see big things we have done and still feel we haven't done anything meaningful.

Leave it to God to determine how meaningful you are - using your gift in the church can assure that He will find your life of ministry as meaningful.

A listing of his movies and television appearances can be found on his official website - <http://www.charlesnapier.com>

c. We should be satisfied in this life with the place in which God has placed us. Some of us are leaders, some of us are ministers, some of us are other things – all effectively prepared for our specific place within the body of Christ. If we are not a leader, we need not feel less than we are. If we are leaders, we need not feel more than we are. We are all believers prepared as He desires for the ministry that is before us.

d. He gave you a gift to use, not a gift to develop pride over. Some believers seem to feel that their gift is one that everyone ought to have, and when they see someone not having the same fruit as they there grows a spirit of judging toward others.

Some preachers seem to think they are God's gift to mankind, when in fact they are only a gift to the church for the growth of the church.

Some evangelists assume all will lead as many to the Lord as they. They begin to assume that all should have the fruit that they produce. God gifted them to do a work – not everyone to do the same work. All of us are to evangelize, but few are gifted as evangelists and few of us will have the fruit of an evangelist.

Just some brief notes relating to the gifts:

THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS EXAMINED BRIEFLY

SIGN GIFTS

PROPHECY: This gift is quite often listed in the sign gift area due to the revelatory nature of it in

the New Testament. "But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort." (I Cor. 14:3) Some feel that prophecy rightly belongs in the ministry gift area due to this verse. In truth it would seem that possibly the gift of prophecy had a redefinition in the New Testament times. In the Acts the gift has the idea of forth telling with the future involved as in the Old Testament prophets. While this verse (I Cor. 14:3) sounds very much like a gift that belongs in the Ephesians four category.

Some see different aspects of the gift in the New Testament. There is the prophetic aspect of revealing God's message to man, there is the forth telling of God's message as in what we view as preaching. I'm not sure there is enough evidence to justify either side of the case. The important item is this, if you see the gift of prophecy in place today, be sure that you explain what you mean by that gift, and not allow people to believe there is prophecy of the New Testament revelation type going on today!

FAITH: This gift seems to be the God given faith to see something that God wants done and to go forward planning and praying toward that end. This would probably be in view in the book of James. "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up;" James 5:15

WORD OF WISDOM: This is usually seen as a sign gift, and rightly so, however there may be a sense in which you should watch the wisdom that comes your way as you walk through life. I personally believe that the gift of wisdom is a sign gift, yet I have seen some very wise men who God has placed in my path. Don't discount wisdom when it walks up to you and says hello. Learn from it!

It seems to be the ability to take the facts and consider all information and wisely choose the course of action to be taken. You may run into this fellow when you begin trying to figure out what the Lord wants you to do with your life. You may give him all your assets and fears, and he will work through your fears and help you to an understanding of what you can do and encourage you toward that end. Not all people are as wise as they profess, so be very careful, of those that you take advice from. If you don't have confidence in them, if you don't see evidence of wisdom in that life then don't ask them advice.

WORD OF KNOWLEDGE: The ability to search the scriptures, systematize and communicate the knowledge received. Again this is usually viewed as a sign gift and should be. There is the idea of it in our own day also however. Hopefully this is what we have in the books that we are reading. The men of God of our day and past days are looking at the word, looking at the language, and looking to other areas of research and are setting down information that we might be able to use in our own lives.

HEALING: The miraculous bringing about of cures to all manner of diseases. Another sign gift. This is seen as the complete and immediate cure of the malady. This is seen in several accounts of the healing in the Book of Acts. It is significant to note that the apostle Paul healed many in the book of Acts, yet in later life he could not heal himself or others mentioned in the epistles. This is

proof that he no longer had the gift of healing.

We might make comment also that God is able to do as He pleases in response to our prayers, and based on this it should be noted that He does heal at His choice and discretion. This healing is done directly and not through a faith healer or some other third party.

MIRACLES: The supernatural intervention of someone with the laws of nature to bring about some work via a command or prayer. Again this is a sign gift that is no longer in existence. The fact that God works in miraculous ways in this day is not disputed. He, as we have said, can do as He pleases, and does intervene at times in wonderful ways.

DISCERNING OF SPIRITS: The ability to discern the difference between a spirit of truth and a spirit of error. Though I believe that the gift has passed away, I would encourage you to develop your impressions and feelings toward people and what they teach. As you go along you may feel, with no cause there is something wrong. Go carefully and see if your feelings or impulses are correct. I have noticed many times that we will meet someone in a secular setting and I will tell my wife that I would bet the person is a charismatic. I have been quite accurate. We arrived for a deputation meeting in Oregon and about fifteen minutes into the Sunday school lesson, I leaned to my wife and said that I thought there was something very wrong in the church. She said that she felt the same thing. Within a couple of weeks someone told us that the church had gone charismatic.

TONGUES: The supernatural ability to speak in a previously not known tongue or language. This is definitely one of the sign gifts and is not for the use of the believer today. The so called heavenly tongue that many claim to use is easily proven to be of something other than the Lord and His plan.

INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES: The supernatural ability to interpret what is spoken by the person speaking in tongues.

APOSTLES: This would seem to be the office that the disciples and Paul held. There is no equivalent to this office or gift today.

MINISTRY GIFTS

MINISTRY: This would seem to relate to the work of the Deacon. This is the ministering to the physical needs of the saints. I rather suspect that many people have this gift in there is so much to be done in this area of the church. Indeed, I have to think that many of the bench warmers that we have in our churches may well have this gift, for there is quite often too much ministering to be done for those that minister.

TEACHING: The God given ability to search the scriptures and declare that truth which has been learned. This seems to carry with it the ability to create interest in spiritual things and have insight into the needs of the students. We have many teachers in our churches, but I'm not sure how many

gifted teachers we have in our churches. (That are busy Ministering at any rate.)

EXHORTATION: The Spirit given ability to comfort and help those that call you along side for help or assistance. The term is also used of the Holy Spirit in relation to his ministry as the comforter. The person who has this gift quite often finds that people with problems seek them out for help, advice or just a listening ear. If you have this gift PLEASE use it at every opportunity. Many in our churches are hurting and have no one to talk to.

GIVING: The ability to give money for the ongoing work of the Lord with a single-minded commitment to continue to do so as long as the Lord allows. This does not mean that you are or will be rich. We had a supporter that felt that giving was his gift. He was on a disability income from social security and is unable to work. He and his wife give as much as they can and are determined to do so as long as the Lord gives them income and life. Even though they are low income, they seem to have the gift of giving.

RULING: Some would lump this into the gift of governments however there is a possibility that the two are different. Ruling may have the idea of ruling over the church as in oversight. The idea of the one that guides the church along.

MERCY: The ability to show mercy or kindness to those in the body of Christ that are hurting and/or are in need of encouragement. This will normally be a part of a pastor's ministry, however there may be some in the body that could do a much better job of mercy. We should teach people this so that the pastor is not burdened with a ministry that he is not gifted to do. The pastor can do his part and allow others to come in and hurt with the people. I've noticed in the past, however that normally the pastor does do well in this area and is probably gifted for the ministry.

HELPS: The ability to step into any situation and assist in accomplishing the task at hand. This gift may well involve the ability to organize and carry through on a task until done. In a church in Nebraska there was a man that always headed up everything. At potlucks if something needed done he was in the middle of rounding up workers to get it done. His motto was, "Everybody works!" Many joked of the man's work, but he was a man that got the work completed in quick and good order.

GOVERNMENTS: As opposed to Ruling this gift would be in the area of administration. The smooth running of the church affairs. Possibly an assisting of the different church leaders. We have churches and organizations with gifted people in this area, but the heads of the groups are too insecure to allow them to minister and have a great effect upon the body.

EVANGELISTS: The gift that enables its bearer to share forth the Gospel to the unsaved in a way that is both powerful and effective unto the leading of souls to the Lord. Some churches are seeing an advantage in having an evangelist on staff. This is a man that is equipped, not only to evangelize, but to train others to do the same. He is usually head of outreach for the church and is given a certain amount of time in the pulpit to exercise his gift among the assembly. It is not

necessarily the man that is called in for evangelistic services. The order of evangelism in the New Testament is for the church to train workers that go out evangelizing and then bringing the new converts into the church for training. (I think that you have read that before!) If the church was functioning properly, there would be no need for an outside evangelist to come in for meetings.

PASTOR-TEACHER: The shepherd of the flock that can both shepherd and feed the flock with the food from the Word of God. This man may well have the gift of administration in a small church, yet not in the large church where they have a very good business manager. When you are organizing the church as it develops, be sure to see what qualified and gifted people you have. This may well help you know what ministries the Lord has in mind for your people. If you are in a city and find that you have three evangelists and four or five pastor-teachers, you might conclude that a few satellite churches would be in order.

II Timothy 1.13-18

1.13 Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 14 That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us. 15 This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. 16 The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: 17 But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found [me]. 18 The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.

1.13 "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

What we hear and accept of God should be held in faith and love - faith that it is true and love toward others that need to hear the same.

Hold fast the sound words! Hang onto what you learn of the Lord from the Word.

Hold fast has the thought of a possession of the mind - hanging onto a possession as furniture - making it yours - to wear it as a possession.

Neat thought! So, how do we do that?

1. Determine what is good. Be good Bereans and check all you hear against the Word and determine what is right. As an old farming area pastor put it, "Chew and spit" - chew on what you hear and spit out the pits and retain that which is good.

Acts 17.10-11 mentions the Bereans - those that compared all with the Word. 10 And the brethren

immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming [thither] went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

2. After you determine it is right, then store it away for future reference. Both in your mind for your personal walk, and I find I also need to store it in a file somewhere so that I can refresh my mind now and then. When I wear things in my mind, they tend to get misplaced.

I have always kept files of studies and sermons - all are now on a computer so I don't need the two four-drawer large size filing cabinets - they are now full of electrical and computer parts.

It is good to just sit down and remind ourselves of some of those things we have determined to be good in the past.

One day after chapel my wife came to me and said, "He agrees with you on that passage." During the message I had thought the preacher had a great take on the passage. I looked in my notes and sure enough I had taught the same principle a number of years before and forgotten all about the truth.

There is the thought that we are ever learning of the lord. If your knowledge of His Word is not increasing weekly then we are amiss in some manner. We learn from reading the Word and we learn from hearing the word. If you aren't learning from these things something is wrong – either with your or those you read (books) or those you listen to.

It is a sad church that does not offer opportunity for growth for its people.

Wear those things you learn and hope they are made of strong material so they last better in your mind than mine.

I suggest that the love that is mentioned here might come in as we relate to other believers. How do we normally react to people that disagree with us?

Not necessarily with love. We ought to react with love - sharing if possible the truths God has given us, but also very importantly, react in love if they continue to disagree with you.

This gives rise to just what disagreement we can have with believers and still remain in fellowship. Some say that nothing should come between believers. Others insist on separation from those that are not following the Word.

Scripture gives us some guidelines relating to separation.

1. From nonbeliever should be obvious - not that we shouldn't witness to them, but we should not

accept them as believers into the church.

One of the great losses to the church today is the loss of purity - the accepting of unsaved people into its membership.

Many churches do not require personal salvation testimony for membership. To me, it ought to be a requirement for each candidate to testify before the assembly they wish to join. Not just to the board or a select few - but all the assembly - the assembly votes on the candidate, thus taking partial responsibility in the issue, even though they have no personal knowledge of the person's salvation in many cases.

Other churches allow the most limited of testimony to be basis for membership. One such testimony I heard - "I met Christ in 1981" - well many lost people have met Christ, but never accepted his work on the cross personally.

II Cor. 6.14ff "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in [them]; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean [thing]; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

2. Division is another cause to separate. Rom. 16.17 "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."

I have not seen anywhere in Scripture where this concept was rescinded.

Note, "divisions and offences contrary to the DOCTRINE which ye have learned" – separate over divisions of false doctrine.

Possibly, just a little comment on the terms involved here would be of interest. The word translated "hold fast" has the idea of hold or even "wear" thus it is not only holding onto but holding on very tightly - to the embedding of them into your flesh might be my idea of the word.

When I had a heart attach, the doctor inserted stents into the vessels to open the blockage. These stents are inside the artery, but the artery actually grows over the stent and the stent becomes an integrated part of the artery. This is what the Word should do – become an integrated part – so much a part that it dictates our every motivation and action.

The term form has the thought of an outline or an example.

Timothy is to wear the pattern or outline of these words of good spiritual health – now being a theologian I might take a stab at defining this. Take all the good words received from Paul and roll them into a workable outline – or might I suggest a systematizing of the words into a pattern to wear for life.

Some might disagree, but in my mind if you don't have a systematizing of the Word of God you have a touch of chaos. If there is no outline to follow you can and will get anywhere you want to go with the words. If you, on the other hand have an outline to go by, you are forced to interpret and understand within that outline. It was Paul that used the term "form" at this point.

1.14 That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

"Good thing" relates to the Gospel, according to Clarke. Barnes suggests that it is the good doctrine he had been taught. "The reference here in the phrase, "that good thing committed to thee," is to the sound Christian doctrine with which he had been entrusted, and which he was required to transmit to others." Wesley agrees with Barnes.

Gill suggests it relates to either his gifts or his work.

If it relates to his gift, it has to jump back several verses and out of context in my mind. I think that the doctrine or teaching thought would be most consistent with the text.

Robertson introduces the thought that this could be translated "good deposit." If this is the case, it could be as general as just the time and effort that God had deposited in Timothy.

This has some distinct possibilities of application if nothing else. There would be the efforts of Timothy's mother and grandmother into his life, the efforts of Paul not to detract from the efforts invested by the Holy Spirit. Much had been invested in Timothy and he ought to give serious thought to how he uses this effort – how good a steward is he being in his life.

I might suggest we as individuals take a moment or two and wonder if we are being good stewards of all the efforts that have been placed in us and our spiritual lives. Are we doing as much as we should be with our spiritual preparation? Are we really succeeding to the maximum?

There have been times that I have contemplated the effort I have invested in people and their seeming use of that effort. I know in my mind that it is up to the Lord to watch over my effort and that I need to allow Him to work in the life, but you sometimes wonder anyway.

When I was teaching, the faculty always put in one hundred and ten percent of their life to the students learning. One year we had a young man that seemingly got sidewise to the Lord over the

summer. Previously he had been a great student – interested, engaged, learning and excited. When he came back he was slouchy, uninterested, and sloppy with his work. He was still engaged, but in all the wrong activities.

This young man had not kept the good things he had learned – he had set them aside for things that were hindering his walk with the Lord.

1.15 "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes."

The next verse indicates that the believers around the area Paul was in had turned away from him due to his being a prisoner. There might be two reasons for this, though Paul indicates it was the fact that they were ashamed of his chains. There would be one other possible - that they were afraid of being caught up in the governmental mind set that caused Paul's imprisonment - namely the thought of being a Christian and the persecution believers were going through.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown indicate that they may have turned from him at Nicopolis when he was arrested. I am not sure what they base this on as the Scripture only uses Nicopolis once (Titus 3.12) and it does not mention his arrest there. "It is possible that the occasion of their turning from him was at his apprehension in Nicopolis, whither they had escorted him on his way to Rome, but from which they turned back to Asia." (Jamieson, Fausset and Brown) I suspect they may have had some tradition that mentioned this.

Other commentaries suggest that either those that abandoned him were present in Rome when he was arrested or they were there on business and just avoided going to see him.

Turned away is a word that relates to apostate, or turning from one's loyalty. This might in my mind indicate that Paul considered them as not only turning from him but from what he stood for - namely, Christ.

The term is used in this manner in Titus 1.14 "Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth." Men that turn from the truth would relate well with the people turning from Paul and more importantly from Christ's work.

What an important truth. When one believer is in trouble because of the truth all should rally around him rather than turn away for fear of retribution.

It is not easy to place oneself and ones fortune or family in harms way to take a stand with another for the Lord, yet this seems to be the criterion.

Those that signed the Declaration of Independence, though not taking a direct stand for Christ, did lay all they had and owned on the line for their principle of freedom of religion.

Phygellus: This man's name means "a little fugitive"

Hermogenes: This name means "lucky born or born of Mercury"

Just a side note, abandonment by co-workers is not a pleasant thing to experience. You know that Christ is your strength and that He is all you should care about, yet to see those that should support you in time of trouble turning their backs on you is hard. Disappointment is not an emotion that necessarily is wrong. It seems there is some disappointment in Paul's word here.

On the other side of this – you might well be wise to expect abandonment when you decide to take a stand – often you will find yourself alone.

1.16 The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain:

The term refreshed relates to cooling one's heat or refreshing of the spirit. The latter would relate well here. Chain relates to the bondage that chain imparts to the wearer.

Paul asks for mercy for the whole house of Onesiphorus - God does often bless whole houses even if only one believer in that house is walking with the Lord.

Onesiphorus means "bringing profit" a very fitting name for one that ministered so greatly to Paul. He is mentioned here and in 4.19.

Paul gives a glowing report of this man to Timothy. A man to be emulated.

One must wonder if these Biblical names were prophetic or if the meaning had such meaning to the people that they wanted to live up to their name. My name means stone lea (valley) – now I relate to that – I lay like a stone.

1.17 "But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found [me]. 18 The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well."

He was with Paul at Ephesus and at Rome. Paul was at Ephesus for two years ministering, thus he must have been assisting in some manner.

Another great truth. There may be a big name preacher but you can bet there are many men like Onesiphorus behind them making the big name possible.

Those big names ought not use those under them incorrectly, nor should they become too big on themselves, because they are big due to those behind them and the work that God has given them.

Really big names are not right and proper. It is God that is working behind the scenes in peoples hearts to make a particular ministry move along, thus the name that should be lifted up should be God's rather than some man that happens to be at the forefront of a given ministry.

Indeed, most of these large ministries falter because the leader begins to think too highly of himself - that he is above the moral code set up by the one he serves.

APPLICATION:

1. Taking a stand for Christ and His Word. There are some things to learn in this area.

a. We need to take a stand when the situation warrants it. Allowing things to slide will only cause further trouble down the line.

Many of the problems of decline in organizations is the allowance of minor issues to continue. If a minor issue slides by then later, larger issues are a little easier to allow to slide by till all is by and nothing is left to stand for.

Most liberal and doctrinally incorrect organizations and institutions did not just overnight change their spots - it was a slow-moving process of allowing little things to change away from the solid bedrock Word of God.

When on the east coast for orientation we assisted a couple in moving their belongings into a large four story mansion that had been divided into small apartments. The building as well as others was owned by a very liberal missionary organization. They would rent the apartments for a very token amount to missionaries on furlough. To show how liberal the group was the couple we assisted had nuns for next door neighbors.

The organization began many years ago when a group of fundamentalist pastors got together with some businessmen to purchase old seaside mansions that had been allowed to fall into disrepair by wealthy city folks that didn't go to the coast any more. The group would buy, renovate and rent the buildings as a ministry to fundamental missionaries home from the field.

At one point they needed to fill one slot on their board and there were no fundamental men willing to work with them. They took on a man that had some slight liberal leanings. One thing led to another and before all that many years all of the fundamentalists had died off and all had been replaced by liberal people.

A downward spiral always goes down! Allow the first step and you may hit a slippery spot.

b. We need to take a stand - even if it is alone. Others may not, but you must. Don't look to the support of peers, look to the support of the Lord.

When we left my teaching position, a doctrinal issue was at the basis of it. It normally is not an issue requiring separation, but I had agreed to leave quietly if I ever came to disagree with the policy or practices of the school. The board changed a long-standing policy on divorce/remarriage. I disagreed, so ethically needed to leave. This we did.

Over a year later one of the other faculty members took me aside and confided that when I left he should have gone with me.

I was willing to do what was right - even if I was alone in the decision. This admission, however, was a real encouragement even though it was a year later in coming.

c. We need to take a stand that others may learn. Others will hear of your stand and possibly come to agreement with you on your position. You have assisted another believer in their walk.

2. Ministering beside one that is in the forefront.

One of the privileges I had years ago was to assist a young pastor in the Portland area. He was pastor of a small church and he called me alongside to teach Sunday school class and assist in the ministry. He included me in a lot of his planning, and desires for the church.

We had our doctrinal and practice differences, but we never saw them as divisive - we knew they were there and just went forward anyway.

The result seemed to be a working of the Spirit in the church body. There was physical growth as well as a lot of spiritual growth because we were working together.

We noticed as well that there were areas where we complimented one another's inadequacies - what an honor to be used in that way.

I raise this point, in that, many pastors can't stand to have an assistant - they will often run an assistant off rather than seek to work together. There are some problems with this that the pastor's deacons or elders fail to deal with. The arrogance of a man running another person off because he does not want to work with him seems obvious. Oft times these assistants are called and hired by the church leadership/congregation, not the pastor.

Having said that I would be quick to suggest that any assistants called be quite well looked at and evaluated by the pastor that is to work with him. There are personality differences, practice difference etc. that need to be similar. However, an assistant should not be rejected just because the pastor does not want an assistant - he also should work through his congregation/leadership if there are personality/practice differences.

3. A little further concerning the thought of a systematizing of the Word of God.

It isn't that God did not organize the Word He delivered to us, but He didn't. It is a compilation of 66 books by a number of different authors over a multitude of years. It is not a clearly understandable document as it stands. Anyone that disputes this statement must require of himself a literal and careful following of the Word as it was set forth in its present format.

This will require a few items of constraint. There will be a number of chronological errors within the Word. There will be some historical errors. I say this based on the fact that there are some books that cover the same materials and if taken strictly chronologically will have the same event occurring in two different places.

I think the untenableness of this line of thought is obvious without going into further considerations.

For the average person reading the Word of God there is a confusion as to how a particular passage relates to the whole. The outlining or systematizing will allow the reader to find how the passage relates to the whole.

I don't know that I would require the thought of systematizing to relate to systematic theology, though this is quite a plausible line to follow - at least there should be the thought of a system of understanding such as Dispensationalism. Admittedly other systems of understanding are around and these "others" allow for plugging in the passages to assist in understanding, but they also point out the need to adopt the correct and Biblical system before doing any plugging.

I also am quick to point out that any system, or outline is based on man's thinking so may well be flawed, but it is a tool to assist the Bible student.

Years ago we ran into a man that had a very well thought through system of belief. He held that we are all eternal, however his eternity related to one of Einstein's theories. He said as you go out into space time slows down and that if you go fast enough you can stop and look back and see yourself coming - in this sense we are eternal beings. Based on this he was trying to discuss the Bible with us and how the Bible related to his system of belief.

It should not surprise you that in about two hours of discussing different issues he buried his head in his hands and declared loudly, "Wait a minute you have me totally confused." Guess our system of belief worked better than his.

Chafer defines systematic theology as "the collecting, scientifically arranging, comparing, exhibiting, and defending of all facts from any and every source concerning God and His Works." Lewis Sperry Chafer; Systematic Theology; I, 6; Dallas Seminary Press; 1947

I like Hodges definition "Systematic Theology has for its object "to systematize the facts of the Bible, and ascertain the principles or general truths which those facts involve" Dr. Charles Hodge; Systematic Theology, I, 18; quoted in Lewis Sperry Chafer; Systematic Theology; I, 6; Dallas Seminary Press; 1947

In short, we are to have an understandable body of beliefs – based on Scripture - that can be shown to others for their consideration and acceptance.

Can you see how important it is to study before teaching – whether it be teaching children, whether teaching adults, whether teaching lost people or teaching believers – all need truth – all need Biblically based information.

One of the great differences between Colleges and Christian colleges has always been that the Christian colleges teach all subjects in the CONTEXT of the Word of God. If a school leaves this one premise they no longer are a Christian college.

4. Just a note about Phygellus and Hermongenes. Did you notice anything of interest in Paul's comments relating to them, besides the fact that they left him?

It is of note what he didn't say of them. Of Onesiphorus he gave praise, of Phygellus and Hermongenes he gave nothing - he didn't bless them, he didn't give any good comment of them, he only gave of the negative. This relates to how we ought to treat those that wrong us. We need not be magnanimous in how we talk of those that have wronged us, but just give the facts. He did not belabor their wrong either.

I personally feel that we need to warn others of a persons short comings if they are apt to be a problem to others as they have been to us. Not that we are to go looking for opportunity to demean those that have hindered us, but that we should give information to others that might assist them.

Example: When a pastor is approached by a new person/persons seeking membership. Talk with them and find out where they have been attending. Call their former pastor and inquire of their status with his church. Some would call this snooping, but I would call it protecting the sheep. Why would you want to welcome in someone that has been causing problems in another flock?

Take a stand for the solid doctrine you have been taught.

II Timothy 2.1-7

A FAITHFUL SERVANT IS COMMITTED (to discipleship)

2:1 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. 3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of [this] life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. 5 And if a man also strive for masteries, [yet] is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. 6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits. 7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

2:1 "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

Because of the illustration you therefore live as follows! Be strong in the grace that is in Christ. Now, just what does that mean?

"Be strong" seems to relate to "become strong" or "make strong." Because of what Paul has said, Timothy is to become stronger in grace.

When I took a job in maintenance at a retail store, I had been sitting at a desk for the most part for several years. I found what becoming strong was. I could do little without tiring and becoming out of breath, yet after a few months of running from one end of a three story building to the other all day; I found I could do most anything without becoming breathless.

This is all good, but what does it mean to become strong in grace? It is of note that this growth is from outside of Timothy - he only has to let it happen in his life.

The term grace is the normal term for grace in the New Testament, but it has many shades of meaning. Some of the thoughts of this word are "that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness: grace of speech - goodwill loving-kindness and favor." These are all qualities that Timothy could show and certainly all come from Christ - they are not qualities we show automatically from within ourselves. Showing these is showing grace to others.

Indeed, read through the previous context and these are qualities that were in the actions mentioned.

2:2 "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

This passage was the theme verse of a couple of the Bible schools that I attended in the past - a wonderful goal to be sure.

This is also the thought of two other great passages. Matthew 28.18-20 and Eph. 4.11 ff. Both mention the training of those that are won to the Lord.

Another text that relates is found in I Peter 2.2 "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:"

I was recently in a Bible study and this passage was considered and I was vividly reminded of my own salvation experience and the time that followed. The pastor that led me to the Lord made no attempt to follow up on the new convert. I was dumped back into the world with no clue as to what the Christian life was all about. I knew I needed something - I desired the milk of the Word, but had no one to feed me. I read the Bible but it had little meaning to me.

I was told by some believers that I ran across that what I was doing was great, but none took me

under their wing to nurture.

I knocked around the world for about six years - part of which was being a typical sailor - not growing at all. What a waste of time spiritually.

We might also observe the context of this verse. It is in the context of the grace that Paul and his coworkers were showing to others, it was the grace that Timothy was to become strong in - yes, Timothy was to teach doctrine to others - he was to make disciples - but he was to teach others to become strong in the grace that is in the Lord.

Let us take a look at this word grace and some of the features that we might want to take upon ourselves for our own benefit, and to teach others.

"that which affords joy" is a trait that we certainly need in our present society. Our world is deep in despair due to humanism taking away hope - if I am all important and I don't become all I want to be then what hope is there for me? On the other hand if God loves me and has a purpose for my life then I can have hope for a better day.

"pleasure" is something we can always give to others if we put ourselves aside so that we can minister. Just the simple activity of asking how they are doing, how their week went, and how their health is. I suggest this for those that are GENUINELY interested in the person.

I must warn against the seminary training where the student is trained to ask questions - not to gain information necessarily but simply to make conversation and make the person feel good.

We were invited to a seminary student's house for lunch years ago. When we arrived, the football game was on quite loudly - the man would mute the television between plays and ask a question. If I failed to finish my answer it had to wait till the next play was over - or at times was never finished because he spit out another question before I had a chance to finish.

He didn't get the hint when I started finishing my answer I was in the middle of and then answering the one he interrupted me to ask. His lack of interest was shown when he asked me the same question three times before we went to eat.

"delight" is what a family has when they get a fantastic deal on a great car. We were given a car by my father - when we showed it off to one of our friends, the wife, said, "Oh, but it is a Ford!" Such grace she was not showing it would seem.

As we interact with others, we ought to be delighted with their good fortune. At times this is difficult - when you are in hard times and someone gets a break it is hard to be joyful for them at times, but that should be the response.

"sweetness" "charm" "loveliness" - what attributes for a believer to have!

"grace of speech" might indicate we are to be at least civil when speaking to others. Really, since grace is described by all the words above, might we substitute a word and say sweetness of speech, or loveliness of speech. Kind of rubs the wrong way if you are a gossip, doesn't it?

"good will" is the desiring of good for the other - being kindly attuned too. There are believers that are easy to get along with and there are believers that are totally difficult to get along with. I seem to attract the latter most of the time - good will is not what I always feel yet that is what the Lord would have us increase in.

I think the idea is clear, so I will simply list the other ways the word is used and allow you to consider them individually on your own.

We are to increase in:

"loving-kindness"

"favour"

"strengthens"

"increases them in Christian faith"

"knowledge"

"affection"

"kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues"

"Benefit"

"a gift of grace"

"bounty"

Suffice it to say we are to attempt in our lives to increase in the grace we show others - the grace that comes from the Lord Jesus!

2:3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

Endure that which God brings your way - as a soldier. While doing this study, I watched several war movies - movies about World War II and Viet Nam. I was struck by the commitment of these men - men that had survived heavy battles and had lived when so many had died - men that had to walk immediately back into some other skirmish which could be as bad if not worse than the one before.

If they survived that one, they were willing to walk into another and another, when each battle was one worthy of being their last, yet they kept going.

What an example we have in these men - they were fighting/dying for their country. We as believers have a Savior which is much more worthy of our commitment and sacrifice - how willing are we to step into hardship for Him?

We knew a couple that were pastoring a church in the Midwest when God called them to go to the mission field. They packed up their few belongings and visited a few churches and raised \$150 dollars a month support and enough for airfare to the Philippine Islands and left to serve the Lord in that needy land.

Today we have missionaries that are willing to go out to the field, but they must have \$5,000 a month support. They can't go without a full compliment of everything that they might need, nor can they leave without their retirement adequately supplied, their return fare guaranteed, and a number of other things.

Not that the missionary today should not look to his families need, but that he should look to God for his families need, not the gathering of funds.

Having said that, there are a few I have met that have gone to the field as the young couple years ago, and they have faired quite well with God supplying their needs.

2:4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of [this] life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

In recent years the President has called up the National Guard and reserves to bolster our forces abroad. Many of these folks when interviewed were crying in their milk about having to leave their jobs and their families - well isn't that what they joined for? They knew when they signed up that it was a possibility. This passage speaks against those that were disappointed in being able to serve their country - they should have counted the cost more carefully - they are entangled in the world and not ready to serve at a moments notice.

I understand their consternation well - there hadn't been any call ups in years so it was a safe bet they could make some bucks, get their education paid for and have some fun with no real danger of having to go - WRONG as they say.

It certainly is hard to see a mother going off to war leaving a husband and babies behind. It is also hard to see a father doing the same, however being a soldier has its requirements.

If you are a believer then you ought to be a soldier of the Lord. Be sure you are ready to serve on a moments notice. Don't entangle yourself in this life too heavily - you want to be free to move when the orders come forth.

Entanglement can take on many forms. Some are entangled in debt to the point that they can't go, some are entangled in marital situations to the point that they can't go, some are entangled in business to the point that they can't go, some are entangled in sports to the point that they don't want to go, and others are entangled in sin to the point that they can't go.

What a sad situation for a believer to be in – to be called, to desire to go, and not be able to because of a situation of their own making.

2:5 And if a man also strive for masteries, [yet] is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

There are laws to every way of life, to every occupation, to every sport - break them and you most likely will not succeed.

Now, in our present day this is not the truth that it once was. We saw the Enron debacle as well as many others - few wrong doers were in any trouble at all.

Our judicial system is awash - little makes sense within its findings. Murder someone and you can walk in a very few years - kill a cat and look out, you may be in for a very long time.

On the whole, it is required that you obey the rules - in spiritual things it is no different. TRUST ME, in the spiritual realm we have a judge that is righteous and just - there will not be the inequities and foolishness we have in America.

A prime example of this is found in the book of Joshua chapters six and seven. Achan did that which he was not to do and it resulted in defeat at Ai. God sets down His criteria and we are to follow it, not adjust it to fit our own desires and needs.

If you desire to operate in the Lord's realm, do it His way, not your own.

What modern day application might we find for this passage?

Can we tell all those "stars" of football, television and other sports that they should stop praying to Jesus to ask Him to let them win and suggest they concentrate on playing the game by the rules and take their chances just like everyone else?

By the way if you pray that God allows you to win and you win and some other Christian on another team has prayed the same prayer - does it mean that you are more spiritual than the other - more prayerful than the other - more favored by God than the other?

If a Giant's pitcher prays and asks God to let him win and a Dodger's player prays the same and the Dodgers win, does that mean God is a Dodger's fan? NOT!

Might we put some meaning back into our prayer lives!

The Sunday I presented this study in my class I saw an ad in the newspaper. I told my class that it would help them get their prayer priorities straight – it is typical of America today. The ad was for little pendant necklaces – they were prayer boxes – “Write down your prayer, fold it with love, place it in the box and gain strength from above.” was the caption under the boxes.

2:6 The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits.

Congress rewrote this verse years ago – it reads now The government that laboreth not will be first partaker of your fruit.

Again this is a truth from the past that does not always find its way into American thought.

Example: Who is it that gets first dibs on your pay check? Not you that is for sure - it is the government. They rip off the top 20-30% and allow you what is left - thus far anyway - and expect you to enjoy the pleasure that they have given you.

The one that plants, nurtures, and harvests has the right to first fruits. If not then why bother laboring might be the outcome - I think many Americans have discovered this - why work when the government will take from those that do work hard to support you?

Of a truth in our country you plant so others can enjoy your first-fruits. God has a plan and America is treading heavily upon it. Many have repeated Billy Graham's famous comment, “If God doesn't judge America, He will have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah.” I must almost agree, but we still have a little way to go before we are as bad as those cities of decadence.

That is the way I originally wrote the paragraph above, but on the front page of the Sunday paper just before I went to teach was an article about the Episcopal diocese that had elected, by a wide majority voting, their first openly gay bishop. “When Robinson emerged as the victor, more than 300 voters and spectators at St. Paul's Church erupted in cheers and jumped to their feet to applaud.” (Article GAY MAN ELECTED BISHOP OF EPISCOPAL DIOCESE; Statesman Journal; Salem, OR; 6-8-2003; p 1)

I am not sure that all in Sodom were homosexuals, but rather that many were, and that the rest of the population condoned or were approving of the sin. I fear America is nearer to Dr. Graham's end than we think.

Our leader is Jesus Christ - our allegiance is to Him - we ought to be free to serve on a moment's notice. If we are not in this position, then maybe we need to rectify the situation and make some changes in our lives.

2:7 "Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things."

Consider what Paul says - God will give you understanding! Might we apply this in the following manner? When we read the word (what Paul says) and consider it - then God will give us understanding.

He gives understanding of the Word and how it applies to our lives. A related passage to this is I John 2.27 "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."

The Spirit is our teacher if we allow Him that privilege. He can guide us into all truth as we walk with Him.

Now, this understanding may not be like someone pouring water into your ear – it may require some study on our part. It might take some further reading of the Word. It might take some digging into commentaries to find what other passages might assist in our understanding of things. The point is that God will give us the knowledge we need when we are in the Word.

APPLICATION:

1. Several times years ago while working with some men that took great advantage of me they would use something in one of their sermons as if it was one of their own thoughts – when in fact it was something I had mentioned to them a few days/weeks earlier.

It really bothered me for a while, but then I had one of those light bulb moments. My thoughts come from the Holy Spirit – when I am walking with Him – and these thoughts I share with others, and if they have learned they share the same thoughts with others.

Instead of being bothered I determined to be blessed – I was a living example of II Timothy 2.2 whether the other guy was right or not. Our purpose in life is to teach others that they might teach others. What an honor we have to share what we have learned of the Lord with those around us.

2. In an application sense II Timothy 2.2 also relates to the family. As we walk with the Lord and learn from Him we ought to share those truths with our families. I'm not sure this should stop when they leave the home. I have found that I share little tid-bits with our grown and married children via email. They haven't put me on their anti-spam list so I assume they don't mind.

3. The passage we have just looked at is sometimes used to show that Christians should not be in political office. The thought is that you are so tangled with the world you can't be a proper Christian.

I personally do not believe this is a valid use of this passage. The passage does give clear warning to one that is in politics – don't entangle yourself so that you can't serve God, but it does not say that

being in politics is entanglement.

I believe that if God leads a believer into government, then more power to that one that God can use to His benefit. Believers can and are strong forces within the government.

There is one truth – a believer that is called to the ministry ought not entangleth himself with political office – a call to the ministry ought to be responded to.

4. Our title for this section states that a faithful servant is COMMITTED. I think this is obvious from the text and what we have seen already. If we are not committed to the work that we attempt for God then we ought not bother.

Some make good lip service to serving God, but there is little evidence that anything is ever done. Even in those that seemingly are doing great things for God, may not be really committed – they may only be gaining good results from their half-hearted efforts.

When we are called to a ministry, it should be our total focus. We should do all that we can to accomplish all that is set before us.

Commitment is the laying of all ones' resources, physical, mental and material before the Lord for His use in His way. Every moment, every thought, and every penny! Do I live up to this? Not hardly, but it is certainly the goal and should be our focus.

I would like to dwell a little while on the second verse. "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

True this was a specific instruction from an apostle long ago to a colleague of his that was leader over a fairly sizeable group of believers, but it seems obvious that it is applicable to all believers that are of a maturity level that is higher than those around them.

The word disciple relates to instruction of another and the following of another's precepts. "matheteuo" is the main word used in the New Testament. The root of the word is where we get the word mathematics. One is drawn by the picture of adding and multiplying in this context, but also the negative side of subtracting and division in the church.

"Discipleship involved two principles. First, it meant that the disciples had fellowship with their teacher. They lived with him as Jesus' disciples lived with Him. Second, disciples carried on the tradition of their teacher. After he died they taught the same things that he did. Disciples were the main means of perpetuating teaching in the ancient world, since many great teachers wrote no books." NEW TESTAMENT WORDS IN TODAY'S LANGUAGE; Detzler, Wayne A.; Victor Books; Wheaton; 1986; p. 120

Humm! Doesn't sound like Matthew 28.19-20 does it? "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, [even] unto the end of the world. Amen."

I am sure in most churches there are a number of people that could disciple others with the maturity that they have. This isn't rocket science as they say – it is just sharing what you have learned of the Lord and His Word with someone that has not been taught to any great length.

How do we do this?

Know that it takes time.

Know that it takes commitment.

Know that it won't be easy – the Devil ain't gunna like it!

Teachers have the privilege of doing it at times – especially in college age situations or in adult classes, even youth ministries.

Pastors have the privilege of doing it at times – those that stay in one church more than the average of 18 months..

Missionaries have the privilege of doing it at times.

This is based on the assumption that they know enough about the Lord to share, and they know the basics of how to make a disciple. A study of the Gospels will give you plenty of training as to how to disciple.

there is teaching

there is correction

there is challenging

there is prodding

there is example

there is illustration

there is living example

and many others I am sure.

How does the layperson go about putting the passage to work in their lives?

1. Commit time to find someone that you can disciple – someone at work – someone in the neighborhood – someone that needs to learn more about the word.

a. Take time with them on a regular basis. Meet for coffee or a lunch and make it clear that it is a time for spiritual things – other things if there is time but the concentration is spiritual things.

b. Take time regularly to pray for the association you are building. Find others that will pray for what you are doing and for the person involved.

c. Take time to be sure you have something meaningful to say. Prepare some thoughts and topics that you want to cover. Possibly a study guide or a book that you can go through chapter after chapter.

d. When there seems to be a good maturity on the part of the other person set them loose to do the same with someone they know. How long will this take? Most likely a long long time – you will be learning new things of your own and you will need to teach them those things as well

It took Christ – Almighty God – three years, twenty four hours a day, and seven days a week and though they seemed a little inept when He was crucified, they all went on to do great and mighty works for the Lord.

It might take a long time however we aren't preparing apostles, so we wouldn't need to go into as great a training program as the Lord. It seems to be the thought of teaching till they can teach others.

This might not take long if you disciple a person that knows how to teach – then again someone that knows nothing of the Bible will take a lot longer. God has all the time in the world so don't get in a hurry.

2. Find a relative or friend that you know has email and develop a relationship with them and do the same as in number one.

3. You could also do it by snail mail though it would take a long time.

4. Maybe someone you work with – you could meet for coffee break now and then.

5. Basically anyone you can find that seems willing to be disciplined is a great candidate.

Finally in verses three through six we see three principles that American society seems to have set aside. We need to assist believers to get their priorities straight in these areas of Christian living.

II Timothy 2.8-13

A FAITHFUL SERVANT IS PERSECUTED

8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: 9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, [even] unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. 10 Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. 11 [It is] a faithful saying: For if we be dead with [him], we shall also live with [him]: 12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with [him]: if we deny [him], he also will deny us: 13 If we believe not, [yet] he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

Vs. 8 "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:"

In the first phrase the word “that” probably does not belong – there is no word in that position in the Greek. Barnes Notes states of the phrase “The idea seems not to be, as our translators supposed, that he was to reflect on the fact that he was raised from the dead; but rather that he was to think of the Saviour himself.” Other commentaries follow this thought as well.

This seems quite in keeping with the following context which speaks of suffering – the remembrance of Christ’s suffering, would naturally encourage others in the same.

The ASV translates it this way “Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel:”

Paul uses a strange terminology here - my gospel. What is meant by this?

The phrase is translated correctly - Paul meant “his gospel” or he would have chosen other words - maybe his salvation was so important to him that he felt the gospel was his personally - do we feel that close an affinity to the gospel that brought us salvation?

Some translations render this phrase as along the lines of the “gospel or good news that Paul taught.” rather than “my gospel” which actually fits the thought and text as well.

Evidently some commentators in the past have considered “my gospel” to have been an insert into Paul’s thoughts by Luke, the only one with Paul at the time and probably the one actually writing the epistle. Gill states that this is not the case and continues with the thought that this is the doctrine of the apostle being taught, not that He thought it was “his” gospel.

Not sure how they would get such an idea – if someone dictated a letter to, you would you just insert your own thoughts along the way? I doubt it.

Many have used this point of Christ being risen in apologetics (apologetics are the giving of an answer for your faith). Christ is rising, He is not in the grave and never will be, thus. He is the one Savior that must be true – His grave is empty as opposed to all other comers.

He calls them to remember not only the resurrection but also that the Lord was from the line of David. Matt. 1.1 ff relates this fact to us.

Two texts might be considered at this point: It may be a way to draw attention to the uniqueness of the Lord – man yet God, able to offer salvation.

Rom. 1.3-4 Is a great passage which declares not only the human side of the Lord but the divine as well. “Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 1:4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: ”

Phi 2.7 “But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:”

Why did Paul feel the need to call them to a remembrance of David?

1. Was he just name dropping?
2. Was his audience primarily Jewish? No, not necessarily nor would a large part of his collateral readership be Jewish.
3. Possibly it is a call to not only “to recall” the resurrected Lord but also to the God of the Jews which brought it all about.

Again, the ASV translates the passage as follows “Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel:” You might note also that the phrase “was raised” is translated simply risen – there is no “was” here, only the word for risen.

We might note these are two of the mistakes that King James Only people would count in all the errors that they find between the translations.

Barnes has a considered comment that I’d like to put forth for your possible consideration.

“As the Jews universally believed that the Messiah would be descended from David Joh_7:42, it was of great importance for the sacred writers to make it out clearly that Jesus of Nazareth was of that line and family. Hence, it happened, that though our Saviour was humble, and poor, and obscure, yet he had ... an illustrious ancestry. To a Jew there could be scarcely any honor so high as to be descended from the best of their kings; and it shows how little the Lord Jesus esteemed the

honors of this world, that he could always evince his deep humility in circumstances where people are usually proud; and that when he spoke of the honors of this world, and told how little they were worth, he was not denouncing what was not within his reach.”

Clarke ties the thought of the passage up quite well. “Whatever tribulations or deaths may befall us, let us remember that Jesus Christ, who was slain by the Jews, rose again from the dead, and his resurrection is the proof and pledge of ours. We also shall rise again to a life of glory and blessedness.”

Vs. 9 "Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, [even] unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound."

Not that Paul had done evil but that he was imprisoned as one that had.

The important piece of information is that though the messenger is bound the message most certainly is not.

Mankind may think it will slow the spread of the gospel but in reality they cannot. Believers may, by their inaction, cause God to revise His delivery system but even then the gospel will not be slowed.

Just a little side trail - how arrogant and foolish for man or mankind to think they can ever overcome the All Mighty God! Can you feature the one that might suggest such nonsense? Yet many have over the ages - including most of the isms of the world. Indeed, our own society is treading heavily into this concept in America.

One of the joys of contemplating death is to realize that what we hold to be the dearest truth is one of the few things that will not be swayed by our death. At death our thoughts cease, at death our dreams cease, at death our intentions cease, at death our everything ceases in this life EXCEPT that one great driving force that has been the highlight of our life – the Gospel will continue unabated. We will be gone as we relate to this life, but our driving force the Gospel will not falter.

Verse nine may hold a truth for us that by application might encourage us in time of trouble.

As we suffer indignity at the tongue of another, that abuses the truth about us, can we not have Paul's attitude of ignoring the wrong and looking on the great truth that God will not be hindered in His great Plan and purpose?

When the tongues wag, focus on what God is doing and the fact that HE WILL DO IT! not on the ill gotten gains of a gossiping tongue.

Vs. 10 "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."

He endures ALL things for the elect's sake - hummm - even talking behind the back, even rude comments, even untrue stories, even being left out etc. - yep sounds like a lot of pastors I have known - endure all things the elect can throw at them. Not that the elect should live that way, but many do in our present church climate. No, that is not what Paul is talking about but the minister of God does endure many things.

Upon a more accurate reading I would say that actually Paul is speaking of the elect before they are saved in this context - that they might find salvation.

Years ago one of the joys of working in a large television shop was that the boss would send me out with the outside technicians to deliver television sets. One day he asked me to go out with a man that was not the most likeable person in the shop. He was a Biker and very crude in speech.

I jumped in the truck and he turned to me and asked, "You aren't one of those religious nuts are you?" I told him that I tried not to be. He didn't question me on what I meant, but launched into a long tirade about our service manager, an Independent Baptist, that had been witnessing to him over the lunch hour.

I just kept my mouth shut as he ranted on. As we jumped into the truck for the return trip to the shop, he mentioned something that gave me opportunity to just share the simple facts of the Gospel with him. He listened intently and his parting words were "Stan, I have to know if you are right!"

Enduring a little ranting and raving allowed the Gospel freedom to be shared.

Indeed, the Gospel was shared with a man that had never heard it before. He told me his home was stacked high with religious literature but that he had never heard or seen the simple Gospel.

Vs. 11 "[It is] a faithful saying: For if we be dead with [him], we shall also live with [him]:"

When I was recovering from a minor heart attack, I received an email from a friend - she mentioned that when we are in that sort of situation we either live, or we-----live! What a comforting thought. We either live on in this life or live on in the next.

I think the greatest realization I have had concerning spiritual things since salvation is the fact that we do not die as such when we die physically - we just transition from one level of existence to another - both being life.

Paul knew that if we were dead - walking totally with God - that we really have true life. In short we is dead and we is resurrected, all we gotta do is the deed – namely die physically and all will be completed.

Gill states it in a much more profound way than I. “For if we are dead with him; with Christ, as all his people are, by virtue of union to him; they are dead with him, he and they being one, in a legal sense; when he died, they died with him; being crucified with him, as their head and representative, their old man, their sins, were also crucified with him, being imputed to him, and laid upon him; and through the efficacy of his death, they became dead to sin, both to its damning and governing power, and so are planted together in the likeness of his death; so that as he died unto sin once, and lives again to die no more, they die unto sin, and are alive to God, and will live forever.”

I trust you will give that some serious thought. WE ARE DEAD with Him – if we are dead how can, we LIVE as we do at times.

Vs. 12 'If we suffer, we will also reign with [him]: if we deny [him], he also will deny us”:

If we suffer we will reign - not that the reigning is because we suffer - it is that if we suffer for Him it is because we are believers. We are told that we will suffer if we are His. This is a declaration of the right that will be every believer's - reigning with Him.

The term suffer actually can be translated endure, which rather implies suffering.

In a way, is not living on in this life suffering, when we know what the next life is going to be like? That is just a thought to contemplate when you have some time. Place yourself in the day of the apostles and the lifestyle they led - not our comfy lifestyle with all our affluence and toys.

If we deny him - he will deny us.

Now, I know this is not the thought of this passage, but I would like to think about this for a moment – it is definitely a Scriptural concept, Luke 12.9 mentions “But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.” If man denies Christ then Christ will deny him – this is what the Gospel is all about – we have one chance and that be Christ. If we reject Him then there is no help or hope for our lost condition – hell is the only result.

That is a scary principle to contemplate! To be denied by Christ - that is automatic hell - He is our only opportunity for avoiding eternal torment.

I have contemplated often the heavenly scene where ALL will bow before Christ and recognize Him as Lord. What a terrible position - to know that He is Lord and know that it is too late to receive Him and His work on the cross - talk about sinking feelings.

When I saw Michelangelo's concept of this scene when the boatman is forcing the people off the boat onto the shore of Hell I couldn't help but think of what will go through peoples minds as they are taken off to their final place of abode.

If you can find an art book, take a look at this scene that is depicted in the Sistine Chapel called the last judgment.

The following verse seems to set the context of deny Him as salvation rather than post salvation denial. Verse thirteen says that he cannot deny himself - He is within us, so how could he deny a believer?

Vs. 13 "If we believe not, [yet] he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself."

He will be faithful to stand up for us even if we fail in the belief department - not saving belief, but in all other areas of belief.

Can't this verse relate to one doubting salvation? Of course – they are not believing what they know in their mind.

A rather encouraging statement - if we fail in some respect to grasp the truths of Scripture it will not be held against us.

I think it should be emphasized that this is lacking belief, not knowing truth and rejecting it due to our selfish desires that override taking action on what has become a belief and realization of knowledge.

APPLICATION:

1. Since we have introduced the fact that we aren't held responsible for what we haven't learned yet, might we contemplate that for a while? Can or will we then be held responsible for not learning if we have opportunity? Example: We sit in church services week after week, but are we really listening? In some services it is hard to listen as closely as we ought due to distractions, poor content, and personal distractions, but shouldn't we listen as best we can – in case something new comes along?

And one more facet, will the one teaching in the church be held responsible for not using his/her time wisely for teaching when it is given to them in the church situation. I have seen college professors that enter a classroom with a question or two relating to their topic and when the discussion is done they waste the rest of the class time on most any topic that comes along.

And maybe we should consider one more facet to keep us thinking this week. Will we be held accountable for those things we have not taught within the home to our families? If we have knowledge of the Word and do not impart it to the family are we going to be facing this failure in the future?

Well, one more aspect. Those kids and teenagers that don't listen to their parents – you know the ones – the ones that know everything there is to know already. Yes, I think that they will be held

responsible for not listening/learning what their parents – teachers – pastors – Sunday school teachers attempt to teach.

Well, okay one more aspect. I have to wonder when a pastor or teacher sees a problem in a churchgoer's life and they prepare a message with application to the problem, will the member be held accountable for that teaching and the ramifications in their life because they did not hear the teaching?

Well since you insist – one more aspect. How about the pastor/teacher that teaches incorrectly and his sheep that believe what he teaches.

2. Our section title mentions that persecution is the servant's lot. Here is a question. If a person attempts to be a proper servant of God yet does not suffer persecution, is he or she a true servant of God?

In most countries if you do what God wants, you will find some sort of persecution. In America, not always, but this seems to be changing in recent days.

Also in relation to persecution we need to understand what persecution is. It is the suffering for things of which we are innocent. If you are a liar and get caught and suffer the repercussions, do not call it persecution – it is more like “just dues.”

There is also suffering for doing right. The Bible tells us that this is to be expected and that God will carry us through.

Some of the suffering of the Bible is pictured in Hebrews 11.35-38 “35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 36 And others had trial of [cruel] mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and [in] mountains, and [in] dens and caves of the earth.”

There is great suffering going on today around the world. Preachers are being imprisoned for preaching the Gospel in the Mideast, children and adults in Africa are being sold into literal slavery because they are Christians, missionaries are being targeted by terrorists because they know they are Christians. Many are in dire straights due to their faith. Others are being starved because of their faith.

That makes what we call suffering in this country seem a little less like suffering don't you think.

3. I would like to dwell on verse ten for a moment. “Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus....”

What is it that the average American Christian “endures” for the sake of the lost today?

Let us think about that for awhile:

They might give a little money to the missionary passing through.

They might even pray now and then for a missionary – if they ever go to prayer meeting.

They might labor intently to hang that heavy prayer card they picked up on the refrigerator.

They might even witness to someone now and then.

Paul endured beating, imprisonment, shipwreck, tired feet, weary days, sore tent making hands etc. but more to the point what have you endured lately to assure a lost person salvation?

“Endure” according to Merriam-Webster means “1 : to continue in the same state : LAST

2 : to remain firm under suffering or misfortune without yielding”

The Bible uses the word in different ways, “1) to remain 1a) to tarry behind 2) to remain i.e. abide, not recede or flee 2a) to preserve: under misfortunes and trials to hold fast to one's faith in Christ 2b) to endure, bear bravely and calmly: ill treatments”

Probably Paul meant a little more than what we might describe for ourselves today.

How might we change our lives to become one that “endures” that the lost find salvation?

Make prayer a priority in our lives especially for lost people: Those we know, those we don't know.

Possibly get involved with a few missionaries and pray for those they are seeking to win.

Get involved with some country you are interested in and find out what mission boards are present and working there – pray for the mission boards – for workers.

Make giving a priority. Give MORE. Give to missionaries material needs such as cars, equipment etc.

Have a missionary family in your home for a few days between meetings.

Take your next vacation on the mission field and go out on tract distribution and assist in anyway you can – work, don't sit see. Well you can sit see a little, we don't want you to endure too much.

Go to the field full time!

Basically take a little time and consider how you might better help the effort of reaching the lost in the church, in missions and in your personal witnessing.

And even if you do all of the above, you aren't living up to the enduring of Paul.

Just a concluding thought, we in America do not endure or suffer for the most part, though I think we will in coming days. The American society and media if not our government is turning away from being tolerant as we know tolerance. They are operating with a newly defined tolerance. Josh McDowell in an article calls our attention to this fact. Basically when media, government and society speak of tolerance it is the thought that all systems of belief are valid and true thus anyone disagreeing with anyone else is intolerant.

To apply this if you as a believer want to convert someone from a religion you are being intolerant because you assume your belief is correct and that the other person's belief is false.

The Southern Baptist Convention has come under this type of criticism on the internet and in the press due to their desire to pray for those of other belief systems or to evangelize some of these peoples – they have been labeled intolerant.

Basically if you don't believe homosexuality, Buddhism, Islam, and all other belief systems which would include the modern Nazi movement and other hate groups are just as viable systems as your own, you would be held as intolerant.

Do you see some enduring and suffering coming for American Christians?

II Timothy 2.14-19

A FAITHFUL SERVANT IS APPROVED

14 Of these things put [them] in remembrance, charging [them] before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, [but] to the subverting of the hearers. 15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16 But shun profane [and] vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. 17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; 18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. 19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

Vs. 14 "Of these things put [them] in remembrance, charging [them] before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, [but] to the subverting of the hearers."

Such a warning! Strive not about words - this isn't the total phrase - to no profit is the key - not that words aren't important.

Why? So the listener isn't subverted - or overthrown is another word that is also used. It is the term "katastrophe" the word from which we gain catastrophe.

Don't make an issue over minor words to the detriment of others - could be in church, in class, in fellowship, or at the dinner table.

Just where is the division between words to dispute and not dispute?

The term "strive" is "to wrangle about empty and trifling matters" - argue about what color of socks women ought to wear under their long skirts - socks that are never seen.

Should we discuss the virgin birth? Of course, but even then, not to the destruction of others - a discussion of this type most likely would be over fairly quickly and clearly. Should we discuss the number of angels that can stand on the head of a pin? Not for very long - they are spirit beings so they all can stand on the head of a pin - one at a time or all at once. This is not a great question that needs a lot of debate.

I would assume doing anything to the destruction or detriment of others would be non-productive or at least should be.

Might I suggest that we all use some amount of wisdom? We all know when things are getting heated, we all know when someone is getting upset, we all know when we are being offensive, we all know when we are hurting another's feelings, so why do we continue on to the detriment of someone else?

There is an area where we need to stop things. When we see something going on in our class that is getting out of hand it is easy to let it slide but it should be stopped – allowing it to slide will mean it will be back being a bigger problem next time.

Vs. 15 "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Five items: Study - to show yourself approved before God – a workman - need not be ashamed - rightly dividing the word of truth.

"Study:" An affront to many preachers that trust the Holy Spirit to move them when they get to the pulpit! God says "study" - that contradicts the thought that we should just sit back and allow the Spirit to send the message when we get before the people.

We knew of a church that had gone charismatic in the leadership and many of the congregation. The

pastors famous line was that he didn't prepare his messages, that the Spirit gave them to him as he stepped into the pulpit.

Many of the congregation wondered out loud why the Spirit kept giving him the same sermon – he was always preaching on the same subject and seldom changed the content.

Study has the idea of preparation, of gaining knowledge, and finding truth, not sitting on your sofa waiting for the Spirit to do it for you.

This verse also should be an affront to those that prepare a lesson in an hour or so - planning to feed the flock. You don't prepare most good meals in that short of time, how can you think you can feed a flock on such meager preparation?

There is even another side to study - study does not require two weeks full time to prepare an hour message either. Some believe that they are called to preach and nothing else - study and preach and that is sufficient to the position. Nice job if you can get it, but that much study is way more detail than most flocks have need of.

To show yourself approved before God. Well, now that is a great motivator to study! Do it so that you can stand before God and find approval. The implication seems to be if you don't study you will not find approval. That has some serious ramifications.

The pastor/teacher that is too busy to prepare properly is not doing the Lord's will.

A balance - be properly prepared to the work at hand would seem to be the thought. There may be some situations where an hour preparation for a few comments at the end of a children's program would be appropriate, but an hour for a sermon to feed the flock is not enough to get started in.

Study to show yourself approved – the implication if you don't study you may not be approved.

Just a few comments further on the lack of proper study. First of all if you don't prepare properly then your flock is not being properly fed. They are under nourished. They are hungry, they are not getting what they need to exist, they are trying to operate in the world under prepared.

Now that gives a little emphasis for the under preparer - or should.

If there isn't proper preparation then the preparer is not properly prepared spiritually nor physically for the task at hand. He will not be in a proper frame of reference to do the work that God has called him/her to do.

One further comment on under preparation. There are many that do not know their flock well enough to prepare properly. Some flocks contain new and old believers, people that need milk while others needing meat. The pastor/teacher that feeds everyone milk fails, and one that feeds everyone

meat fails. Again, a balance is required.

It is like it is assumed that if there is a person that needs milk, then all will be fed milk. This under nourishes the rest of the flock and should definitely be avoided.

Just another comment or two on study - some of the terms used to describe this word in the lexicons are endeavor, labor, diligence, and exert - not just a quick look, not just a surface scan and most certainly not a fifteen minute preparation for a half hour sermon or study.

A workman – sounds like we are expected to work. What are the characteristics of a workman? Even today.

Following directions.

Doing the work for others.

Labor intensive.

Hard.

Rewardless quite often.

Drudgery – boring – day in day out – same – o – same – o.

These qualities may well relate to that study and approval aspect.

“Need not be ashamed.” What a position to be in - to be standing before the Lord and feel shame for that which was done or not done in this life.

I can't think of a worse scenario for the believer to find himself in. God is the most important part of our lives and to say we serve Him, while not doing our best in His calling will most certainly cause shame. There will be no excuse - no reason for being too busy that will suffice.

“Rightly dividing the word of truth.” This gets back to the original thought of study. You can't rightly divide the Word if you haven't studied and prepared.

Can you imagine the chaos I would cause at the local Safeway grocery store if I were to get a job in the butcher's department – I know nothing about cutting up an animal other than that I might need a knife and a saw. How dare people attempt to rightly divide the Word of God without some study, some preparation?

What does it mean to divide the Word? Some might suggest the division into dispensations - some might suggest the division into covenants etc. but I think there is something else that we need to

look at.

It is looking into the text and discovering what it says and what it means. There is the element of dividing truth from falsehood as well. Many have given interpretation of the Word, but not all is truth. Dividing out the false before delivering it to the people is imperative.

I might add that divide does not allow for the concept of stir in. Many stir in things that ought not to be within the confines of a Biblical study. Giving credence to anything that is not clearly taught in Scripture is not dividing, it is multiplying.

Barnes adds a thought that is worth bringing up. He relates dividing as in division of correct proportions to each member under his care. Giving food to each person as they have need. He mentions that some commentators relate this to the division of the sacrifices of the Old Testament into the correct portions.

This should put a lot of weight on the pastors/teachers of our churches!

Vs. 16. "But shun profane [and] vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness."

Shun, stay away, don't go for a little snoop – avoid these things.

This would seem to relate to the previous admonition to keep away from those things that lead others to destruction, though this doesn't reference others - this seems to indicate those involved in these babblings will become more ungodly.

That should give us indication of what the babblings are - if they lead to MORE ungodliness - those involved must already be in ungodliness.

What might profane and vain babblings be? Profane relates to the common or unholy - that which is unhallowed. Vain relates to discussion of vain and useless matters or empty discussion. "Vain babblings" is the translation of a single word "kenophonia" The word phone relates to sound in music as in Saxophone, while in language it relates to a sound that isn't a part of the whole – any sound that does not communicate any real meaning – ca doesn't relate much information nor does se, but the two – case – relates an idea. In short vain babblings relates to sound that really has no meaning or words that really have no meaning.

The term increase is used of a blacksmith that heats metal to pound it to flatten and move the metal forward to lengthen it. The term relates to moving forward. If you are ungodly, this discussion will move you forward into more of the same.

Ungodly relates to the lack of reverence to God thus we might assume that these discussions move the participants away from the God of their supposed service and toward a position of lacking respect or honor for Him.

This is not a good thing to be sure. This is a thing to be surely avoided. So, what is it so we can avoid it? Let me suggest what it might be in my mind in this current church climate.

A discussion about whether alcohol is okay for the believer might move those involved into thinking that it is okay and that they will continue drinking - socially of course - and might ultimately end up with a serious problem with alcohol.

It might relate to what some call grey areas. We have the truth of Scripture and we have the falsehood of the Devil but the synthesis of the world has given us grey areas (a mix of truth and false). A discussion in any of these grey areas might lead one into ungodliness.

Remember that these are probably already into ungodliness so they will have a bent toward ungodliness in any of their discussions and conclusions. Their mind will twist the facts to fit their need.

If you are walking with the Lord then there shouldn't be much chance of you falling into this trap. You will make godly decisions and most likely won't be part of the discussion, or at least will voice the proper attitude and the ungodly will ignore you.

When we were janitors for a large church I was cleaning up the youth room one Saturday evening and stopped to look at the writing on the blackboard before cleaning it. Written across the top were some titles for the columns. One of the columns was labeled Grey Areas. Under this list were several items such as drinking, music and the last was abortion.

Shocked to the core as a parent I approached the pastor about it. He in turn approached the youth leader that was somewhat embarrassed. He had stuck it there because he had not dealt with it as yet and never did deal with it. He agreed that someone might well have gone away from his class thinking abortion was a grey area.

Basically a lack of thought/preparation had allowed him to possibly have led someone off into areas of belief that were wrong.

Vs. 17 "And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;"

Now Paul gets personal - these babblings are like a canker and then he names two men that were cankers. Not sure I would ever want to be called a canker, but these two men have that distinction.

Canker is not even as pleasant as it might sound. It is the term for gangrene, that malady which kills living flesh. If you have serious injury the tissue can start dying and this death if not excised promptly will continue right on its path until the person dies.

This seems to be some serious babbling that Paul is speaking of.

Hymenaeus means “belonging to marriage.” Now, I wouldn’t comment on that if someone begged me to! Philetus means beloved. The meanings do not seem to relate to the lives of the men. Names usually, in the Bible, relate to the qualities of the person - this would indicate that these two have left their appointed life with God.

The lexicon lists Philetus as a disciple of Hymenaeus, but did not list any reference to back this up. From the text I’m not sure if we could determine if one were the leader over the other or if they were cooperating members in their error.

Hymenaeus is mentioned in I Timothy 1.19-20 “Holding faith, and a good conscience, which some, having put away concerning faith, have made shipwreck; 20 Of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered unto Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.” Since Philetus is not mentioned here, it might indicate that he is a later addition to the error of Hymenaeus.

The next verse gets into the error of these two, and some translations mention they were part of a group, thus there may have been more than the two.

We see that it is of major doctrinal concern that they have erred - Paul is quite pointed in his pointing out of the error.

Some in the church say we should be respectful of diversity, but Paul says when it comes to doctrine you are dealing with gangrene! Not something you cover up and not talk about!

Barnes relates quite well. ““mortification” - the death of a part, spreading, unless arrested, by degrees over the whole body. The words rendered “will eat,” mean “will have nutriment;” that is, will spread over and consume the healthful parts. It will not merely destroy the parts immediately affected, but will extend into the surrounding healthy parts and destroy them also. So it is with erroneous doctrines. They will not merely eat out the truth in the particular matter to which they refer, but they will also spread over and corrupt other truths. The doctrines of religion are closely connected, and are dependent on each other - like the different parts of the human body. One cannot be corrupted without affecting those adjacent to it, and unless checked, the corruption will soon spread over the whole.”

If you think of false doctrine, it usually starts in one small area where there is a divergence from truth. This in turn requires other changes of doctrine to remain consistent with what is believed. From one to the next to the next doctrines will be affected.

He goes on to mention of the cankerous pair “They have gained an undesirable immortality, destined to be known to the end of time only as the advocates of error.”

Gill seems to agree with the thought of the word “canker” “And their word will eat as doth a cancer,.... Or "gangrene", which gnaws and feeds upon the flesh, inflames and mortifies as it goes, and spreads swiftly, and endangers the whole body; and is therefore to be speedily taken notice of,

and stopped.”

Vs. 18 "Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some."

You might take a look at II Cor. 15.12-19 for further information.

Some were suggesting that the resurrection had occurred. This brings up some questions.

1. What resurrection?

a. Christ's might be suggested but that is required for the Gospel and would not lead people astray.

b. Resurrection of the lost might be suggested though a trip to the market would prove this wrong. Lost man is quite evident even in our day.

c. The resurrection of the children of God seems to be the obvious and only choice.

2. What doctrine might be built on this supposed truth?

It would have to relate to the true believers being gone - maybe that those speaking the falsehood are God's special emissaries? Maybe, follow what we say or you will be lost? This would give pressure to make the followers want to adhere!

The above is one of the strangle holds most cults use - you can't reach God without following us.

Possibly along with this line of thought they may have been suggesting that Paul and others with their message were wrong and not to be trusted.

3. Who would perpetrate such a falsehood? We know the men but were they part of a group?

Possibly they were just getting their group started though I'd guess Paul might have mentioned it rather than single out two or three individuals.

4. Why would someone do this? I assume they didn't one day get out of bed thinking, "I am going to start a false doctrine cult today." I assume that their own minds duped them into buying into the false teaching. Indeed, this may have stemmed directly from some of those false discussions that Paul was dealing with.

This happens even to fundamental Bible believing Christians. The sister of a classmate was approached by two cult members. They used Scripture to spin their finely devised web, and because she was off guard for a few moments one evening, she began what was a several year vacation from reality, Christianity, family, friends and all that is wholesome.

I am sure these two men and if there were others, were products of their minds. They allowed themselves to become entangled with additions and philosophical ramblings loosely based on the Word of God.

My fair warning to the believer is to read a passage, take it for just what it says and no more, apply those truths to your life and walk away. Do not sit for hours contemplating the deeper meaning - if God had wanted us to dig for the deeper things I think He would have told us to do it and given instruction as to how to regulate the product of such scrounging.

One of the respected authors of our day tended to find more truths in a passage than the words would ever allow. He would wring and wring until the verse was dry and then press further trying to find more.

If this Bible is God's message to us, wouldn't He have given it to us in a plain package - easy to understand?

5. Are there current isms or movements might have grown out of foolish discussions? I'm not currently aware of any but I'm sure there are some.

Some evidently had bought this and gone astray. It would seem possibly that this new belief system had arisen from getting into discussions about foolish things thus it may have just been an unwise choice in using information.

I see in some of the thinkers of our own day a dangerous move to find something new and exciting from the Word. By this I don't condemn natural study that produces valid new information.

I have been reading recently that one of the big name preachers of our day has assumed almost God like status in his own mind and in the minds of some of the movement's leaders.

Example: They look forward to getting to heaven so they can hear this leader tell them "well done thou good and faithful servant." This group is nearing if not already at cult status! Indeed, many of the ex followers that have been public with their accounts view the movement as a cult that teaches false doctrine.

Beware how you view Scripture - it will bite you doctrinally if you fail to be careful.

We were in a Sunday school class taught by a psychologist that considered himself quite a gift to mankind. He suggested a passage for discussion then told us what the passage said but then proceeded to tell us some of his psychological principles - items that seemed to be possibly valid.

Had he stopped there he would have been okay. He however being the gift that he thought he was proceeded to try to find something new and unique from the passage.

He started trying to screw his psychological principles into the text. As he went along it was obvious to all that the passage was never going to fit the principles. As he tried harder and harder, he pushed himself into more and more trouble.

He never stopped trying even though the students had given up much earlier.

Teach the Word as you find it. Be satisfied to find only that which has been found before by the church fathers. It is good if you find further information, but don't press so hard that you start finding things that are not there. If you do find something that you feel is new, talk to others about your findings and see if they agree with you.

After 2000 years, I am sure most of the plain truth of the Word has been found, though now and then there are new things that arise - question them and accept if they are valid.

I don't know for fact, but suspect highly the liberal line of thinking as well as some of the non-traditional thinking of that end of the spectrum comes from the rejection of God's Word as truth and allowing the introduction of speculation and vain discussions of whatever came along.

It is of note to me that the evangelical and neo-evangelical movement came from a desire to be more user friendly - to be attractive to the lost - however if the polls say anything truthful, the lost have little respect for these movements - thus will probably never listen to the Gospel when preached by an evangelical.

We don't have to repackage the Gospel to make it user friendly. Making the church acceptable to the world isn't the answer. Making the church into the church will automatically set us apart from the world. When the Spirit begins to work in the lost person's life – THEN – they will know where to go to get their answers – to the church that is different from the world. Why would they go to a church that is just like them to gain answers? The polls and logic say they won't.

The Gospel is God's, the truth is God's, I can't understand why some insist on trying to embellish that which is perfect.

Vs. 19 "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

God knows them that are His - what a blessing to know! We don't have to worry about slipping through the cracks - when we are His; we know He will be watching over us.

Linked with this thought is the other side of the coin - ACT LIKE IT! If we are His we ought to depart from sin and act like the children of God that we are, not like the lost that wallow in their sin.

The back side of this is that if you aren't departing from iniquity and name the name of Christ then one might question if you are truly His. Not that we are to judge and condemn but that we ought to

be wise in how we allow people to operate or not operate within the church, our families and our lives.

If we have people in our church that live with some ongoing sin, we must wonder if they are truly His and whether we want them active in our church's activities - as in teaching etc.

Many churches are so desperate for workers that they call upon those that are not really believers to do the Lord's work - not wise, not even smart.

APPLICATION:

1. To those that make light of doctrine – HOGWASH – if that isn't considered vain babbling then it ought to be. Doctrine is teaching and teaching should be based on the Word of God rightly divided. Anything else then is vain babbling and ought not be allowed within the church.

Just a question for your consideration. What should we do when someone in our church is teaching falsely?

a. If it is really off the wall, confront it immediately – even within the session, be it Sunday school, Bible study or a sermon.

b. If it is something that isn't going to mislead someone into a cult right away then a personal confrontation might be best, but be sure you have Biblical support for your position.

c. How about something that just isn't supported by the passage being used? Again a personal confrontation might be better, though if it is a difference of opinion on the interpretation of the passage, ignoring the item might be best, unless you can give good Biblical basis.

2. A faithful servant is approved. Why will God judge a servant faithful?

One that teaches the Word consistently and precisely will be found faithful. One that does not stray from that which is correct and true will also be found faithful. One that does not allow his class, study or session to degenerate into vain babblings and talk that leads others astray will be found faithful.

I would like to share a quote from Gill. "A workman that needeth not to be ashamed; the ministry of the word is a work, and it is a good work; and those that perform it aright are worthy of honour and esteem; and it requires industry, diligence, and application, and for which no man is sufficient without the grace of God; and those who are employed in it are workmen, workers together with God, and labourers in his vineyard: and such who are faithful and diligent ones, "need not to be ashamed"; such do not cause shame, neither in themselves nor in others, as false teachers do, who foam out their own shame, and as negligent ministers of the word, and such whose lives are not agreeable to the doctrines they preach; nor have they any reason to be ashamed, neither of the

Gospel, which they preach, nor of their sufferings, which they endure for the sake of it, nor of their upright ministrations of the word; and as they are not afraid to suffer shame for the sake of Christ now, they will not be ashamed before him at his coming.”

3. Verse nineteen closes with “depart from iniquity.” First of all believers live where they ought not, but secondly, believers ought to live where they ought. Paul told them to leave sin. It is not wrong for church leaders to confront and deal with the sins of their people.

How approved might we be if the Lord came for us right now?

II Timothy 2.20-26

A FAITHFUL SERVANT IS PREPARED

20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. 21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, [and] prepared unto every good work. 22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. 24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all [men], apt to teach, patient, 25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And [that] they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

The next two verses are very entwined, so lets look at both at once.

Vs. 20 "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. 21 "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, [and] prepared unto every good work."

Let us just observe some facts from the verses.

1. There are vessels of gold/silver.
2. There are vessels of wood/earth.
3. There are vessels to honour.
4. There are vessels to dishonor.

5. If a person purge from these - he will be a vessel to honour.

6. He will be sanctified.

7. He will be ready for the master's use.

8. He will be prepared to do every good work.

The question is what are the "these" he is to purge himself from?

The question seems best answered by avoiding the profane and vain babblings of verse sixteen. The text lists vessels and honour/dishonor but nowhere list items to be avoided as sin etc., thus we must need go further back in the context to the babblings.

It might also be suggested that one is to avoid the two men of verse seventeen as well. Both might be the thought of the text.

Most commentaries take this to be talking about the church and the fact that there are some in the church that are worth great amounts to the Lord, and others are worthless to Him.

Relating to the wood and clay vessels, Gill relates these to the ungodly portion of the church. "there are others in a visible church state, who are like to dry wood, destitute of the grace of God, and are fit matter for Satan to work upon, and by them raise and increase the flames of contention and division, and will be fit fuel for everlasting burnings; and there are others who are sensual, and carnal, and worldly, who mind earth, and earthly things, and have no spirituality, nor spiritual mindedness in them:"

Oh, what a reason to give prospective members a good looking over – not just the quick question that elicits a brief testimony, but a good questioning that will show their understanding and acceptance of the Gospel.

I believe Gill's thought of the text is correct. I do however feel there may be a further application which we will see later. Suffice it to say at this point the context is a comparison of spiritual/worldly if not lost people. This verse shows that some are a dishonor to God – worthless to Him, thus indicating either very off track if not lost people.

It should be clear on which side of the honor situation that the believer should be.

Vs. 22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Okay, "flee also youthful lusts" means what in your mind?

The word also lists the youthful lusts on the same plain as false doctrine - quite an important concept for the Christian!

Being young it might be clearer in mind as to what is mentioned, but as we age those lusts tend to seem less important and some may even forget them.

Let me see if I can approach this subject with any semblance of reality at the ripe old age of sixty-three. I seem to have faint recollections of physical lust that seemed to be one of the most important driving forces. Quickly behind that I seem to remember the lust for material things such as cars, neat accessories for the said cars, and maybe a little desire for other toys while desiring a pretty girl to ride in that same car.

In my day car accessories were a good radio or record player and a nice set of rims – nowadays they have great toys to lust after - \$40,000 containers for all the toys available – the GPS, the CD changers, the 1000 watt stereo systems, the televisions, the DVD players and a host of other items. I didn't know what youthful lust was compared to the possibilities of today.

I seem also to have had a great desire toward matrimony or at least someone to accompany me through those lonesome days.

These items tend to take over the person's thought life, time and energies.

I suspect Paul is trying to say, don't allow anything to consume you the way false doctrine can consume you - or the way youthful lusts consume you.

He then gives a list of items to substitute for these two driving forces in the life of the believer. Items that will take ones attention from that which is incorrect.

This is Good. Substitute good habits for the bad. When the doctors told me to stop eating sugar, salt and fats, I didn't stop eating, I just substituted a good set of eating habits for the old bad ones.

BUT do the following:

Follow righteousness: This would be the opposite of the sin that the other path leads to. Sadly, we can only serve that which is righteous or that which is unrighteous. One leads to honor and the other to dishonor.

That is a choice that each of us must make for ourselves and it is a critical choice that quite possibly dictates the path of our lives.

“Faith” in this verse is the word in Greek that is normally translated faith. It seems to mean confidence in something or assurance of something. Having faith in evolution is having a confidence in the truth of this false teaching, while faith in creationism is a belief that the Word of God is true.

“Charity” is the Greek term agape which is a self-sacrificing love - a love that benefits the object of that love even to the detriment of the one loving.

“Peace” means pretty much what we hold it to mean - peace versus war - peace of assurance of salvation - rest as opposed to turmoil.

“Call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” Personally I have noticed I don't call on Him much when my heart isn't pure so I can know if I am praying I must be on His ground rather than my own.

Vs. 23 "But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes."

Just what are foolish and unlearned questions that we should avoid? Some would suggest a question like "How many angels can stand on the head of a pin?" I would feel comfortable using the question to begin a discussion on the character of angels, though I would not dwell on the question for long.

If, on the other hand, you allow a discussion on the question to continue, you could consume a large amount of time, and most likely sooner or later would introduce friction and strife to the group.

I used to open a class hour to discuss the Sons of God/daughters of men issue in the Old Testament. I did it so that the class could see all sides of the question and learn how to gather facts and present an argument. It normally went well, however one morning I had two women that were certain they were the dominant force in the class to be reckoned with and they caused quite a disturbance to the usually smooth discussion.

A person bent on strife will introduce it no matter the topic, but most certainly if the question has little value to begin with.

The second phrase assumes that the person knows about the result of these sorts of questions - they know they bring strife amongst the brethren.

Anyone knowingly introducing strife into a church is in question as to wisdom as well as motivation.

This is one reason many pastors, when contemplating the newcomers for church membership, call the old pastor first to see if there was trouble. If there was a problem many pastors ask the prospective member to return to settle their business at their old church before going forward with membership.

You don't need to accept troublemakers into your assembly - you will have enough problems without them most likely.

Vs. 24 "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all [men], apt to teach, patient,"

Now, Paul didn't have to put that verse in at this point. In the illustration with the two ladies just above, I am afraid I wasn't as gentle and patient as I could have been, though. On the other hand the teacher must control the class – in this instance a visitor to the class was attempting to dominate the discussion toward her opinion distracting from the class.

When questions leading nowhere come up the teacher must gently move the class onto other things.

The teacher is there to teach, not strive. Years ago a pastor, after introducing some questionable topics in his message, made the mistake of asking if there were any questions. The result after a few minutes was that one of his deacons was on his feet and the two were hollering at one another about the validity of the pastors comments.

Neither was gentle and patient, but the pastor should have been the stronger and done better with the situation. This is TERRIBLY hard for a pastor or teacher. You must be very careful in how you handle such situations.

You may find in some situations where someone is becoming obnoxious, it is best to stop the discussion and move on. If you are not allowed to move on then possibly a well thought out and well-placed comment should be made - something that brings the troublemaker up short. This is as a last resort only.

In a Sunday school class a woman was taking exception to her perceived answer to a question I had asked. She was totally obnoxious in her comments and her body language/color of her face indicated something close to rage. I made my intent quite clear and she insisted in rude comments. Finally I just quietly said that we really needed to move on and that I was sure she understood what I was getting at - the entire class was very clear in what I said and knew she was way out of line. She finally ceased her ranting.

“Apt to teach” Have you ever sat in a class or message where everything said sounded Biblical but just wasn't quite fitting the passage used? Apt to teach indicates ability and desire to teach yet many in our churches can't or won't take time to properly prepare. Often the problem with this not fitting is the failure to look at the context of the passage used.

Years ago a pastor had us turn to I Cor. 16.2 and taught for half an hour on why we should give like mad right now – today – Christ could come at any moment and we don't want to take an offering after Christ gets here to pay the church bills. The context clearly is speaking of Paul coming not Christ. Not to speak of the context being a giving to help a struggling church elsewhere, not local church needs.

Vs. 25 "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;"

This gives indication that this is a little more than just disagreeing over the interpretation of a passage. The person is called to repentance and acknowledging truth.

These are opposing themselves - their beliefs are counter to their good condition. They are believing things which will lead them into hurtful living - these are to be gently taught the error of what they believe.

Know that there may be some that will not accept the truth and that will continue on to their own detriment.

Many years ago I met a young seminarian that was one of the men that really affected my spiritual life. A number of years later I learned that he had read a book that had really cast doubts into his beliefs. His professors worked with him at great length attempting to draw him back to truth, but he refused to be budged in his error. He finally dropped out of school and enrolled in a liberal seminary.

The result is up to God - we are to gently teach truth.

Vs. 26 "And [that] they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."

Again, it is clear that these are some serious questions that lead to destruction.

This reinforces what has already been said - it is up to God and the person to extract themselves from their wayward way, the teacher's responsibility is to teach the truth.

Truth is the only antidote to false teaching and even it must be accepted for it to be effective.

APPLICATION:

1. What are some of the great church disputes that you personally have lived through?

In our home church there was a great distress between factions relating to what color to paint the doors of the church. The doors were in very poor condition and looked terrible. The pastor finally took it upon himself to go to the paint store and pick out some paint of his choice and paint the doors. He chose a bright purple. At first look it was terrible - upon a second look it was even worse. Finally after a few weeks everyone became used to it and accepted it.

Verses 23-24 speak to the need to avoid strife – as believers we ought to find ways of avoiding strife.

We spoke for a few weeks in a little church where the two deacons had vast differences theologically. When I found this out, I was quite hesitant about teaching/preaching there because one was a total Armenian and the other was a five-point Calvinist. Scripture is quite literally sprinkled with waiting time bombs when you have two men such as these in your congregation.

The first Sunday school class we attended was the test of the relationship between these two men. The teacher read a verse and I knew the eruption was near – I wanted to duck. The Armenian began to talk and presented his totally Armenian position. The Calvinist then began to talk and presented his totally Calvinist view. The teacher moved on after a few brief comments. That was the end of it.

These men knew one another, they knew one another's doctrine, and they knew this passage – the thought of never causing strife. Both presented their belief and left it there for others to consider – no discussion, no debate, no fighting, no strife. May many others in the church learn what these two men had learned in their walk with the Lord.

2. The question should be raised whether verses 20-21 are speaking of strictly saved/lost or is it on the other hand speaking of the fact that there are people that are worth more by their service, while others are less fruitful in their service. In the phrase “gold of silver” there even is a decline in value. Gold today sells for around three hundred and fifty dollars an ounce while silver sells for around five or six dollars.

I personally feel that this in itself requires us to look at this as declining values, as well as a division of peoples. That some are to honor and some are to dishonor relates to the spiritual/unspiritual or believing/lost side of the issue. It is not clear at this point in my mind whether these are spiritually corrupt believers or plain lost.

There seems to me to be a clear indication that the works/service that the vessel presents is also open to application.

Some would suggest that God isn't a respecter of persons, and rightly so, but He also will judge us according to our works, not his ability not to respect between persons. The two are different areas of God's character and justice.

I think also that the very nature of vessels in the house is important - some are of more value than others. When the pastor comes for lunch do we get out the Rubbermaid tubs to eat from or do we get out the best dishes we have? Some vessels are much more used than others and thus are more valuable than others. The clay pots would have been for carrying food and water, the wood vessels for mixing and gold and silver for the serving.

The final thought of proof might be that even a most valued vessel of gold can be used for the most dishonorable of uses while the most base of vessels of clay can be used for most honorable uses if that is all you have to use.

All commentaries I checked hold that the gold/silver relate to the honorable vessels and the wood/clay relate to the dishonorable vessels. Lenski does follow my thought that within the gold/silver there is a decline of value, and within wood/clay there is also a decline of value – he just does not follow through with the obvious that gold to clay also shows a decline of value.

I think there should be a realization that there is a declining of value within the materials picturing a variety of worth of members, and that there is a disparity between honorable/dishonorable as a picture of position within the body (spiritual/unspiritual or saved/unsaved).

The very fact that we will be judged according to our works just as the lost will be judged by their works pictures this variance of value. (See I Cor. 3.12ff which shows the believers works being tried by fire while Rev. 20.12 shows the lost being judged according to their works.)

There are also some passages that give indication of this truth:

Luke 6.13 “And when it was day, he called [unto him] his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;”

Acts 9.15 Speaks of the special mission God had in mind for Paul.

Scofield mentions in his notes on I Peter 5.13, “... the sovereign act of God whereby certain elect persons are chosen for distinctive service for Him....” (Note one on page 1337 of his new reference edition.)

3. Possibly some thought as to what I am not saying. Based on the above one might think that I believe that a pastor or a missionary is more valuable than a custodian.

In the “spiritual” result of the two’s labors, yes the pastor may be more important, however as to the commitment to their labor the custodian may be more valuable than some pastors – depending on the commitment of the two.

In plain English, I don’t want to be one that tries to figure out how God is going to judge us according to our works – it is His place to judge and I am very glad that He is as smart as He is so that He will know how to do His job!

Our title was “A FAITHFUL SERVANT IS PREPARED”, just how is the servant to be prepared according to this passage?

20-21 Free from false doctrine and vain babblings

Be sure he is a sanctified vessel. One set apart to assure God’s purpose

22 Not submitting to youthful lusts

Calling on the Lord out of a pure heart

23 Avoiding foolish questions

Avoiding strife

24 Gentle

Apt to teach

Patient

25 Meek in teaching the opposition

Did you notice all the verbs in this text – this servant is also to be active – purge, flee, follow, avoid and be.

May we all be so prepared as this.

II Timothy 3.1-7

A FAITHFUL SERVANT IS SEPARATED

“3:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. 6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, 7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

Vs. 3:1 "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come."

Little did Paul know of the twenty-first century! He was speaking of what he saw on the horizon relating to the Roman Empire and its ways with people. He had his own experiences to relate to the subject as well.

I think we can all look forward and tell our children that we too are in perilous times and that further bad times are on the horizon. This doesn't take a prophet, only someone with open eyes and half a mind.

Within the church I personally see perilous times. We have some really false teaching in some of the movements. We have major compromise of life in some of our movements. To see trouble for the church is simply looking at the facts.

We all know that the truth that will encourage in all of this is that Christ said there is nothing that will prevail against the church. This was not only a promise from almighty God but it was also a prophecy based on the decrees of God - don't think we need to worry about the church ultimately - it will survive. It already has had its ups and downs, but it is moving forward as the Lord directs.

Vs. 2 "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 "Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good," 4 "Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;"

SAY WHAT? WOW! Who upset Paul? He was on a roll there. Let's look at those one at a time - I think these are not so nice people.

“Lovers of their own selves:” I think the world and much of the church is in this category. We in America are so self serving we never see the other person. This is why we have all the rudeness, road rage, and problems between people in this country.

As Dr. Phil once ask a person “Who declared you the center of the universe?”

This is the translation of one Greek word - "philautos" - it is translated "own self" "loving oneself" or "too intent on oneself"

I'm stuck on me would be the modern thought. I am so important and I certainly know it, but I'm not sure you do yet so let me tell you.

The word used here is made up of two words – “philos” which means friend or to be friendly and the word “owtos” which means him or themselves. So we would see it as the thought of a friend of oneself.

We have all seen the character on the road that thinks he owns the entire road and that all must get out of his way. The other day I was biking just east of my home and there were two cars sitting at a stop sign. The second in line tooted his horn slightly to which the other man floored his gas to get across the intersection – slammed on his brakes and piled out of his car hollering at the other driver that was at least half a block up the road by then. I was waiting for traffic to clear so I could go

across the street – I crossed as quickly as I could lest he decide I didn't belong in his space either.

“Covetous:” Loving money or avariciousness. This is the same first word as the previous with a different word following – it relates to being friendly with silver. In our day we can't say money because there is little coinage that contains any silver, but the thought is of money or of any silver item – material covetousness might be a good way to put it today.

Loving money often leads to many other problems of materialism. If it goes far enough, you can enter into theft and deception to gain that which you love.

It might be noted that this is not a deep love but a friendliness toward money. Some relate love of money only to the super greedy when this seems to just relate to anyone that has a friendship with money.

Might I step on some toes here? I wonder if a church can be a lover of money – wanting to increase itself, its buildings, its library, and its congregation. I think this is distinctly possible.

Years ago I read an article on institutionalism and the principle that an institution that comes to a point where it is doing all it does to perpetuate itself has become institutional. Indeed, I think many churches are in this boat today. They raise funds and build buildings for the betterment of the institution rather than for the purpose of extending the spiritual kingdom of God.

“boasters:” This word comes from a word that means vagrancy and means empty pretender or as it is translated a boaster.

Sadly we have these in our churches today. In the Midwest, and I am sure all over the country people are so stuck on numbers that they often stretch the imagination with how their church is doing.

A friend asked if I knew anything about a church near us. It was the church we had been attending. The average attendance often left more people playing instruments and on the platform than in the congregation.

I told him and he started to laugh. He had been talking to the pastor at a pastor's get together about his church and the pastor had left the impression that the church was fairly large.

Since it is God that gives the increase, why must man attempt to impress others with their abilities?

Even in the pew, I suspect many tend toward the uplifting of themselves when they have opportunity.

“Proud:” This comes from a word that relates to putting oneself over another. Humm, seems we just saw this in the previous illustration. Bad enough a believer is involved in one sin, but in the process gets a two for one deal.

“Blasphemers:” Railing, reproachful, and slanderous fit the word used here. Usually this is used of the way someone speaks of God. Even the cursing of lost men fall into this category.

Any language that takes away from the correct image of God should be called blasphemous.

In a limited sense wasn't this what the pastor was doing. Detracting from what God was actually doing in the church? The pastor had no need to inflate the image of his church. God had been the increaser - as long as the pastor was doing the best he could, God is doing the rest. If God isn't adding numbers then it would seem that He didn't want to at the time.

The pastor was doing well in his sermons, he was shepherding his flock and he was calling on the lost in his area. The blessing he was missing was in waiting upon the Lord for His increase.

“Disobedient to parents:” This word simply means “not compliant.” The not following of a parent’s instructions.

How sad this is in a believer’s family, but if the parent has done his level best, then the child is making choices for themselves. These choices will be on their head rather than the parent if the parent has done his best before the Lord.

Many are the parent that has been talked down to by people that do not get this point. A person should know the erring child before condemning the parent.

While on deputation I was taken to lunch by an older couple that had lost their son to sin many years before. They were still trying to operate under the guilt a pastor had laid upon them years before. In talking to the folks it was obvious this son had gone his own way knowing he was going against his parent’s wishes as well as God's wishes.

When I explained this truth to them they were so greatly relieved that they both were crying. How dare a church leave a couple thinking that they were responsible for their child’s wrongs when the man was making adult decisions in disobedience to God.

“Unthankful:” This word relates to being ungracious or unpleasing. It is the opposite of forgiving. Not being thankful for what one has or is given.

The exaggerating pastor fits in this category as well. He is not thankful for God using him as God has chosen to use him. I would clarify that this man, as many, probably didn't give a second thought to embellishing stories, but the point is that they ought to give a second thought to it.

I call these fellows “bean counters in clerical clothing” – always counting noses instead of caring for sheep.

“Unholy:” Wicked is another way this word can be translated. Being the opposite of holy, looking at Christ and then forming an image of His opposite would give you the thought of unholy - not a pleasant thought at all.

As the old rock song mentions "the beat goes on," this list just goes on. What an indictment of these people.

“Without natural affection:” Without natural affection and unsociable are suggested usages. However, the word relates to not having natural affection toward a wife, a child, a parent etc. Clarke mentions of the word “Without that affection which parents bear to their young, and which the young bear to their parents. An affection which is common to every class of animals; consequently, men without it are worse than brutes.”

I've been accused of being unsociable - probably the thought that it is not natural to not be sociable since humans are normally sociable. I am not sure this is as true as it used to be in America. Due to many social issues Americans are becoming less sociable all the time.

One of our son's teachers called when he was in grade school to inform me that she wanted our son to be tested for some possible rehabilitation. I asked what his big problem was and I was informed that he was very shy.

I told the teacher I was very shy and that I didn't think either of us needed testing or rehabilitation. I told her I was capable of operating in the world and that I was sure my son would be capable of doing the same.

In my own defense and the multitude of other “un-sociables” shyness is not a fault, but a general state of nature – we function differently in the mind according to doctors.

However, these people are not normal in their affections - this could well relate to homosexuality, or it could relate to the thought of not liking to be honest, moral etc. The natural way of socialized man is to be monogamous and we all know how our country stands on that issue today.

Canada now allows same sex marriage and some of the states are considering it. I understand that about one third of homosexual couples are now raising children – tell me the world and our grandchildren do not have terrible times coming!

It was reported this week that researchers were extracting eggs from aborted babies in the hope of fertilizing them for infertile couples.

Can you imagine a child asking her mother where she came from – well dear a doctor dug around in the remains of an aborted baby and found an egg and made you.

Actually this most likely relates to the spouse that decides they don't love their spouse anymore. This is not a natural state between spouses, so is not right. It would also relate to a child that does not love his folks. It would also relate to the parent that has lost love for their offspring.

“Trucebreakers:” This word relates to not being able to come to agreement or one that won't come under a covenant rather than the implied breaker of a covenant or agreement. In practical application it most likely relates to not desiring to come under a covenant with God - refusing God's terms.

In 2003 we know that Saddam is a trucebreaker – he does not want to come under the rule of the United Nations nor the United States. He also fits another shade of meaning to the term which is this – one that promises anything because they plan on doing nothing.

“False accusers:” This is the Greek word "diabolos" or devil - false accuser. One that is the same in action as the devil - relating to his system of thought or action.

The Devil's action in the fall seems to be the emphasis under which he received this name. He basically proclaimed that God was inferior to himself. He attempts in all that he does to place himself above God.

“Incontinent:” Without self control or intemperate is the meaning of this word. Lacking the desire to or the control of one's self.

If a person is in this list then there may well be external controls upon them that keep them doing wrong.

Some might suggest that it is their sin nature. True it is the natural man, but probably relates to the bent toward self and serving self. The concept of the sin nature tends to relieve the person of believing in any responsibility for personal sin. Self acting for itself is what is responsible for the sin committed. This seems more in keeping with Scripture – this in my mind is the problem rather than a “sin nature” – that thing that drives us to sin - not that far off thing, deep inside that we can't do anything about that many teach.

“Fierce:” Not tame or fierce can be the meaning of this word. Imagine the fury of the wild horse that roams the wilderness, or the wild tiger of Africa - these seem to picture this term - a person that has never been under, nor responded to civil training or God's grace.

Lewis and Clark when they entered the western country ran into Grizzly Bears – bears that were fierce – animals that the Indians warned them about. Lewis and Clark could not imagine an animal to be feared, but when they found out that eight and nine shots would not stop these furry balls, they found that the Indians had a very distinctly true point.

This is someone that you meet on the street that cuts you off, that is totally rude to you, is the one that glares at you for no apparent reason - this is normally called totally depraved - totally without God's influence in their life. This is one that can do nothing else than what is natural to them.

“Despisers of those that are good:” Another way to translate this is one that opposes good or good men. Another way to describe total depravity - completely geared toward self and self fulfillment.

I can't picture a better term for those in our government today that oppose all that is good - those that oppose stopping abortion, those that oppose prayer in the schools, those that oppose the ten commandments on the court room wall, those that oppose anything Godly and support all that is un-Godly.

“Traitors:” The sense of giving forward into the enemies hands may picture this term. This is one that turns you over to the enemy.

This again continues the picture of the previous terms, one that opposes anything good and attempts to deliver any that are good into the hand of evil.

“Heady:” This relates to rash or reckless. Not considering the consequences of the actions taken. One that gives no thought to future ramifications. We could probably roll this thought up into one word for our day – “teenager” – a general statement, not that all teens are rash and reckless, but many are.

“Highminded:” This is in the perfect tense which indicates action that is permanent continuing into the future to a sure end. It is also a passive term which indicates there are outside forces acting upon the person to bring this action. It has the thought of proud, or deceiving others into thinking highly of another. It can relate to wrapping in smoke as to disguise the true identity.

The term belongs with the phrase below - some will be lovers of self in verse two - a long list of description and the next phrase that tells us that they are proud, wrapped in false smoke of righteousness but love pleasure more than God. You can't describe self better than that can you?

The proof of the previous is found in verse five - they have a form of godliness, but have nothing to do with God.

“Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God:” Now, I know that we are speaking of lost unregenerate people but I can't help but relate this phrase to some believers - we do act like the lost at times - how many love the pleasure of staying in bed or going to some pleasurable exercise rather than going to church and showing their love for God on a Sunday morning? Enough said.

Vs. 5 "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

Here we have a clear command to separate from any that profess to believe, yet by their life declare their disbelief.

These look like a believer, may act that way some of the time, but really deny the power of God in their lives and should be avoided.

Further application seems unneeded - but possibly a word as to what does turn away mean. The term can mean shun or avoid thus more than a turn away is needed. It should be a concerted effort to avoid contact with this person.

Some reasons to do so: First you don't want to be contaminated by their false teaching or false living, nor do you want to be seen as being an associate of someone that is denying the God that you serve.

Is there leeway to talk with them about their condition? I would think this would be right and proper, but only if there is some indication fairly quickly in the conversation that they are listening and actually considering what you say.

Paul taught that the avoidance was to bring about a return to the assembly, thus we should be open to reconciliation with one that is gone astray.

Vs. 6 "For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,"

This verse sets a real qualifier on previous comments about talking to these people - they are out to deceive so be careful not to fall into their trap of falsehood.

Creep relates to putting on something, putting on the house as you would a piece of clothing. This is something that is done in the lowest of attention getting. The term for women relates to a "little woman" as one that uses the term with contempt.

The term laden has the thought of heavily laden – overburdened – weighed down with sin would be the thought. These women are led away as an animal is led.

Years ago several times I came home to lunch and found that the Jehovah Witness women of the neighborhood were in my living room. As soon as I opened the door they were on their feet and moving toward the door. They were operating on the truth of this verse – they knew women were the easiest targets for their false doctrine.

It is the church's responsibility to teach women to defend themselves from such. If the church isn't training, it is not protecting.

Vs. 7 "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

Ever know a woman like this - always reading, studying, listening and never quite grasping the truth - always following the whims of those she listens to - constantly gaining information, but little true knowledge.

A sad case indeed - one that takes so much time and effort seeking knowledge from the wrong sources when she could go to the Word and immediately gain the truth she desires.

APPLICATION:

1. So, based on verse one, what perilous times do you see coming for the church? What problems are we going to be facing in the future?

a. Homosexuality and its acceptance within the church. Several denominations already ordain homosexual pastors. The homosexual community would have us believe that the plain statements of the Scripture don't relate anymore. I would guess that some of the large homosexual churches one day want to be part of denominations, conventions, and fellowships.

b. Music in the church is already out of hand within the evangelical community. Nothing seems to be out of line for the church service. We have Christian "Raves" for all practical purposes – they have mosh pits as well as the hard rock music to go with them.

c. For the more conservative churches we will be looking at the thought of ordaining women to the ministry. There is already a real pressure to do so in the less conservative churches.

Christianity Today's website carried an article (3-12-03) relating to a problem that has arisen within the missionary arm of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The group has made a change in their doctrinal statement and has asked all missionaries to sign it. At that particular time ninety-nine percent of the missionaries had ignored the request. I have read that since most have signed but not all.

Some have left the mission due to their refusal to sign. "I can't pledge to act in accordance with something where I have differences of opinion and think it goes against Scripture," Rick Dill told Christianity Today. "Over half the Baptist pastors in China are women. Are we willing to say they're out of God's will?" (Christianity Today April 2003 TIME TO DECIDE by Ken Walker)

Relating to the statement of faith: "First adopted in 1925, the faith statement has become more conservative through three revisions since 1963. The BFM of 1998 included a section saying that wives should "graciously submit" to their husbands. In 2000 the statement added the wording that "the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture" and that the statement was an "instrument of doctrinal accountability." (Christianity Today April 2003 TIME TO DECIDE by Ken Walker)

d. Lack of morality is already a creeping problem in conservative churches. Churches are seeing their

young married couples swapping wives, we see adultery almost accepted within the conservative church. This will most likely increase.

2. When we looked at the word blasphemous I mentioned “Any language that takes away from the correct image of God should be called blasphemous.”

Can you think of situations where this might be true even though we might not really think about it being the case?

a. When evolutionists speak of the billions of years and millions of years since different things lived, are they not really speaking against God and all that He is?

b. Giving indication that God is less than He is would fit this consideration. We heard a missionary that was breaking laws in his country justify his actions with the statement that Christ used half truths. This casts great doubt on the righteousness and veracity of God.

3. We mentioned despisers of all that is good. I saw an interview of one of the Muslim leaders from Great Britain that had been influential in the lives of some of the recent terrorists. They asked him what he wanted in the world. He proclaimed that the world was Gods and that God requires that Muslims reclaim it for him. The interviewer asked what if someone did not want to be a part of a totally Muslim world. The answer was simply that they had to leave – they would leave by death.

We might make mention at this point of those within Christianity that are calling for making this into a Christian world. Many teach that we are to set up God’s kingdom here on earth so that He can come to rule. It would not take a lot of false insight to take this teaching one step further and be just like the Muslim radicals.

Indeed, I suspect this was part of the thinking during the Crusades as well as the Muslim blood shed in centuries past.

A little review:

THEY ARE AGAINST

SELF

OTHERS

GOD

RIGHT

GOOD

AGAINST EVERYTHING

AND EVERYONE!

THREE TYPES OF

PEOPLE

SELF CENTERED ONES

VS. 1-5

SEPARATED ONES

VS. 5

SILLY ONES

VS. 6-7

YOU MUST DECIDE AND ACT!

LAST DAYS

PERILOUS TIMES

(BIG TROUBLE)

LOVERS OF OWN SELVES

COVETOUS

BOASTERS

PROUD

BLASPHEMERS

DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS

UNTHANKFUL

UNHOLY

WITHOUT NATURAL AFFECTION

TRUCE BREAKERS

FALSE ACCUSERS

INCONTINENT

FIERCE

DESPISERS OF THOSE THAT ARE GOOD

TRAITORS

HEADY

HIGHMINDED

LOVERS OF PLEASURES MORE THAN LOVERS OF GOD

HAVING A FORM OF GODLINESS BUT DENYING THE POWER

THEREOF.

FROM SUCH

TURN AWAY!

Separation is not a four-letter word – it is two four-letter words – turn away.

TURNING

REQUIRES A RESULT -

SEPARATION FROM

1. YOU CAN'T RUN WITH THE

CROWD AND NOT BE IDENTIFIED

WITH THE CROWD.

2. YOU CAN'T RUB ELBOWS WITH

THE CROWD AND NOT GET DIRTY

ELBOWS.

YOU WILL BE AFFECTED

A FAITHFUL SERVANT IS

SEPARATED!

WHY?

1. AVOID IDENTIFICATION WITH WRONG.
2. AVOID EFFECT OF THE WRONG UPON
THE SERVANT.
3. AVOID EFFECT OF THE WRONG BEING PASSED
ON TO THE DISCIPLES OF THE SERVANT.
4. AVOID BEING NAMED WITH THE WRONG.
5. AVOID CRITICISM AT THE JUDGMENT SEAT
OF CHRIST.

TRUTH

Always out of reach

WOMEN

1. SILLY
2. SINFUL (laden)
3. SEDUCED (led away)
4. SELFISH (lust)
5. SCHOOLED (learning)

EVER LEARNING

II Timothy 3.8-13

A FAITHFUL SERVANT IS EXAMPLED (Paul was Timothy's example)

“8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. 9 But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all [men], as theirs also was. 10 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, 11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of [them] all the Lord delivered me. 12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. 13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.”

Vs. 8 “Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.”

Even clearer - these are those that reject the truth - they are not seeking, nor following God, thus worthy to be avoided.

Reprobate seems to relate to not coming up to the standard - rejected - not standing the test - castaway. Something, when examined, which is found wanting in some manner.

This in effect is saying the person has been found wanting in truth. There seems to be an evaluation on the part of others in the determination of the person's credibility.

To those that do not want us to judge others - well this seems to be a clear command to “evaluate” the teachings of others and class them according to the truth found within.

Jannes and Jambres were, according to tradition the magicians that withstood Moses before Pharaoh and imitated the miracles. (Ex. 7.11-12, 22; 8.7; 9.11 speaks to the events, but does not name the men involved.) There is nothing in the Bible dictionaries that I checked that would indicate the truth or falsehood of what is assumed by many. (Jannes means “he vexed” and Jambres means “foamy healer”)

The two are named in some of the older traditional sources including the Latin Vulgate translation of the Bible. These names come to us from Tradition, but Paul knowing that tradition of the Jews knew of the men and that the old Jewish teachers had held the two names to be authentic. Since they are in the inspired New Testament, we know the names of the men to be true from God via Paul. Not as if we need tradition to prove it.

A note of further information about these men - the term “corrupt” is a verb and is presented in the perfect tense, thus these are men of corrupt minds - minds that will remain corrupt into the future to a corrupt end - at least this is Paul's “evaluation” of them.

To seek to reconcile them might be a total waste of time and this should be considered before going to them.

Vs. 9 “But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all [men], as theirs also was.”

It seems Paul’s “evaluation” is that these will not go far - they will be shown for what they are — false — fake - worthless.

There have been modern day cultists that seem to grow and prosper, but seldom do they go very far before they are revealed for their falsehood — some by their Messianic bent, others by their suicide and criminal behavior. Some do it themselves, via the outlandish lifestyle, others by their evil treatment of their followers.

We had one such rise up in central Oregon years ago - all eyes were upon him as his following grew and his collection of Rolls Royces grew. He and his cult declined almost as quickly as it had arisen out of the dust of Oregon. He and his followers were shown for the false prophets they were by their actions and their deeds.

The problem with false teachers is that they stir in their falsehood with their Scripture teaching and the general public often is taken in. They see the validity of most of what is said from the Word but they just accept the rest which has no basis in the Word.

Then there are those that think they are preaching truth, think they are following the Lord, yet by their lack of study or lack of thinking blurts out brief comments that have no basis in the Word — result — many will not compare the comment with Scripture and will suck it in as truth.

I think this is most frustrating — to have a good man/woman teaching false items with their offhanded comments that they don’t really think through.

Vs. 10 “But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, 11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of [them all the Lord delivered “

We have a series of personal items then two items that were without Paul. Is he giving us to lists of qualities, or just including the persecutions and afflictions as just a part of who he is? The later seems to be quite consistent.

Now a word from our sponsors, so to speak, Paul has laid out the false prophets, now he wants the people to understand where the truth is coming from.

Paul sets about listing his qualifications to be heard as one with authority.

Doctrine: This is the normal term for teaching, doctrine, or that which is taught. Paul reminds the reader of his teaching - teaching that is based on the revelation of God via the Old Testament as well as personal revelation in the wilderness from Christ Himself.

Now, personally that is enough to lead me to want to listen intently to what he has to offer, yet he continues on with other marks of his authority.

Manner of life: One of the clearest of passages to show that our life before the world and before the church is of utmost importance. Paul called upon this as a basis for others to listen to him, how can we think we should be any different?

If you have questions about how to live your life, go to the epistles and see if you can find out how Paul lived his. He mentions we are to use him as an example. We are also to use Christ as our example - what question can remain in our minds as to how to live, if we look at these two as our example for life?

The question might come to mind - if you were trying to gather support for something you were telling someone, could you call upon your life before them as an example? If not, then possibly you need to seek some changes in your life.

In essence, whether you call yourself as an example when teaching or preaching, you are being examined as such. We are automatically using our life as backing for what we say. If people see our life lacking, then they will also see our teaching and preaching as lacking.

Purpose: What was Paul's purpose? He was always about the preaching of the coming kingdom and bringing people into a proper relationship to Christ. In the final chapter of Acts in the final days of his life, he is still preaching the kingdom (Acts 28.30-31 "30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, 31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.")

Faith: By faith Paul walked across Asia and Europe, in and out of prison preaching and setting up churches. What a testimony to his faith are the churches he planted.

We may not plant many churches, but we can certainly walk by faith and see what God can do. If we don't step out in faith to do the small things for Him there is no way that He will do great things with us.

It is our steps of faith that allow God to use us. It is the lack of steps of faith that limit our usefulness to

Him.

What is really sad is that as we step out for Him, He provides the way and means for anything He requests - we don't have to do anything - only take the step in faith and He does the rest — and yet many do not take that first step for Him.

Longsuffering: I assume that he references his suffering physically primarily - the ship wreck, the beatings, the jailings etc. However there is also the longsuffering for the churches/believers mentally. He took all he was involved with seriously and all this was also a burden to be dealt with.

A brief look at the book of Colossians will show that he was burdened for the people and that he was praying for them. If he was concerned for the Colossians, you can be sure the other churches were on his mind as well.

Charity: The love he had for the people and churches are most likely exhibited in the longsuffering mentioned above. It is the Greek word agape or self-sacrificing love. This is clear in his life - he was willing to suffer for those he reached with the Gospel, indeed, he also suffered for those that rejected his message. He suffered so he could spread the Gospel to all that he found.

Another point of application - suffer for all, both lost and saved if you are going to use Paul as your example.

Patience: This term can be translated steadfastness as well as patient. His steadfastness in ministry is quite plain in the New Testament.

His patience with believers is also evident in his writings. He put up with their following of false teaching and patiently reminded them of good doctrine. He sent workers to the churches to help them straighten out problems that they were having. He could have blasted them, but he taught them as he found their problems.

Persecutions: He endured persecutions at the cities listed, we won't go into that but a quick look at a concordance will give you further information. He suffered all these things and the people knew of what he had been through. His persecution and afflictions are due to his doctrine and his work - part of who he was at that point in his life. This was one of his credentials - he was the real thing - he was withstanding the Devil's wiles for the Lord's sake.

Verse eleven ends with the following "I endured: but out of [them] all the Lord delivered me." He not only endured all that was sent his way, but he realized it was the Lord that delivered him. Thus it must be today when we fall into less than nice times - allow God to deliver you rather than to take things into your own hands.

Vs. 12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Now this is a bold statement of fact - not a hypothesis but his opinion of what is the expected thing. If

you live godly - you will suffer persecution.

That word “will” is a present tense verb as is “live.” A continued life for Christ will result in persecution. The persecution is a future tense, so it may not be immediate, but it will come.

It indicates an act of the will to decide to live for God as well as an active lifestyle following that act of the will.

Some might accidentally live for God now and then, but this is a lifestyle - a person committed to living as close to the word as is possible.

It is of note that the source of the persecution is not really specified. It might be of note to go back and see who it was that persecuted Paul - if memory serves me correctly it was the religious establishment. Yes, Acts 14.19 shows it to have been the religious establishment – the Jews. This is not all that untrue today either.

When we were on deputation, I had a short thought in our prayer letter each time relating to things I was seeing in churches that were counter to Scripture. A friend of mine was in a large church in southern California and the pastor asked him about me. They talked and ultimately the pastor said, “You know Derickson is right but he is a missionary and he doesn’t have the right to say that. That is why he will never be in my church.” Hummm, I thought it was Christ’s church.

I suspect many would agree that the worst times come from the religious establishment that doesn’t like the waves you are making. Yes, persecution will come from without, but much will come from within - a sad commentary indeed upon the establishment.

Few there are that really buck the main stream of their day. Those few that do not conform to the mainstream established religious community of the day seldom are heard of outside of their small personal geographical and ministry areas. Those that conform often are known far and wide.

Vs. 13 “But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.”

This truth is seen in many of the cults. The leader starts out relatively benign, but as power comes their way and they like it, they usually increase their power and their evil bent leads them even deeper and deeper into evil. Several have gone as far as calling for the death of their followers.

Not only does their evil increase, but their followers become further entrenched in the falsehood and evil.

Just how many can you think of that are in this mode of operation today? People that are waxing worse and deceiving others as they go.

There are those that “minister” to homosexuals — they run their churches in an effort to bring them

together and to raise them spiritually. They are continuing to go deeper

APPLICATION:

1. It is of note that Paul laid out such a list of qualifications — qualifications he held which should qualify him as a teacher of truth, yet we have believers today that reject what he taught in the New Testament.

During his campaign for president Jimmy Charter — a Christian and member in good standing of one of the major denominations — was asked what he thought of the apostle Paul's comments relating to women preaching in the church. He smiled and said, "Well that is one place where I would disagree with the apostle Paul."

He isn't the only one; many today relegate items that they don't want to hold as truth to a disagreement with Paul.

My one little observation — they don't disagree with Paul, they disagree with God the author of what Paul taught. I for one would be a little uncomfortable with such a position.

2. It was mentioned that Paul used his own character as reason for others to listen to him. A question to make application of this truth might be good.

If, in your life you listen to a teacher/preacher and find that there are discrepancies between what he teaches and what is going on in his life — should you continue to listen to that man?

We had a young preacher in chapel make a big case that small churches in small towns deserved good preachers. He went to great lengths to make his point throughout his message. He mentioned that he had committed himself to the small church in a small town when he was in school. It was quite a surprise when a few months later he accepted the pastorate in a city rather than in a small town in a fairly large church instead of a small church.

He was still a good preacher, but somehow his preaching seemed a little hollow in light of his previous actions/comments.

When we were in the Midwest, I worked for a man that was involved in a divorce. His wife had gone off into the world to find herself and left him with the bills and the divorce papers.

He requested, before the divorce was final, that the church they were members of bring church discipline upon her to see if the wife might wake up to her error. The church board deliberated right along until after the divorce was final. The remedy of the board was to issue a letter stating that divorce happens and that the couple would continue to work with the youth even though they were no longer together.

Does it seem wise to remain in a church that allows such action or inaction in this case?

3. I have observed something that is of interest to me. We mentioned earlier that persecution often comes from the church establishment. There is also the truth that some of the smaller cults are started by men that were shunned by the church establishment.

I have to wonder if there is a correlation between the two items. I have to wonder if the establishment had taken a little further effort to bring that one back into the norm if the cult would have been averted.

I am not saying that the establishment is always right and proper, but it is the norm for the time.

I personally have been evaluated by more than one “religious establishment” as being outside their parameters. I personally take this as badges of accomplishment for the most part, but I realize how easy it would be for me to get off track either spiritually or doctrinally since I often have no spiritual/doctrinal norm to go by.

When I see that I am outside their parameters, I compare myself to Scripture to see if I need to go back or remain where I am.

I am not speaking ill of the Independent Baptist movement, but I wonder if the independence hasn't been the catalyst for some of those churches going into movements where they don't belong, buying into systems of belief that they normally would have rejected.

If we find ourselves at variance with the church or movement that we are associated with it is serious business to either remove ourselves from or remain with the group. It should be a serious decision to make, not something we do on the spur of the moment.

Let's list some quick principles to guide us in such decision making.

A. Is the item of contention one that normally in the Word brings separation? Is it a personality conflict, is it a philosophy of ministry conflict or is it a real Scriptural item of division.

We said in the previous lesson that we are to turn away those that are living like the world – we are to turn away from those that are deceiving others. Paul also mentions the reality of separating from one that causes division. Is there a Scriptural reason to separate?

B. If you remain will you have opportunity to make a positive difference in the church/group? A long-lasting change.

C. If you leave, what are your alternatives? Do you have a group that you feel comfortable with? Are they Scriptural in nature? Can you make it as an independent?

D. Are you leaving because of hurt feelings? This is not a proper basis for leaving.

E. When you are ignored, ostracized or asked to leave – this may be the time to make a move.

F. If you aren't offered positions when you have made it known to the higher ups that you are looking, it may be time to move on.

4. Separation is not an ugly word, some of our great movements of the past came from separation over doctrinal and practical divisions. It is of interest that now those same movements are the ones condemning people for leaving them J. Separation to them is wrong – now.

Some of the movements were started due to the compromise that they saw in their denominations, but many of them are now in the midst of the same type of compromise and call it progress.

5. Do you know anyone that fits Paul's comments about the bad guys?

People that resist the truth:

People with corrupt minds: I have worked with many that live here. Their mind is always in the gutter; they have no time for spiritual things and seldom have anything good to say. Their lives are centered in filth and vile thinking and activity.

People reprobate concerning the faith:

Indeed, most lost fit this criterion quite well.

6. Do you know anyone that fits any of the characteristics that Paul set forth as his own?

Solid in Doctrine: Quite a number of men come to mind in this area, men that have taught me over the years and ministered to me as pastor.

Good manner of life: When growing up I knew many in my hometown that were good clean-living people. They would assist when needed, they were there to help and care. One stands out amongst all of them. He was the family dentist, and he and my father belonged to the same service club. They weren't the best of friends outside the club, but he was there for my father.

My father had to go to Rochester, MN years ago when the dollars were really tight for the folks and just before they left the dentist handed my father a number of checks all made out for one hundred dollars – signed and ready to be cashed. He told my father that they were his to spend as he had need, but if he did not need them all to return them. They were a gift, not a loan.

Purposeful: Many of the early missionaries were great in this area. They had God's direction toward a path and that was their life's purpose until they were able to accomplish it for their Lord.

Faithful: Again many of the missionaries of the past fill this ticket. Especially Hudson Taylor. He was supporting several hundred missionaries on faith alone. They did not go on deputation, they just went to the field and the Lord supplied their needs through his speaking and reporting of what God had been doing on the field.

Longsuffering:

Charitable:

Patient:

Persecuted:

7. Now for the hard one, do you know anyone in your past that filled all of these characteristics?

I think one man, well his wife as well, were about the closest I've seen to filling this bill. One of the pastors that we knew in our early spiritual walk seems to stand tall in this line of thought.

They were straight on doctrinally, they were quiet in life, they were purposeful in their work for the Lord over the years, they stepped out on faith to begin a new church in a new city, they suffered many things in their work toward a solid church, they showed great love to everyone that they met, they showed great patience in how they dealt with people – even those that opposed them. I don't know that they suffered great persecution or affliction but it wouldn't surprise me to find that they did. I am sure that they did face opposition from not only the Devil but from those that did not want to see this church planted.

I know personally he put up with a lot from a new Christian that had no idea which way was up even though I thought I did. He showed me great love and patience while showing me gently toward the Lord and His work.

In my grade school days my folks sent me to the local barber now and then to get a hair cut. I was always fascinated with the mirrors in the shop. The entire wall had a mirror on both sides of the long narrow shop. You could look into that mirror and see an endless series of reflections of yourself and the walls.

I feel that being an example is like these mirrors. We may only be an example to one person, but that person will probably take on some of your characteristics, thus reflecting your example to them, onto those that might take that person as an example and so on down the line.

I trust if you take nothing else away from this section it is the fact that you are an example whether you try to be or not and that the example you set will most likely be passed on to others, giving you a lot of responsibility before the Lord for how you live before man.

II Timothy 3.14-4.2

A FAITHFUL SERVANT IS WORKED

“14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned [them]; 15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. 4:1 I charge [thee] therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; 2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

Vs. 14 "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned [them]”;

No matter this stuff I've been relating to you, YOU continue in what you know to be right and proper.

I suspect Paul may have had a play on words in mind here – in the previous verse he mentions as the evil continue deeper into their evil and deception, so you continue ever deeper into what you know to be right and true.

There are three items on which Paul builds - "what thou has learned", those things "thou hast been assured of", and "whom thou hast learned." You know truth, you have been assured that it is truth, and you learned it from me! Hold fast to that which you know to be truth!

We all know what we know individually, but are we totally convinced that it is all truth? We all know who has been teaching us but are we totally convinced that they are firmly grounded in the Word.

When I am on some of the internet boards I read long diatribes from people that think they know it all, but have obviously taken in “truth” from men they ought not to have been listening to. Often times these people when confronted with the truth of Scripture will melt into the background to be heard from no more – their “truth” has been found lacking – I trust they are considering what they believe and who it was that taught them.

As a practical application of this verse take some time this week and consider those people that you have listened to in your life. Are they really as well grounded in the Word as you thought they were? Are all those “truths” you soaked up really true? Have you been too accepting of the teaching of others?

Just because those messages/lessons sound good, there may be a lot of falsehood lurking within. In my college days we had a great preacher for our president. We really thought he was the cream of the crop. His chapel messages were always tops! However, years later when going over my notes from his messages, I found little that he said was in a particular passage was actually there. I had always been glad that I had such good notes from this man, but as I went through the notes, I found that there was little worth saving for future use. Not that he was all that unbiblical, but he was seldom preaching from the right passage.

No, I don't think he was teaching falsehood, but he was certainly less than a prepared preacher. For him to dig out the correct passages for his points would have taken longer than it was worth, it would seem.

Vs. 15 "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

That truth is the Scripture - the same Scripture that brought Timothy salvation.

Again, when I was in Bible College I envied those that had grown up in Christian homes. When studying I found that I was on the bottom of the food chain as far as learning went. I had no idea what I was trying to do with assignments. I didn't know the main men of the Bible, I didn't know the flow of Scripture, I didn't know how to live the Christian life – all those things I was lacking many others had in full measure.

I was told by one of the faculty members that I had the lowest Bible knowledge score in the history of the school.

Timothy was raised on the word – a fact I am sure he understood and appreciated.

Vs. 16 "All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"

Paul doesn't leave it there - he further emphasizes the importance of Scripture for the believer - indeed, if we hath not a high regard for Scripture we will be deceived and go into that same evil as the evil men.

All Scripture: We generally apply this phrase to the entirety of the Word as we have it today and rightly so, however Timothy would have understood the phrase differently. He would have thought of the Old Testament specifically and possibly some of the early writings that he had probably seen, however I am not sure he would have recognized Paul's writings as inspired Scripture. I suspect he would have thought of the Old Testament only as inspired at this point in time.

Can you imagine hearing this truth for the first time as Timothy did? The Jews held to the Bible being Gods word, but the specific thought of inspiration seems to be a new concept introduced by Paul and Peter.

This is of note to me in that Paul had a concept of the inspired Word of God long before the church set forth the Canon. He recognized God's work in the setting down of the Old Testament for all of mankind to use in their lives if they only would.

Given by inspiration of God is a concept also pictured in II Peter 1.21 "For the prophecy came not at any time by the will of man but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." I am told that this term "moved" has the thought of being born along as something or someone in a ship.

The word is used in Acts 27.17 of Paul's ship being driven along by the storm. The thought of one in a boat being born along by the wind is the picture. As the writer wrote, he was born along by God. There are a number of thoughts on just what is meant by this idea of inspiration. I would like to just list some of these thoughts for your general knowledge.

"1. DICTATION THEORY: When I consider this theory, I am reminded of the idea of padlocking someone's mouth so that they can say nothing.

"In this line of thinking, they tell us that the Holy Spirit took the message from God and imposed it upon the writer, and that the writer just recorded the words, much as a stenographer would record the words of an employer.

"In short, man opened brain, and God poured it in. It then flowed out through the man's hands. This thought is proven incorrect by the many styles of writing that we have in the Scriptures. The styles fit the life and times of the author. Not only are there different styles but there are different historical backgrounds involved in the scriptures.

"If dictation were the method, then the texts that speak of the author's great love, or remorse over sin would become phony and empty if the person penning the words weren't involved (The Psalmist, Daniel in his prayers, etc.).

"Fundamentalists are accused of holding to this mode of inspiration but most do not. Most hold to verbal, plenary inspiration. There may be a few very strong "sovereignty of God" men that hold to the dictation theory.

"2. PARTIAL INSPIRATION THEORY: This theory allows my mind to imagine the Sunday school teacher getting up to teach the class and presenting an overlay of Scripture. He has marked only three verses in red and mentions that these are the only verses that are inspired in that portion of the Bible, and that is what will be studied for the day. A ridiculous thought I trust?

"This theory originated in answer to the problem that many think that the Bible has errors of history and nature in it. They felt that they had to devise a theory that would allow for those errors. (Heaven forbid that they take the Bible by faith and prove the historian and scientist incorrect - which has been done in most if not all of those "error" passages.)

"This position holds to two authors as we believe, however is limited to only the doctrinal parts of scripture, and not the other areas such as history and science.

"If only the doctrinal parts are inspired then why carry all the uninspired around with us? Let's just rip all that uninspired stuff out and have smaller Bibles.

"The problem arises - which sections are doctrinal and which are not. When Christ turned water into wine - was this section doctrinal or historic? It could be teaching miracles thus doctrinal, or trying to explain science, and not inspired. Who is the judge?

“This view and the concept view are held by New and Young evangelicals. These people are probably Christians, however they are far a field of fundamentalism, and in reading some of their writings they seem more political than spiritual in emphasis.

“3. CONCEPTUAL THEORY: The concept that God wanted to communicate was given to the author and the author was then free to put the concept into his own words and record those words as the Scriptures. This position even allows for the author to make up a story to show the concept. This is the basis for the thought of some that Jonah is "just a story".

“This idea that God gave a concept and the man put it to words, is not a logical theory. How can one being communicate with another being without the words being important? They suggest that Jonah being in a fish, or not being in a fish is not the point. It was a story. It needn't be true - only that the reader know that he was punished for his wrong doing.

“The Jews killed after David's sin of numbering the people is only to show the result of sin. It didn't really happen. No one really died, they suggest.

“Example: I want to communicate something to you. There was a man driving down the road and his car suddenly swerved out of control into a deep lake. The car began to sink. Luckily he was able to climb out of the window. What point was I trying to make? If you guessed that the building is on fire and you should climb out a window, you are right. Wouldn't the phrase "FIRE" have communicated the facts more readily? This theory can only lead to great confusion.

“4. INTUITION THEORY: The men that authored the scriptures were functioning only on insight which they had, and there is no divine author or interference.

“Now, to put that into perspective, let's assume that I have great insight into things, and indeed I feel that I do. In fact I think that I should author a book based on my great intellectual insight. Now, how many of you would like to base your eternal destiny on that book when it is written?

“5. ILLUMINATION THEORY: The men were inspired and given much illumination and they recorded their own thoughts and words as they saw fit.

“6. DYNAMIC THEORY: Some list this as the same as mystic, while others as verbal plenary, and some believe that both the men and words were inspired. God supernaturally inspired the man to write the words.

“7. LIMITED INSPIRATION THEORY: This is the theory held by many Young Evangelicals. The Bible is inerrant in the matter of salvation, but it has errors in the historical and scientific areas. The next logical step is to question the Bible in the matters of salvation. If part is false then how can we determine which is true?

“8. NEOORTHODOX THEORY: The Bible gives witness to God, however it has errors due to the infallibility of its writers.

“9. NATURAL INSPIRATION THEORY: This view would have us believe that God sought out gifted men to write His message to man. Some men are great writers of poetry, some are great artists, some are great politicians and some are just great writers of things that inspire people to do things. The writers of scripture were only men gifted in this area.

“If this theory be true then we can look to the great novels of man such as Giant, the Caine Mutiny or Hawaii for general guides for our lives.

“Indeed, if this theory be true then there are no guides for our lives.

“10. MYSTICAL INSPIRATION THEORY: This idea might be called the mystical zap theory as well. God mysteriously zapped the authors of Scripture and they wrote. God empowered the authors to write. This was some mystical empowerment to record God's Word. I personally don't feel comfortable using the results of a person's "mystical high" to guide and pattern my life. Indeed, I do not want to trust my eternal destiny to such theories.

“11. DEGREES OF INSPIRATION THEORY: Some parts are more inspired than others. When God spoke from the burning bush, or wrote the Ten Commandments - that's really inspired! When Luke records the remembrances of Mary there was much less inspiration involved. If this be true then who is the judge of which is the "really inspired" and which is the "not so inspired?" There would be no basis for truth if this theory were true. Can we sin a little if its not "really inspired" then sin lots when its not so inspired? If this theory was true I'd probably use the not so inspired part of the Scripture for devotions! I wouldn't get so convicted if using less inspired passages.

“12. VERBAL PLENARY INSPIRATION: God in some manner moved the author along as he wrote. The author used his own style of writing, yet the Holy Spirit was moving him along so that the result is God's Word - true and complete. There were a number of methods by which He communicated with man. We have discussed these but will mention them again. Verbal communication, Dreams, Visions, Trances, Theophanies and Written communications.

“The doctrine of inspiration would seem to be directly related to that information which the writer put into writing from verbal communication, however Scripture would also bear out the fact that other forms of communication were also inspired, and were also God's own message.

“This is the only view that allows for differences of style and language. It is the only view that allows God to communicate with man in a logical, real manner.” (MR. D'S NOTES ON THEOLOGY; Salem, OR; 1992)

Inspiration simply means God breathed – He moved the writers along as they wrote.

Profitable for doctrine: This is the usual word for doctrine or learning - that which is taught and learned. Any teaching is actually doctrine, and in the church situation Bible teaching is doctrine. You see doctrine is not a bad thing as some indicate - it is the natural result of the Scriptures.

Reproof: This is a proving of something - proving the wrong action of the one being reproofed would be the thought of the word.

In church discipline you would want to reprove the one in the wrong - confront them with their wrong, with why it is wrong and with why they should abandon their wrong.

Naturally the use of Scripture in this process is a must - a required to make it right and correct.

Correction: This term has the thought of righting a tipped over item - setting back upright.

This runs along the lines of reproof, only probably not quite as strong. It might include items such as incorrect lifestyle or treatment of others.

"Instruction in righteousness:" This instruction most likely works along with the previous items - the correcting of what is wrong via proper teaching of the Word.

Vs. 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

This is the purpose of the Word - the proper preparation of the man of God - preparing him for the GOOD WORKS that His God expects of him.

Good works has fallen into the category of bad words in recent years within many churches. Works are not the "in thing" for the run of the mill believer - he does that at his job and he comes to church to be fed and nurtured - or so goes the logic of things.

God through Paul says the Word is to prepare the believer for proper living and good works - not in the great bye and bye, but now and right now! All believers should produce good works.

I might add that good works don't necessarily need to be within the pastor's control nor within the church, but some of the good works should benefit the church in some manner.

I might also add that church leadership should get to know their people well enough so that they know if there are good works or not in a persons life. If not there should be encouragement toward them, if there are then encouragement in them would be quite appropriate.

Many a pastor assumes that if a person is not active in the good works they want them active in that they are not doing anything.

The Holy Spirit is capable of leading the individual priest into those areas of works that He wants them in without the pastor's intermediary activities. Not to say that the pastor is not to seek works from his people as he feels lead - just that if he is turned down by someone, he should not judge the turn down to be laziness on the part of the parishioner.

4:1 "I charge [thee] therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the

dead at his appearing and his kingdom;"

I charge - sounds like a call to action - something that Timothy should listen to - react to.

This term relates, not only to command, but heavily is related to giving of testimony - God and Christ deserve your attention, might be the thought of it - not just Paul - your friend, your spiritual father, your mentor, but almighty God and His Son Jesus Christ charge you!

Let God and Christ be my witness – I am charging you with this duty.

Not something to be taken lightly would be my suggestion. Listen up is another line of thought - DO IT might even relate - not because I told you to do it, but because God desires it.

Not that Timothy didn't know who Paul was talking about, but just a reminder - this is God the one that is going to judge ALL at his coming. An added emphasis of authority in case Paul's authority wasn't enough.

Now, since we know Timothy surely knew all this and since we know that Timothy would do as he was expected - why would Paul use such emphatic wording?

Might it be that Paul was in need of establishing Timothy's authority as well as his own - authority to teach, to preach to seek change in people's lives?

The "quick" relates to being alive and dead is simply dead - without life, the lost if you will. Literally I think it relates to the general thought of God judging all peoples, both dead and alive in the final day.

Now, not to get theological but the judging will happen at His appearing and His kingdom. This could relate well to either the beginning of the Millennial kingdom or at the end of the Millennium.

Which might be the question? I suspect it is at the end of the earthly kingdom and the beginning of the eternal kingdom - the Great White Throne if you will.

There may be a judging of sorts at the beginning of the Millennium as many believe that only regenerate Jews will enter into this kingdom. However, this is not necessarily done as a judging session - it could well be that the unregenerate lose their lives in the terrible days of the tribulation rather in a judgment.

Vs. 2 "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."

Preach the word: This is a simple charge to do the work listed in the following phrases.

It is also a direct order to preach only the Word of God. There is no need to preach other information from the pulpit of the church. No need for philosophy, no need for travel-logs, no need for the many

and varied side tracks of our day.

We attended a church years ago and the morning service was made up of a woman telling of her trip to China - no real reason for her going to China – such as missions or visiting a church, just went to China and the pastor thought she should report to the congregation.

Preaching the Word will take up every available moment of time and there still will never be enough time to cover the depth and riches of the Word.

"be instant in season, out of season" gives further emphasis to the order - do it in and out of season - all the time, there is no right or wrong time to preach the Word - all the time, preach the Word.

And while you are doing it there are some items that you should use it to do - "reprove" those that have need of it. This word can mean a number of things relating to proving another wrong. It can relate to just reproof, or it can relate to severe confrontation as in cases of outward sin that needs to be confronted outwardly.

There are many that condemn a negative message as being negative and inappropriate - Paul was often negative, Christ was also very negative at times. When sin is involved, you need to get negative and get rid of it.

Purity of the church seems to be a lost concept. Some churches have as much outward sin as secular organizations - what a dishonor to our Lord.

"Rebuke" relates to "censure severely" - tell it like it is - you know - be like your deacons don't want you to be - make waves over sin, tell people what sin is, censure wrong doing - that seems to be the thought of the word.

The next phrase seems to tell you how to do the above - "exhort with all longsuffering" - do it with longsuffering - or patience - or steadfastly - keep up doing it as long as it takes.

The term exhort is the thought of one called along side to council - to help - give guidance might be the idea of it.

This would relate to sin that is not outward, but yet sin must be cared for if the shepherd knows of it. When he finds that a lamb is straying, his duty is to go along side and attempt to guide the sheep back to the flock.

One sin in the life can take a person off track, and usually leads to other sin that will further derail the believer. The sooner someone comes along side to assist the better.

And we see that nasty word "doctrine" that many hate to hear. Oh, how often I hear pastors knocking theology - theology is doctrine, doctrine is simply teaching - they knock that which they are supposed to do.

It also is the basis for any exhortation - exhortation based on less than the Word is not true exhortation and should be avoided.

APPLICATION:

1. I would like to read the passage we have just covered. “14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned [them]; 15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. 4:1 I charge [thee] therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; 2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

Does this sound like the pastors you have been under over the years? Does this sound like the teachers you have been under over the years? I trust that it does.

2. Verse sixteen is probably about the only distinguishable difference between what we call evangelicalism and neo-evangelicalism. Neo-evangelicalism for the most part rejects the normal thought of inspiration and its meaning/significance.

Where we believe that all of the Word is inspired, the neo-evangelical would believe that parts of the Word are inspired. They normally hold to anything relating to salvation as valid and inspired, but other parts of the Word might not be inspired.

There are other differences, but many of the evangelical camp have taken on most of the neo-evangelical camps trappings. Only inspiration holds many evangelical people in the evangelical camp.

For the most part Billy Graham is seen as the prime mover in the neo movement and there are a number of theologians that follow as well - Edward Carnell, Carl Henry, and Bernard Ramm.

Some list Christianity Today and Moody monthly as the movement’s publications, but I am not so sure. Moody was more moderate than the neo camp for many years – having been closed the discussion is kind of a waste of time. Christianity Today is quite evangelical and may lap over into the neo camp, though I have not seen personally, any articles that would show this. (I haven’t read any issues for a number of years.)

I will include one paragraph from a website that gives detail to the thought of inspiration and the neo-evangelical. “(1) Espousal of, or toleration toward, questionable views of Scripture; e.g., most neo-evangelicals, to one degree or another, have scuttled the doctrine of total, complete inerrancy of the Bible (regardless of the lip-service given to it); there is evidence of the acceptance of a conceptual

theory of inspiration, but the neo-evangelical hesitates to accept the total verbal inspiration of the Bible. The issue becomes: "Is the Bible inerrant in all its pronouncements [the conservative fundamental view], or is it merely an inerrant record of some inspired truth [the neo-evangelical view]?" A "popular view of the Bible now promoted" among neo-evangelicals is that "the Bible is inerrant when it is teaching us about God and His redemptive works (that is, when instructing in important doctrinal matters [revelational]), but it may contain errors in other areas about which it speaks [non-revelational matters]" (Lightner, pp. 80-81, 84; Pickering, pp. 132-133)."

From: <http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/Psychology/neoe.htm>

NEO-EVANGELICALISM

1. THE END JUSTIFIES THE MEANS
2. EMPHASIS ON SOCIAL/ECUMENICAL GOSPEL
3. FREEDOM TO ASSOCIATE/DIALOG WITH LIBERALISM
4. BOWS TO SCIENCE WHEN IT QUESTIONS SCRIPTURE
5. CHRIST WILL RETURN, BUT THE WHEN IS NOT IMPORTANT
6. SEEK APPROVAL OF WORLDS INTELLECTUALS (TEND TOWARD INTELLECTUALISM)
7. TOLERANCE OF AND/OR PARTICIPATION WITH ALL TO FURTHER THE GOSPEL
8. TOLERANCE OF A WIDE RANGE OF THEOLOGICAL POSITIONS
9. UNITY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN PURITY IN THE CHURCH
10. INTOLERANCE FOR THOSE THAT DISAGREE
11. PUSH FOR POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT
12. VIEW SCRIPTURE AS RELEVANT TO MORE THAN BELIEVERS

II Timothy 4.3-8

A FAITHFUL SERVANT IS REWARDED

“3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away [their] ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. 5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. 6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished [my] course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

Vs. 3 "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;"

Ah, where the church in general lives today. The congregations do not like to be told of sin lest they know what they do is wrong - ya - right as if they don't know it is wrong - they just don't like to hear it verbalized.

Many leave churches because they don't like what they are hearing - the truth - they find some place where the preacher finds new and interesting ways to skirt the issues of sin and righteousness.

Years ago I knew a man that was totally against divorce - until he met a lady that proved that God wouldn't put that kind of restriction on his happiness - he began teaching many reasons for divorce.

The sad part is that the church did not call him on his error - they most likely liked his way of thinking. He continued on as their pastor. Another pastor had an affair with one of the church women, divorced his wife and married the adulteress that had by then also divorced.

The term “heap” could be translated "accumulate in piles" - stack up that false teaching so you can dig through it and find rationalization for your sin.

“Itching” is a word that means to scratch - to relieve discomfort - to hear something pleasant. Now isn't that a most descriptive word for today's drivel in so many pulpits.

Scratching that makes your discomfort of sin go away. I wonder if the word wasn't chosen by Paul to relate to the fact that many itches return almost immediately and need more scratching - might relate to why false teaching gains such a large audience.

Two Problems: On the one hand we have congregations that call this sort of man to pastor their church, and then there are this sort of man out there waiting to be called.

There is a congregational responsibility to reject such, and there is a school responsibility not to turn out such men. The school has a double responsibility. Their training should never produce this sort of man, yet if they do crank out one, they should take responsibility to declare him for what he is if anyone comes looking for references.

They should never give good reference to a seeker of information, and they should consider not granting a diploma/degree.

When teaching we had a very nice student that was way off in the area of eschatology. It was of great concern to the faculty and ultimately led us to refrain from granting him his diploma. He knew this was coming as the school bylaws required general assent to the school doctrinal statement.

Schools have a responsibility in this area whether they like it or not. We might speak briefly to the idea of ordination as we have it today. This is another process by which this type of man should be weeded out.

Most ordination councils are scheduled the same day as the ordination service - that is wrong - there should be a viewing of the man with time given to consider his worth and value to the church universal. Today it is very nearly a rubber stamp process - if they ask for ordination - make him sweat but give it to him, seems to be the practice.

Vs. 4 "And they shall turn away [their] ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

How sad - to leave that which is true for that which is false, though that is what believers do every day. Isn't that what theistic evolution is - progressive evolution? Fables.

Believers fall into the lies of the cults, of the liberal/false religions and never think about it - the obvious fact might be that they did not realize truth when they held it. Otherwise why would they leave it?

It is significant that they leave sound doctrine for things that satisfy their lust - leaving Godly truth for sensual falsehood.

Might I suggest one further thought - leaving sound doctrine for things that make them feel good? Hate to keep knocking the church, but this is right where many churches are today.

They put in "feel good" programs so that the folks like to come to church to get their feel good for the week fix, no matter whether truth is beheld while they are there or not.

Recently I heard a pastor decrying the current worship climate by mentioning that we often concentrate on people and things rather than the Lord. This right after the get up and greet people time - a PEOPLE oriented THING!

We are in the middle of it and don't even realize it - we want to feel good rather than hear good doctrine that will cleanse our souls. Indeed, many pastors put out drivel thinking it is meat and their people starve.

The next time you hear someone knocking sound doctrine or theology or anything relating to the study of truth, please think of this passage and be sure you find someone with ears that don't itch!

Vs. 5 "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

Watch in all things - to be calm and collected - to be temperate, dispassionate, and circumspect. What a mouthful for the believer to put into his/her life! I am not sure this describes many believers, especially when they come under pressure or are facing trials and tribulations. Circumspect alone is a challenge to most - keeping oneself from hint of wrong - being a shining light in a dark world without putting a shade on your light.

Endure afflictions seems to be part of the believers everyday life - we will suffer persecution if we walk with the Lord. We are told to endure it - put up with it - go on with your life/ministry in a normal manner. Don't let the affliction sway you from your designated ministry.

Not that this is easy to do! Affliction naturally distracts so to not allow it to distract will be a good trick of the conscious decision making skills. We can however if we choose to walk with Christ rather than ourselves - when we lapse into self pity/doubt, we are walking with ourselves.

Some suggest that Timothy was a pastor - he may have been but this verse tells us that Paul saw him as an evangelist. I personally see Timothy as an apostolic emissary - someone that was carrying out the wishes of an apostle. While he was evangelizing, he was setting the church in order.

Make full proof of thy ministry has the thought of carrying through to the end. It has the thought of fully done. Don't do half a job, but do it all.

I personally feel this may relate not only to longevity in time, but also in age. Do it for as long as you are capable/able to do the ministry. Many of the older missionaries have this concept - no retirement, or if they retire some are staying on the field to finish the work. One dear couple we know bought a home on their field so they could stay there all their lives.

They did a survey of time spent in a pastorate by pastors in the 90's and the average was eighteen months. This is not the thought of Paul in this case - there is no way a man can even get to know the people properly in eighteen months - they haven't even settled into the neighborhood in that time.

Most small communities take at least a couple years before the residents will think about accepting you as belonging. We were in one small town four years and the townsfolk were just beginning to accept us as present and breathing. Nothing against them, they were just slow to accept outsiders.

If you are a pastor, please allow five years for a ministry to develop before considering moving on. (I have heard more than one deacon board joking about how short a time pastors spend in a church.)

Vs. 6 "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand."

Paul sensed the end of his life was nearing. I don't think this was any sixth sense, but just a looking at the facts/situation that he was in and realizing the chances of change were slim and that unless God intervened he was going to be executed. He may have had physical problems that he was aware of that weren't looking that good as well.

Since he seems so definite, I would guess that he may have been under sentence of execution, but we don't know for sure.

It is of interest that Paul chose a perfect tense here - he was sure of this in his mind and he was assuming it was coming to pass. He may even have had a revelation from the Lord concerning this, though I would have thought he would have mentioned it.

He uses the term offered, which has the thought of pouring forth of blood - as in martyrdom or sacrifice for God.

I sense a complete calmness of heart in this passage - he is at peace with God and ready to move onto the next part of his life - eternity.

I don't claim to be an expert on this but I have noticed in my own life that the older I get the more at peace I am with moving onto eternity. There are times when the move seems to be quite a good prospect.

At the point when I had a heart attack I was even moved by the thought that the medical team that pulled me through caused me to miss eternity. A fresh realization that God was not ready for this move was received and continuing on in this life was continued.

On the other hand I am not sure how a young person would come to this realization that His time to go is the best - we want to be so involved in this life - I suspect that we - when younger - should work on the concept of being at peace with moving onto the next stage of life - eternity.

How can we help young people prepare – how can we help them understand God's timing for their home-going is best? When they want to live, to gain fortune, to be married, to have children – how can we help them understand God's timing is best.

Just some thoughts:

1. Teach the sovereignty of God.
2. Teach the wisdom, love, and compassion of God.
3. Teach of eternity – help them know that it is better than anything in this life.

4. Teach servanthood – the master is in control.

5. Take time with youth when people die to remind them, indeed, teach them of their own mortality.

This will assist in having this peace and calmness that we are to have as believers - to patiently move through our ministries toward God's end.

Vs. 7 "I have fought a good fight, I have finished [my] course, I have kept the faith:"

What a joy to know you have fought a good fight. Many I have talked to can only hope - wish - that they have done a good job for their Lord. In fact I don't know that I've ever talked to anyone that was confident that they had done all they could for their Lord in this life.

Paul might be our example here - do all that you can do and do it as best you can, then rely on the knowledge that you have done what God has desired of you.

"I have kept the faith" is one that we all should be able to evaluate. We know when we have failed the Lord, so we can know if we have done well.

Again, in this verse, he uses tenses that would indicate he had more than a premonition of his coming death - a knowledge of its coming is highly indicated.

I have included an appendix which contains a further study relating to this text and the believers' feelings toward death – see appendix one.

Vs. 8 "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

It already exists and is awaiting "that day" – what a thought, God has everything ready for us as we approach our transition to eternity!

There are some crowns which the Lord may give to those that serve in a particular manner in this life. We will just take a brief look at these rewards and allow you to do your own study on the subject.

Phil. 4.1 mentions what is usually called the soul winner's crown.

I Thess. 2.19 mentions the crown of rejoicing.

II Tim. 4.8 mentions the crown of righteousness.

James 1.12 mentions the crown of life.

I Pet. 5.4 mentions the crown of glory.

Why wouldn't the rewards be given when we arrive in His presence? God awaits the time when we are in our glorified bodies and all is ready for eternity. Then He will reward His faithful servants in the presence of ALL His people.

With the way believers stack up material blessings upon themselves one must wonder just how much they even look for Christ's appearing, much less "love His appearing" - our minds are to be set on things above, not on things here below.

Actually anticipating death may relate to loving His appearing – He will receive us when we arrive. We should anticipate our home going.

APPLICATION:

1. Paul downs false teaching – just what makes up false teaching?
 - a. Things that are directly against the Word of God. This would include items like teaching that Christ was not God, or that the trinity is false.
 - b. Things that are not Christ-like. It is perfectly okay to drive like a maniac on the road – the Bible doesn't say, “don't drive like a maniac” but it is clear that Christ would not condone someone being obnoxious and dangerous to other drivers.

To teach anything that would move a person to act in anything but a Christ-like manner would be false teaching.

- c. The teaching of a system of theology which is not Biblical. Someone teaching Amillennialism for example – a system that really ignores some of the Scripture while contradicting logic totally. Teaching that the whole Word is not inspired would be false doctrine.
 - d. Anything that would allow a person to feel good about his sin or make him comfortable going into sin would be false teaching as well.

2. “I have fought a good fight” just screams for some further thought!

“Fought” is the Greek word we gain agonize from.

“Good” according to Thayer is “beautiful, handsome, excellent, eminent, choice, surpassing, precious, useful, suitable, commendable, admirable”

The term “fight” is a general term that is translated conflict or fight normally in the Bible – it relates to the assembly for the games.

Paul saw life as a struggle for victory for His Lord, possibly a struggle for mastery of his life. At any rate he classed it as “good” even though he agonized his way through it.

Possibly we ought to be teaching this concept to our students going into the ministry – they need to know that it isn't designed to be a bed of roses – there will be ruff spots.

Possibly we ought to teach this in our churches – even before seminary – seminary and Bible College itself can be a terrible challenge for some.

We need to prepare all our children/teens that life is hard! Most today go forth looking for complete peace and all they want or desire, but find out there are some brick walls that they need to climb over.

I think that warning youth would keep them from the pitfalls that can lead to real mental distress and disappointment. I have talked with many that are just totally frustrated with the boredom of everyday life.

Life is hard – deal with it – hopefully someone has taught you how to deal!

3. Verse three uses the term lust – they will heap because of their lust. This is the same word that is used in two other important passages.

II Pet. 1.4 “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” Note that corruption is in the world through lust. It was man's lust for what he wanted rather than what God wanted that caused this whole mess!

Note that lust of Adam's was there BEFORE Adam fell. It wasn't his lost nature that made him do it.

Rom. 6.11-13 “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 13 Neither yields ye your members [as] instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members [as] instruments of righteousness unto God.”

Now, it looks to me that we have a choice relating to our lust – we either serve it or serve God. Seems simple enough to me. Now let us add in James 1.14-15 “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

It was Adam that was tempted then lusted and brought sin/corruption into the world, we are not to yield ourselves to our lusts, and here we see why – if we allow lust, then we will be tempted, and sin is the result if we continue the decision making process in the same direction! Seems like a simple formula to me, because we decide mentally to lust then we will be tempted, then we may decide mentally to sin.

If you agree with this then where does the “sin nature come into this picture?” It seems like there are conscious decisions of the mind to allow this process to occur and it is clear that we have the ability

not to allow it to occur – so is it really the sin nature that makes us sin as everyone wants us to believe? I don't think so – it is our desire mentally to have what we want rather than what God wants.

II Timothy 4.9-15

A FAITHFUL SERVANT IS EDUCATED

“9 Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: 10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry. 12 And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus. 13 The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring [with thee], and the books, [but] especially the parchments. 14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: 15 Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.”

Vs. 9 "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me:"

Paul enters a personal section here though there is content that is of interest to our lives here as well. Paul requests that Timothy come to him as soon as he can. There seems to be urgency in his request. This urgency may be related to his focus on the end of his race. He evidently wanted Timothy to do something or he wanted to see him for some purpose.

“Diligence” is also translated “endeavor” and it seems to have a thought of haste built in according to Thayer.

“Shortly” can be translated “suddenly” or “quickly,” thus indicating the urgency in Paul’s mind.

I think of the times when I have been terribly busy with ministry and work and an urgent plea came from someone for assistance – there is an immediate note of total frustration, but always you find that you can work it all in and still be there for a friend to assist.

The point – know that these little emergencies do happen and that they always work out so don’t go through the frustration section that does no good except raise your blood pressure.

Vs. 10 "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia”

Here we see that several had left Paul's side and it is likely that he had need of someone to assist him in his writing. Demas had forsaken him for the world in some manner. We just mentioned that our focus must be on the heavenlies rather than on earthly concerns. Demas had failed in that portion of his spiritual life.

Colossians 4.4 mentions that Demas was in prison with Paul or present in the area at the writing of Colossians. He evidently had been a profitable aid to the apostle in the past but somewhere along the line taken a side track that left him lacking in the spiritual area. How sad to see someone do this. (Demas is also mentioned as a coworker of Paul's in Philemon 1.24)

In bible College I had a good friend that purchased a business for all the correct reasons, but became totally sidetracked with the business to the detriment of his studies for the Lord. He finally dropped from school and left the call to the mission field that he had when we first met.

Adam Clarke mentions of Demas "Having preferred Judaism to Christianity; or having loved the Jews, and having sought their welfare in preference to that of the Gentiles." He feels that Demas loved the Jews so much that he became overcome with the need to evangelize them and had left Paul to do this job of evangelism. He calls this his charitable interpretation, and that it would be, if there were any basis for it.

Barnes as well gives a more charitable reason for his leaving than just worldliness. He feels that Demas just wasn't willing to face the possible martyrdom that may have been his if he had remained with the apostle. He wanted to live rather than die for the faith.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown mention "His motive for forsaking Paul seems to have been love of worldly ease, safety, and comforts at home, and disinclination to brave danger with Paul" This seems more in keeping with the text to me.

The others mentioned, Crescens and Titus are not included in the negative comment about Demas. They were most likely sent on errands by the apostle. There is no further information on Crescens, and we know of Titus from the epistle to him.

Vs. 11 "Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry."

It is of note that he has sent two away and requests two others. I suspect he wanted Mark, the cloke and books and that he may have sent Timothy onto other labors. If he had only needed man power he could have asked Mark to bring the items.

Paul is alone except for Luke - the doctor - one that was there most likely for physical ministry. I am sure Luke was capable of other things since we know he was a very good writer (Luke and Acts) but there seemed to be needs not being met, otherwise Paul would not have called others to come along side.

Mark is of interest. He was determined to be unprofitable in some manner by Paul in Acts 14.37 "And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. 38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. 39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; 40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being

recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.”

However, he is mentioned as being with Paul in Colossians and Philemon and here is “profitable” to the apostle.

It would be of interest to know what changed in Mark’s life to change Paul’s mind. We might find some application in this. Don’t count that “no account” out – he or she may change in life to be of great account.

One of my class mates was run out of our high school by the principal. The principal told him the reform school was the only chance he had to make his life worthwhile. My friend left high school and went into the Marines.

During his enlistment he finished his High school education and upon his discharged applied and was accepted at the University of Nebraska. He went on to gain a doctorate and write some books – not all that worthless in reality of time.

Be careful of those bad apples – they may make a great pie if you get rid of the poor spots.

Vs. 12 "And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus. 13 The cloke that I left at Troaswith Carpus, when thou comest, bring [with thee], and the books, [but] especially the parchments."

We gather from this that Paul was cold or possibly just had a real desire for his cloak - ever have a coat you just loved to wear? He also requested books and parchments - we don't know what these were, but they were important to the apostle at this point in life.

Remember, he has just declared that he is about to die or be killed, yet he wants his books – he is still plugging away at his ministry for the benefit of others. He certainly was in the job for the long haul.

Gill and Barnes mention that some older commentators thought that the cloak may have been an outer covering for books or possibly something to put on a table to place books on. One mentions that some thought that it might even have been a lap desk of some sort.

Since the term is only used here in the Bible, we can’t know for sure what the meaning was. Since it is in the same thought with books and parchments it would be logical that it related to the books in some manner but the lexicons only list it as meaning an outer garment which indicates clothing. I would think a personal garment is in mind.

Since he was looking toward his death, I wonder if this relates to his getting his house in order. With Luke present I wonder if the books and parchments might have been for him for future reference as he continued his ministry.

We don’t know what the books and parchments were but there are some good guesses. The books may have related to secular topics or possibly these were writings relating to the Old Testament or maybe

even Old Testament Scripture passages. The parchments could have been some of the New Testament books, or possibly some of the letters from the churches to Paul.

At any rate, it seems Paul wanted to put them to use or get them in order for his death.

Tychicus must have been Timothy's replacement as he was on his way to Ephesus. Timothy was to leave as soon as possible for Rome and pick up the items on the way there.

I would guess this may be the basis some use in large denominations where higher ups make the decisions as to where the lower placed people serve.

Vs. 14. "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: 15 Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words."

We have another not so "right on" Christian mentioned - one that really turned against the apostle and did him evil. What an arrogant man this must have been, to have withstood the teaching of Paul and then to do other evil to him as well.

False teachers MUST be confronted. You can't allow them to continue or they will become effective in corrupting the minds of others. To delay will cost in peoples lives.

APPLICATION:

1. There are some that are condescending toward those that read and/or use books in their ministry. It seems from this passage that there must be a balance to the use of books with the Word. Not that they are equal to the Word as traditionalists believe, but that they can assist in the understanding of the Word.

I personally seldom read outside of my Bible study. This is due, in large, to the fact that I don't like to read (partly due to a learning disability that makes reading difficult and time consuming :-). I also have an aversion to many books cluttering up the mind and getting in the way of the good stuff!

I find commentaries useful AFTER I have studied a text. I use them to gain further information that I might have missed, and also to keep a check on my mind. If I find that I differ greatly with commentaries, I normally go over my information and assure myself that I am right in my conclusions.

2. Some suggest that we should not be negative toward those that do not agree with our view of things. Seems Paul was a little definite in his thinking and his verbalizing of those that disagreed and those that treated him wrongly.

He doesn't seem to be vindictive, but he certainly is seen as warning others of the falsehood.

Any shepherd that does not keep the sheep from the wolves is no shepherd.

Not only does he warn others, but he gives a certain amount of judging to the situation, even unto calling on the Lord to get him – so to speak – “the Lord reward him according to his works:” – not your average basic blessing to be sure.

Demas means “governor of the people” according to Thayer.

Crescens means “growing” – Thayer mentions that some think he was one of the seventy disciples but the book that mentions this is not even recognized as valid by the Roman Catholic Church. He is listed by tradition as the bishop of the churches in Galatia. The Greek Orthodox Church observes him on a yearly basis.

Galatia

Titus means “nurse.”

Dalmatia

Luke means “light giving.”

Mark means “a defense.”

Tychicus means “fateful.” Paul in Titus 3.12 mentions that he is going to send Tychicus or Artemas to Crete to replace Titus. “12 When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter.” Since he is mentioned in II Timothy as being sent to Ephesus we can assume that Artemas was sent to Crete.

Paul mentions him as “a beloved brother and faithful minister” in Eph. 6.21. Again in Col. 4.7-8 he is mentioned as “a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord”

Ephesus

Troas

Carpus means “fruit.”

Alexander means “man defender.” Some identify this man with the Alexander that along with Hymeneus had turned away from the truth in I Tim. 1.19-20 “19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: 20 Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme. 19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: 20 Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.”

II Timothy 4.16-22

A FAITHFUL SERVANT IS STRENGTHENED

“16 At my first answer no man stood with me, but all [men] forsook me: [I pray God] that it may not be laid to their charge. 17 Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and [that] all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. 18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve [me] unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom [be] glory for ever and ever. Amen. 19 Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. 20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick. 21 Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren. 22 The Lord Jesus Christ [be] with thy spirit. Grace [be] with you. Amen.”

Vs. 16 "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all [men] forsook me: [I pray God] that it may not be laid to their charge."

Evidently there was much disagreement with Paul's rebuke of Alexander. Isn't that the way it often turns out - take a stand for God and you stand alone. Not at all uncommon in our own day.

We were in a church where there was a young man living in sin. The pastor approached his board about church discipline and was fought tooth and nail. He finally brought the issue to the congregation and again there was little cooperation. The man's sister stood in the congregational meeting and pleaded with the church to take steps of discipline – finally after another chance to change they did discipline the man.

Paul's forgiving spirit is of great note. He may have had some understanding of why others didn't stand with him even though they should have. We should find forgiveness in our heart for those that wrong us - sometimes seeing the situation from their view point helps.

Vs. 17 "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and [that] all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion."

Paul gives great honor to God for His care through the whole dissatisfying situation. God made the truth known in the end even though the days may have been dark to begin with.

If you have a pastor or mentor near, take some time to ask them about situations like this that they have lived through. It will make for interesting listening on your part. Many men have faced this situation and you might learn much by listening to how they resolved their difficulties.

It is no wonder Paul called his life a “fight” in verse seven.

His mention of the lion may relate to trouble in general from another person but more likely relates to his view of the devil. Peter uses similar terminology in I Peter. 5.8 as well. They both may have been thinking of the Romans feeding Christians to lions, or they may have been thinking of the Old Testament where things that are adversarial are related to a lion. Ps. 10.1-10 speaks of wickedness personified as a lion.

There is also a possible link in that the Devil likes to copy the things of the Lord and Christ is the Lion of Judah. One or all of these may relate to their use of the lion.

Vs. 18 "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve [me] unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom [be] glory for ever and ever. Amen."

It is of note, that even in the nasty situation he found himself in he knew it was from the Lord and he was ready for anything the Lord might desire to bring his way. He knew that God was in total control of his life and death.

Vs. 19 "Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus." 20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick."

This is a verse which seems to stop those that believe in healing today in their tracks. I have mentioned that Paul could not heal this man, he could not heal himself (thorn in the flesh) and he could not heal Timothy for he told him to drink a little wine for his stomach's sake. The fact that in the early part of Paul's life people were being healed by clothes that had been sent out by the apostle yet in his later life it is clear that he no longer had the gift of healing.

On internet boards the Charismatics often cease to post after this thought. One that lived in Washington ventured into the waters and suggested I was quite wrong. He however declined my invitation to come down to the Salem hospital and empty it – I told him I was sure the Statesman Journal would cover the story and I would be proven wrong.

Vs. 21 "Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren."

We have four believers mentioned, but we know little about them other than the meaning of their names. Eubulus means prudent, Pudens means modest, Linus means a net, and Claudia means lame.

We don't know if these are some of those that left him that are re-gathering or possibly these are people that weren't as close to Paul when the trouble came and decided to gather round.

I assume that there was a hurry involved in Paul's request, as well as the weather - it was difficult to travel in some areas during the winter.

Vs. 22 "The Lord Jesus Christ [be] with thy spirit. Grace [be] with you. Amen.

Barnes brings up a note that is of interest. He suggests that this verse is a prayer directed to Christ rather than to the Father or the Holy Spirit. What think ye? Is this the case or not?

Clarke states “This is a prayer addressed to Christ by one of the most eminent of his apostles; another proof of the untruth of the assertion, that prayer is never offered to Christ in the New Testament. He prays that Christ may be with his spirit, enlightening, strengthening, and confirming it to the end.”

Barnes also mentions that the last phrase shows that the letter was addressed to the whole church rather than to Timothy alone. Verse two of chapter one seems to make it personal. I don't know that it is relevant either way. I find it hard to think that Timothy would not have shared the letter with all in the first place since many/most believers in the church would have known Paul personally.

I might mention that this is one of the “errors” that the textual critics point out. One text adds the word “all” in the phrase relating to grace while others do not. There is also a subscription that some texts have and others do not. Neither of these really make a lot of difference in the plain understanding of the text.

Gill states “The Syriac version renders it, "grace be with thee"; but the Greek copies read in the plural, "with you"; which shows that the epistle was designed for the use of the whole church, as well as of Timothy.”

Paul uses the word Grace differently than we do in some cases. Just what does Grace be with you mean? Yes, it is a part of a closing prayer, but what meaning did it have to Timothy when he read it? What blessing is Paul requesting upon his friend and co-worker?

Grace I find is a very general term that relates to something good – the “something” being the very general area of the word. Receiving of money, receiving of material gain, good received by a visit from Paul etc.

It would seem to be a general connotation of Paul wanting good in general to be upon Timothy. Since this is in the Bible, then good from God might be a little more specific.

Robertson ends his comments on the book with a paragraph that might be appropriate to read. “Let us hope that Timothy and Mark reached Paul before winter, before the end came, with the cloak and with the books. Our hero, we may be sure, met the end nobly. He is already more than conqueror in Christ who is by his side and who will welcome him to heaven and give him his crown. Luke, Timothy, Mark will do all that mortal hands can do to cheer the heart of Paul with human comfort. He already had the comfort of Christ in full measure.”

APPLICATION:

1. Have you ever stood alone on an issue in spiritual matters?

How did you feel?

Where did you gain your comfort? Since you are alone, most likely it was the Lord.

How did it affect your later life?

We found ourselves alone in a church situation years ago, and we happened onto a retired pastor and his wife. They became a real strength for me – they encouraged us in the fact that we were very right in our position and that we didn't need to feel that we had failed. I thank the Lord for having this man available for the assistance that he gave.

2. Paul made the statement in verse seventeen “; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and [that] all the Gentiles might hear:”

This ought to be the main thought of every believer. It is not to say that they personally have to go to every person in the world personally, but it does require a commitment of all of us to attempt to get the Gospel out to every person in the world.

This is not being done in our generation. It was not done in the last generation and since there are fewer missionaries going to the field now than in past years, it most likely is not going to be done in the next generation.

Even with the technology of today we are far behind in the job of getting the gospel out. This is due to lack of preaching about missions, a lack of interest in missions and a great lack of going on missions.

3. Take a moment to think back through the studies involved in II Timothy.

a. Is there some real blessing that you have received from the Word during this study?

b. Is there some new truth that you have gained from this study?

c. Is there some truth gained that has made a change in your life?

4. Is there anything in the study that ought to be considered in relation to your church?

Are there things going on that shouldn't be?

Are there things not going on that should be?

How can we bring about changes needed?

APPENDIX

TITLE: A THEOLOGIAN'S LAST WISH

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SCRIPTURE: II Tim 4:9-13

An ancestor of David Livingstone named David Livingstone said in Power magazine in Sept. of 1996 that his philosophy at one time was to live fast, die early and be a good-looking corpse.

"A young news reporter once visited an elderly man on his 99th birthday to interview him about his longevity. The interview over, the reporter said to the elderly man, as he was about to leave 'I hope to see you again, sir, on your 100th birthday.' The old gentleman carefully looked the young reporter over and then said, 'I can't see any reason why you shouldn't, young man, you look healthy enough to me.'" (Pulpit Helps Magazine/may 89)

The widow of the man that started the Winchester rifle company became concerned about dying. She became so concerned that she contacted a spiritist to see what he could tell her. The spiritualist told her that as long as she was working on the house she was in the process of building, she would not die.

She proceeded to build a mansion containing 13 bathrooms, 2000 doors, 47 fireplaces and 10,000 windows. She spent over 5 million dollars on her house in a day when laborers worked for 50 cents a day.

This information came from a devotional I read many years ago. The devotional was to encourage the believer as they face death as opposed to this futile attempt to avoid death on the part of a non believer.

Dr. Grounds ends his devotional with this paragraph. "Because Jesus died for us and rose from the grave, our fear of death can be changed to hope. That happens when we receive Him as our personal Savior. That's the best way to face our inevitable appointment with death."

Even in this paragraph designed to encourage the reader, I am not sure that the author has really done a good job of dispelling the fear of the onslaught of death.

I would like to consider the saint that must look forward to eventual death. Yes, I realize that the Lord may well come before that time in our lives, but as a person ages, that hope becomes more of a hope, but less of a probability.

In this study we will be concentrating on the person that knows death is coming, yet we need to realize that we may not have this privilege. Death can come at anytime. This was seared into my mind one day years ago when I read an account in the newspaper. In 1992 (Oklahoma) a funeral procession was proceeding to the cemetery to bury a man. The car in which the widow and other relatives were riding was hit by a pickup. The widow of the man and other relatives were killed in the crash. Now, who would expect to be killed on the way to a cemetery in a funeral procession? There doesn't seem to be a less likely place to die than that. We know not when we will be called upon to breathe our last.

This study is for the person that has time to contemplate his coming death. Even young people can gain insight into death and how older people react to it from this study.

SETTING OF THE TEXT:

Paul is in prison in Rome for the second time. Most agree that he felt his death was coming in the near future. He mentions in 4.6, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." He could have sensed impending death from the government, or He may have had physical problems that he was knowledgeable of (Dr. Luke was with him). The term offered would indicate he may have been under sentence of death from the Roman government.

From the Daily Bread: "The apostle Paul sat alone in a Roman prison facing his final weeks on earth. The wet cold of the dungeon must have pierced his bones as he penned a letter to his young friend Timothy, urging him to come before winter. (4.21)"

The urging to come before winter probably relates to his feeling that he was soon to die. Winter would probably have meant delay in travel. The fact that the prison was probably cold may relate to the urgency as well. I suspect that the Romans weren't supplying many electric blankets to their prisoners.

The Peoples New Testament states, "Second Timothy, being written after he had again been confined at Rome and shortly before his death. It was somewhere about A.D. 66-68 that his busy career ended, and that he received the crown of martyrdom in Rome .

DETAILS OF THE TEXT:

CLOAK: Paul requests his cloak. The cloak seems to be an outer garment of some sort, surmised by most to be to help him keep warm in the prison.

The specifics of the cloak are not clear. This is the only appearance of this Greek term (phelones). Easton 's dictionary has some detail relating to the garment. "was the Roman paenula, a thick upper garment used chiefly in traveling as a protection from the weather. Some, however, have supposed that what Paul meant was a traveling-bag. In the Syriac version the word used means a bookcase." This is also mentioned by Chrysostom.

Vine suggests that it is an outer garment for protection against the weather, but he also suggests it may have been a light dust cover or carrying case for the books and parchments.

My thought is that if a man is looking toward death he probably wouldn't be that concerned about protecting the books. Also if there was a cover for his books and parchments anyone that had known him would know that they were carried that way and would naturally bring it with the books - there would be no need to mention it separately.

CARPUS: Carpus may have been Paul's host when at Troas . He is mentioned no other time in the Bible. His name means fruit.

TROAS : " Troas a city on the coast of Mysia in the north-west of Asia Minor , " (Easton 's dictionary)
The city was named after the destroyed city of Troy which was a few miles north of Troas .

Now, I want to take a side trail here for a moment. Here we sit nearing the turn of the millennium, with computers, modems, satellite dishes, automated sewing machines, cars that are being developed to drive themselves and we read of the apostle Paul when he asks for books and parchments.

I don't think that we really comprehend the differences between Paul and Us.

As I was preparing this sermon, I started my computer, I double clicked on the Bible icon and my Bible opened up. Within a couple of hours I had checked two or three Bible dictionaries, a couple lexicons, two or three commentaries, an illustration database I have developed, a couple of encyclopedias AND I HAVEN'T GOTTEN OUT OF MY CHAIR OR LEFT MY COMPUTER, NOR HAVE I TURNED A PAGE. Not only had I done all of this I had the bare bones and most of the thoughts to fully develop this sermon.

Now, let's imagine Paul preparing for a sermon. He would see if he could find something to write with, something to write on, then hope that the light was bright enough to see. He would probably have to get up and move around a little to warm up enough to get to work. I do that in the winter myself - some things never change. Then he would sit down and recollect the best he could what Isaiah or Jeremiah had said, then begin to develop thoughts for his message. No Bible dictionaries, no lexicons (of course he knew the original languages so he had one advantage over me), no illustration listings, no encyclopedias, and worst of all he would have to sit there and try to write with those miserable quills or whatever they used. And finally he would only set down the bare elements because he only had two pieces of parchment.

Can you now get the picture of why he wanted his parchments and books? No matter what they were, they were very important to him for his life's work.

BOOKS: biblion = normally translated book = probably a scroll - written document. What the books were is purely speculation, yet some suggestions might give some idea of their content. Robert's Word Pictures mentions the possibility that they were his own writings or possibly just books that he liked to read and use. He also mentions the possibilities that they contained the writings of Luke or others relating to the words of Christ (Lu 1.1-4).

PARCHMENTS: membrana = only occurrence = made of dressed skins. The parchment material was more expensive than papyrus, so would have contained something more important probably. The usual thought is that they were copies of portions of the Old Testament.

Easton 's mentions of pergamum , "Parchment was first made here, and was called by the Greeks pergamene, from the name of the city."

Vine mentions, "The writing material was prepared from the skin of the sheep or goat. The skins were first soaked in lime for the purpose of removing the hair, and then shaved, washed, dried, stretched and ground or smoothed with fine chalk or lime and pumice-stone. The finest kind is called vellum, and is made from the skins of calves or kids."

It has been suggested that the parchments were Old Testament portions. The fact that II Timothy is lacking in Old Testament quotes when compared to Paul's other writings may suggest that this is true.

In this study I would like to look at the following items:

- I. THE DIGNITY OF THE BELIEVER FACING DEATH
- II. THE CONSISTENCY OF THE BELIEVER FACING DEATH
- III. THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE BELIEVER FACING DEATH

I. THE DIGNITY OF THE BELIEVER FACING DEATH: Attachment to material items at the ending of ones life is not uncommon as we know if we know anything of dying people. This is not unnatural I don't believe. The material things that we have acquired are things that we like and have been with for many years. Our homes actually depict a little bit about who we are and we feel VERY VERY COMFORTABLE at home. I do not think this is abnormal.

Now, if you are like one of Faith's relatives that wanted an asbestos coffin so he could take it with him, I think you are a little too attached to your material possessions.

In the apostle Paul it is of great interest to me to see what was important to him. He was a man that took everything that he had in this world with him wherever he went, yet he is interested in a cloak and some writings.

My brother had very little in the last years of his life. He moved a couple of times and did it in a sea bag, duffle bag and two cardboard boxes. HE WAS HAPPY! Basically all he had was clothes, a small tape player, a nice camera with lots of pictures and a Bible.

By way of application from Paul's desires, can we not suggest that the people we know facing death should be given as much of their familiar - material surroundings as possible? Most people that I have known that were dying wanted to be at home as much as possible. This is normal and we should do what we can to accommodate them. It is not possible in some cases and we should not feel guilty for not doing what was impossible!

I may upset some with the following statement, but I feel that it is true and I feel that many believers are living with a false image of facing death.

The normal opinion is usually that the believer is to face death with poise, confidence, peace and all other items that one can imagine when thinking of a tranquil transition from life to death.

This concept is normally based on the fact that the believer is to be looking forward to being with the Lord, that the believer is to live in the fruit of the Spirit one of which is peace, and that the believer is to submit to the Will of the Father.

NOW! All of these things are true and I accept these, yet there is also a built in aspect to our nature to oppose change, to oppose leaving people we love, oppose leaving responsibilities undone and oppose quitting, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY FACING THINGS WE'VE NEVER FACED BEFORE - YOU KNOW LIKE DYING!

For Paul to have requested books and parchments as well as personal company, one must assume that he was not ready to die. He had things he wanted to do, things he wanted to read and things he wanted to write. The very fact that he wrote II Timothy shows that he was continuing on doing as he always had done.

To die in complete peace is fine for some people, but don't be entirely surprised if you run across a believer that struggles to hang onto life as hard as they can. It is not that they are unspiritual, it is not that they are refusing God's will, and it is not that they are inferior.

One other aspect of this is the fact that death is an enemy according to Paul. In I Cor. 15.26 he mentions, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." This is in the context of Christ putting all things to a final conclusion at the end of this age. Death is an enemy even unto the end of time - God will have to bring it to its knees before the eternal state can begin.

Not all people can face an enemy with peace and tranquility. What soldier would be held in high esteem if he lay down peacefully in front of his enemy to be killed?

II. THE CONSISTENCY OF THE BELIEVER FACING DEATH: A further application is the fact that believers follow through with their beliefs - even unto the end. If those beliefs are real and true to the believer, then the coming death of the person will not change any aspect of the life of belief.

Matthew Henry follows this thought when he states, "As this was a private epistle written to St. Paul's most intimate friend, under the miseries of imprisonment, and in the near prospect of death, it shows the temper and character of the apostle, and contains convincing proofs that he sincerely believed the doctrines he preached."

A number of years ago when my wife's father was terminally ill, I was interested in observing his reaction to his situation. In life he had become somewhat cold to spiritual things for many reasons. Upon hearing that he was in serious condition his spiritual eyes were readjusted almost immediately. He talked many times of the different people that he had not taken time to witness to.

He fought death. He tried every option to beat the cancer. His time fighting cancer was also a time of fighting his enemy, the devil. He took every opportunity to talk to people about the spiritual lives. He had opportunity to witness to people as they came to visit him in the hospital.

Faith and I were considering going with a mission in Colorado that he was very interested in. As we discussed it one evening Paul told me, "Stan if you and Faith decide to go with the mission Esther and I will support you X\$ per month. He had every intention of continuing to live for some time, even though he knew that wasn't probable.

His reaction at near death was to hold onto life - personally I think part of that drive was the hope of being able to tell others of His Lord.

As the apostle Paul continued on with the ministry as is shown by his desire for Mark to come and to have the books and parchments to assist him, so we as we face death should desire to continue on serving God in our lives until the end is met.

III. THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE BELIEVER FACING DEATH: There seems a distinct possibility that some of these books were just plain books of interest to Paul - indeed, I would assume from his life they would be theological in nature. The Daily Bread had a quote that I would like to share with you. "A famous French author has written, 'The wise men who have written before our time are travelers who have preceded us in the paths of misfortune, and who reach out to us their hands to invite us to join their society when all others have abandoned us. A good book is a good friend.'"

I personally feel that the men that have written in the past often have a lot to say to us in this time. Yes, they are out of date at times, yet they are right on target at times.

I have been greatly encouraged to see that there were many in the past that felt the same frustrations with their age as I have suffered with mine. They see the worldliness and sin around them and wonder if it can get worse.

Yep, it can and most assuredly has.

Yep, it can and most likely will.

It is most likely that some of these items were copies of the Scriptures as well. The longing of the apostle for these is probably a universal desire of believers as they face the final enemy - death.

When discouraged with situation or life most believers will turn to the Word for some note of encouragement. I personally quite often turn to the Psalms and am encouraged by the positive aspect of what I have read or the knowledge that David or one of the other Psalmists have faced the same trouble I am then facing.

The believer can find encouragement, the believer can find strength and the believer can find guidance in the Word as they face death.

Even when a person is alone, there is a closeness that can be gained by reading the Word. It brings the believer closer to the Lord and supplies spiritual nourishment and encouragement.

Just a bit of a side light - this is one of the purposes of the church - encouraging those that are in need of encouragement.

III. SO WHAT?

In my theology classes I often would lecture and then stop, pause, and say SO WHAT? What can we use all that knowledge for.

There is a fourth point this morning that I would like to add by way of application.

When you find you are going to die, know that it is God's will and that you are satisfying His will in the most complete way.

This quote is from Spurgeon's devotional Morning and Evening.

The devotional is based on John 17.24 "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am."

"Death! why dost thou touch the tree beneath whose spreading branches weariness hath rest? Why dost thou snatch away the excellent of the earth, in whom is all our delight? If thou must use thine axe, use it upon the trees which yield no fruit; thou mightst be thanked then. But why wilt thou fell the goodly cedars of Lebanon? O stay thine axe, and spare the righteous. But no, it must not be; death smites the goodliest of our friends; the most generous, the most prayerful, the most holy, the most devoted must die. And why? It is through Jesus' prevailing prayer -- 'Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.' It is that which bears them on eagle's wings to heaven. Every time a believer mounts from this earth to paradise, it is an answer to Christ's prayer. A good old divine remarks, 'Many times Jesus and His people pull against one another in prayer. You bend your knee in prayer and say, 'Father, I will that Thy saints be with me where I am;' Christ says, 'Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.'" Thus the disciple is at cross purposes with his Lord. The soul cannot be in both places: the beloved one cannot be with Christ and with you too. Now, which pleader shall win the day? If you had your choice; if the King should step from His throne, and say, 'Here are two supplicants praying in opposition to one another, which shall be answered?' Oh! I am sure, though it were agony, you would start from your feet, and say, 'Jesus, not my will, but Thine be done.' You would give up your prayer for your loved one's life, if you could realize the thought that Christ is praying in the opposite direction -- 'Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.' Lord, Thou shalt have them. By faith we let them go."

Spurgeon said, "By faith we let them go."

I think we could also say, "By faith be ready to go."

Enjoy your material surrounding, but continue on serving Him as best you can until the end.