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SENIOR PASTOR

NOVEMBER
2019

COMMUNITY

IT'S TIME



ADULT CONNECT
CLASS CURRICULUM



The purpose of First Baptist Church of Fort Worth is to **introduce** people into a loving relationship with Jesus, **instruct** them in spiritual growth through God's Word, **inspire** them to serve for God's kingdom, and **incorporate** them in authentic worship to glorify God.



Dear FBC family and friends,

We can glean much from Paul's letter to Timothy. He gives Timothy clear instructions to pursue righteousness. Often times, pursuing righteousness gets lost in the moments of our busyness when we have a full schedule and rush around just simply to get things done. It is important to pause spend time in God's Word and examine our lives and schedules to ensure that what we pursue pleases the Lord.

As a reminder, the layout of this Curriculum begins with a 7-day approach for both the teacher and the members to get the most from each study. We also acknowledge that teachers may have their own methods for preparing the lessons and we encourage them to prepare in the way that makes them most effective in presenting God's Word and the weekly lesson. We also encourage each teacher and member to use the suggested 7-day approach for their own personal study and encouragement.

In the message on October 20, I put forth a challenge to memorize Psalm 19:14: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer." This is the foundation of pursuing righteousness. In doing so, we will shine for Jesus.

-Blessings
Pastor Don



Suggested Plan for Using this Bible Study Guide Effectively

Introduce

Day 1: Read and meditate on the Scripture, asking God to guide you throughout the week as you study His Word and allowing Him to speak to you through the Spirit. Read the **INTRODUCE** portion of the lesson commentary.

Instruct

Day 2: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and read the **INSTRUCT** portion of the lesson commentary. Concentrate on memorizing the focal verse for that particular week.

Day 3: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and answer the focal questions in the **INSTRUCT** portion of the lesson commentary.

Inspire

Day 4: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and begin thinking about tangible ways you can incorporate the principles you learned in your daily life. Read the **INSPIRE** portion of the lesson commentary.

Incorporate

Day 5: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and apply the theological principle that you learned from this week in a tangible way. Use the **INCORPORATE** portion of the lesson commentary to guide you.

Day 6: Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and in the journal section describe how God allowed you to apply this passage in a real and tangible way this week.

Day 7: Review the Scripture and share with others in your Connect Class on Sunday morning at 9:30am. Be ready to share your experience about how God allowed you to apply the lesson for that week.

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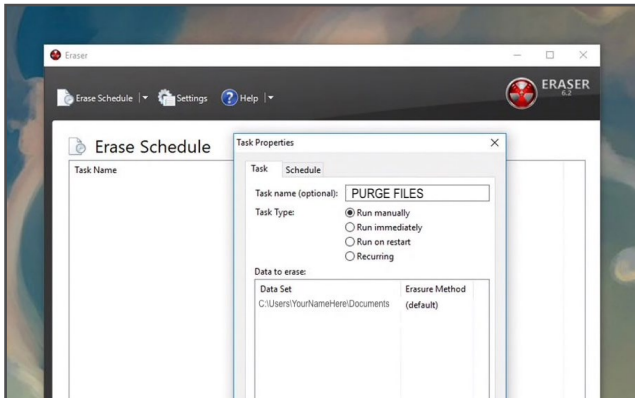
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November 3, 2019



Pursue Righteousness

2 Timothy 2:20-26

Focal Verse:

"Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

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2 Timothy 2:22

Introduce

As Thanksgiving Day quickly approached, Sarah A. Kleen had already spent weeks preparing, but she had recently begun to intensify her preparations because she expected many family members to come to her house and only three weeks remained. She wanted everything spotless and perfect, so she had made a detailed checklist of things she must clean and organize before people arrived. In the kitchen, she began by washing and storing everything neatly in the cabinets. She didn't want to take the chance that a family member would pull something from her cabinet covered in dust or find something that the dishwasher hadn't thoroughly cleaned or on which it had left soap residue. She washed everything by hand!

While washing all the dishes, utensils, and cookware, she scrubbed the cabinets and re-lined them with shelf-liner paper. Then, she moved all the big appliances and swept under them to remove any dirt and thoroughly mopped the tiles until they brilliantly shined again.

After replacing the appliances, she washed the counters, backsplash, and each tile with disinfectant—repeating the same process with the tile floor in both the kitchen



and living room. She even took a toothbrush, detailing the grout in between each tile delicately and thoroughly until the white finish returned to the otherwise dingy look. She repeated this process in every room of her house, but as she continued cleaning she kept noticing other things that needed her attention. Sarah began to realize that this would become a never-ending process. Overall, the house would be presentable to her guest, but something would always exist on which she would need to work. As homeowners, we all can identify with Sarah because every week we find something else that we must do; some project which desperately needs our attention. The list never ends! Most of us can also identify with Sarah in that we want to prepare properly for when someone visits. We want to clean everything that they will see or use, so that we will feel pride and honor as the owner or caretaker of the house.

In the same way, the Lord prepares us to be vessels that bring honor to Him by

Introduce

cleansing us and restoring us. Paul writes, “Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work” (2 Tim 2:21). God cleanses us not simply for show, but so we can be useful to do good works as He leads us. He wants to use us! We’re not some decorative China set apart in a display case to look good and never be used; we have a purpose and function in Christ. Because God wants to use us, we must represent His character; therefore, let us pursue righteousness and allow God to make us into a vessel He can use for His holy service.

Key
Question

Why is it important to pursue righteousness so Christ can use us in His work?

2 Timothy 2:20-21

PREPARE YOURSELF FOR GOOD WORKS:

In order to have a strong structure that won't collapse under the stress of the elements, a building must have a strong foundation which can withstand anything hurled at it. Paul, therefore, expresses that those who belong to the Lord have a "solid foundation" which "stands" because they will follow the Spirit and not be swept away by doctrinal error or habitual sinful practices (2:19). With this declaration, we ended our study in October, but Paul continues the same theme in the passage we'll study this week. He explains that two types of people exist in the church: there are those who know Scripture, abide by its principles, and seek to **honor** the Lord through their holy lives and service; conversely, there are those who don't know Scripture, or at least don't practice its principles, and bring **dishonor** to the Lord because of the inconsistency and immaturity in their walk.

For this reason, Paul uses an illustration of a **great house** to describe the church or body of Christ (v. 20). In that **house**, he identifies two groups: **vessels** made from **gold and silver** and those made from **wood and clay**. Before we continue, we can't let ourselves become distracted by the composition of these **vessels**; Paul isn't making the point that some are valuable to God while others are not! On the contrary, he uses the composition of these **vessels** to describe how **some** bring **honor** whereas **some** bring **dishonor** upon the Lord according to how they behave and especially the doctrine that they teach or believe. As believers, we must always consciously and purposefully strive to bring **honor** to the Lord in everything that we do! Therefore, we must prepare ourselves to do **good works** in the Lord.

What brings honor to the Lord? What brings dishonor to the Lord?

Question
1

Paul leaves no doubt and clearly states the purpose of this metaphor: God desires to make every believer into a vessel whom He can use for **honor** in service. To be **useful to the Master** and **prepared for every good work**, we must be cleansed and **sanctified** (v. 21). In the immediate context, this cleansing refers to practicing the truth and not falling into doctrinal error like some in Ephesus had done (see [2:14-18](#)). However, in the larger biblical context, to **honor** the Lord means that we must be

Instruct

cleansed from sin and any unholy practice. To be **useful**, therefore, we must abstain



from impure thoughts, tainted motives, selfish actions, and immoral practices as a whole. When we participate in such activities, we become like a dirty dish, unfit for use! Probably, most of us check the dishes and silverware at a restaurant before we use them. Most likely, none of us would scrape off some contamination and use the implement; we would send it back for a clean set! So, it is with God

and us; He wants us cleansed so He can use us!

What happens when we attempt to do “good works” for the Lord, but don’t live a holy and righteous life?

Question
2

Ultimately, God does the cleansing and restoration in our lives through Christ and His sacrifice. However, we must also intentionally participate in the cleansing ourselves. Thus, Paul says that **if anyone cleanses himself**, he can become an instrument of **honor** that God can use. Elsewhere in Scripture, we know that God sends His Holy Spirit to guide us and shape us; without Him, we cannot please the Lord ([Rom 8:1-10](#)). Yet, we must take responsibility and seek to participate in that cleansing as well. We don’t simply sit passively, but we actively take steps to cleanse ourselves. We must rid ourselves of worldly influences, turn to the Lord to overcome temptation, and surround ourselves with righteous examples to imitate. Above all, we must actively seek the Lord daily in our lives!

Specifically, how do we participate in cleansing once we have a relationship with Christ?

Question
3

God wants to sanctify us, so we can be used by Him to perform **good works**. Sanctification is a life-long process where God molds us into His image. We often describe the process of sanctification as being set apart or made holy, but this represents *only half* of the definition. Sanctification actually means to be set apart

and made holy *for a purpose!* God uses us in ministry; He doesn't simply display us for our good looks. What good does it do to wash our dishes and never use them? They would really have no purpose or function if we did. They may look nice in a display case, but they aren't being used for the purpose for which they were created in the first place. Likewise, God created us to do **good works** in Him (see [Eph 2:10](#)). God created us to serve Him by helping others and pointing them into a relationship with Him. Consequently, to function as God created us, we must continually seek to remain unstained from all unrighteousness and do **good works** which bring **honor** and glory to Him.

For what good works has God specifically prepared us a church and as individuals?

Question
4

When we think about doing **good works**, we often view the act of serving as the most-important aspect. Even though faithfully performing acts of service is important, the character we display while we serve is as equally, if not even more, significant! Anyone can do something nice or **good** for someone from time to time according to the world's standards; they may even have a sincere heart and the right motives for their actions. What should distinguish believers from non-believers who do **good** things, however, should be our character. We should reflect the holy character of our Savior. Reflecting Christ's character takes a conscious effort on our part to align ourselves with His will and rid ourselves of fleshly desires, so that we can stand in righteous fellowship with the Lord and bring **honor** to Him. In this way, the process of sanctification produces good character that allows us to fulfill our God-given purpose of doing **good works** on His behalf, so that others around us may see and know that He is the Lord!



Why is our character an important aspect of our service to the Lord?

Question
5

2 Timothy 2:22-23

PURSUE RIGHTEOUSNESS WITH A PURE HEART:

Next, Paul details two specific ways in which we ought to partner with the Lord to be cleansed for effective service, so that we can function as a **vessel of honor useful** to Him. First, we must **flee youthful lusts** (v. 22). In this context, the term **lusts** does not primarily refer to physical sensuality—even though elsewhere Scripture does command us to flee every kind of sexual impurity (see [1 Cor 6:18](#)). Instead, **youthful lusts** refer to the tendency for someone to engage in **disputes** without knowing the full facts and failing to take time to assess the situation before responding (see verses [23-25](#)). In other words, they have a quick temper and jump to conclusions. Certainly, we must refrain from participating in any kind of immoral activity, but in particular we must avoid arrogance, ignorance, and impetuosity. For this reason, James advises us to “be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath” ([Jas 1:19](#)).

Many people, not just youth, fail to develop a mature perspective of life through the Holy Spirit. People tend to be driven primarily by emotion which can change on a whim depending upon how they feel on that particular day. Therefore, they often live for the present experience, rather than plan for the future. They may even throw caution to the wind and disregard logic and wisdom from God’s Word. Moreover, they tend to lack patience, so they hop from experience to experience by trial and error in search of finding something that will work for them. They don’t take time to evaluate the cost, assess the consequences, or even think about alternatives; they simply live for the moment. As a result, they base all their behavior upon their self-perceived needs and their own skewed perspective. For this reason, Paul explicitly warns against such a selfish perspective which lacks self-control because it can generate much strife in relationships when people only think about themselves.

In what ways do people lack patience and self-control when they live for the experience or the moment?

Question
6

Jesus’ parable about the prodigal son displays this very kind of youthful exuberance that Paul prohibits in this letter to Timothy ([Luke 15:11-32](#)). In the story, the son demands his inheritance, goes into the world to have a good time, and jumps from

experience to experience until he finds himself broke and eating pig slop. Fortunately, however, we have a heavenly Father who will restore us and take us back when we return to Him! Yet, many people still live like the prodigal son today! They seek certain experiences or crave certain possessions only to find out that the promise of satisfaction was indeed empty in the end. They have a self-centered perspective through which they view the world which always leads to disappointment because they have failed to calculate the costs of their actions and fleshly desires; consequently, this often brings them into conflict with the ones trying to help them.



How does impetuosity or jumping to conclusions cause conflict with others?

Question
7

In addition, many people who engage in **youthful lusts** are reactionary; they don't take time to have a measured and calculated response. In many cases, they may even think that they have all the facts and see themselves as experts (i.e. a know-it-all), so they have the right to respond immediately—even if carelessly. We live in an era of instantaneous information; because we can get bits and pieces of information as it arrives, we think we have the right to comment before we hear all the facts. Today, people will post online, send texts or e-mails, or communicate in other ways without having the full story; they simply react. They don't take time to calculate their response and perceive how their words may affect others! As believers, we need to take time to prepare our response based on Scripture; we need to measure our response through prayer by asking the Lord to guide us. We must allow Him to direct how and in what way we should respond—especially if the situation has the potential to become contentious.

Why should we never react to a situation, but always take time to seek the Lord before we respond?

Question
8

Instruct

Rather than acting impatiently, arrogantly, or selfishly according to **youthful lusts**, Paul instructs Timothy to pursue **righteousness, faith, love, and peace** along **with those who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart**. As we have already learned, our character should reflect Christ. Paul brings four traits that we ought to display in our



lives to the forefront here in verse 22. To **pursue righteousness** means that we act justly with integrity in every situation, seeking to honor the Lord by living holy lives. The pursuit of **faith** involves two primary aspects: 1) that we trust in Christ Jesus and **pursue** a relationship with Him to the exclusion of all other forms of idolatry and 2) that we faithfully adhere to His Word

by interpreting it correctly, teaching the right doctrine, and applying its principles. Moreover, everything we do ought to emanate from our **love** for Christ through which we become a conduit of His **love** by sharing it with others—whether our family, our friends, our neighbors, or even our enemies! Lastly, we ought to **pursue peace** through a gentle, patient, and humble spirit which seeks to do right unto others, but also to teach them and correct them when they err (see [verses 24-25](#)).

When Paul says that we ought to **pursue** these four traits **with those who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart**, he focuses on the importance of the community—those who have a genuine relationship with Christ (see [2 Tim 2:19](#)). God has placed us in a community to grow together; we need each other! We need to spur one another toward maturity in Christ by exhorting each other lovingly, holding one another accountable to **pursue righteousness** always, and encouraging one another to remain faithful to the Lord and His purposes. Before He even created the world, God knew the propensity for man to stumble and sin when left on his own, so He placed us in a community where we could help one other through the Spirit's leadership. In the community, we can find maturing believers who share the same purpose and seek to fulfill the same goal: to glorify Christ in everything.

Why do we need the church to help us mature in our faith and pursue righteousness?

Question
9

Second, Paul explains that Timothy should remain pure by abstaining from **foolish and ignorant disputes** because they cause **strife** (v. 23). This command doesn't mean that we should ignore grievous doctrinal error or sinful practices—for Paul has already charged Timothy with the task of refuting false teaching about the resurrection ([2 Tim 2:14-18](#)). On the contrary, we should concentrate our discussion on things which have value and add significance to the kingdom of the Lord. Thus, Timothy should **avoid** discussions that have no basis and are designed simply to pose a distraction. **Foolish** talk has no substance and contributes nothing to one's life! We can state our personal preferences and give our opinions, but we shouldn't argue about them and allow them to become a distraction for fulfilling God's will. Often, personal preferences and mere opinions become a source of contentious debate and hurt feelings over things that really don't matter! Focus on Scripture and defend its principles which we know to be true!

Likewise, we shouldn't engage in **ignorant disputes**. The term **ignorant** literally means uneducated. In other words, Paul states that we should be informed and educated about the things which we discuss. Too frequently, people know nothing or only a little about a particular subject and attempt to present themselves as experts which causes a whole host of related problems. Rather than admit they don't know something and need to research it further, they make bold and definitive claims which often prove wrong or even fraudulent. In order to save face, they must then embark on an argumentative quest which lacks fact and substantiation. They become angry when challenged and will do anything to make themselves look good, including lying, insulting others, or trying to re-state what they have already claimed to get themselves out of trouble. For this reason, we must engage in meaningful discussions that glorify the Lord and build His church. Above all, we should study diligently, learn to view things from Christ's perspective, and have a humble and teachable spirit.



What are some examples of foolish or ignorant disputes which have no value except to cause strife in the community?

Question
10

2 Timothy 2:24-26

PROMOTE THE TRUTH AMONGST OPPOSITION:

Rather than argue about **foolish** things, Paul implores Timothy to promote the truth of the Lord, so that the **opposition** may see their error and repent. Carrying over the idea about refraining from unconstructive arguments from the previous section, he tells Timothy **not to quarrel**, but then describes four positive characteristics that the **servant of the Lord** should manifest (v. 24). In order to have a positive influence on someone especially when offering legitimate, godly correction, we must **be** kind (i.e. **gentle**). We shouldn't rebuke them sharply in front of others, but take them to the side and lovingly correct them. We should show them a better way according to Scripture! A **servant** must also be **able to teach**; this means that he must have knowledge and understanding, the ability to communicate clearly, and the ability to relate information according to a person's preferred learning style since we all have different approaches that work best for us. For parents with more than one child, you have probably come to realize that a method that works with one child may not work with the other. Consequently, you must take the same information for the desired result and communicate it in a completely different way. It works the same with us in the church. In addition, we must extend great patience just as Christ did with His disciples and He still does with us today. As humans, we tend to learn slowly, become creatures of routine and habit, and often have a streak of stubbornness. It takes patience,



persistence, and repetition to teach effectively. In some cases, it takes years with people making the same mistakes again before they learn! We can't give up, but we must have patience and correct with kindness. Finally, we ought to have **humility** when **correcting those who are in opposition** (v. 25). Our confidence should be founded in Scripture, not on our

own knowledge and our own sense of authority. We shouldn't arrogantly condemn

others or correct them so that we ourselves look good, but we should point them to the truth and allow God to speak to them through His Word and through us!

In what ways should we exercise humility when teaching or even correcting someone?

Question
11

Above all, we must remember the main purpose of correction: restoration. We don't correct others to destroy their lives, to seek revenge, or even make ourselves feel superior and look good in the eyes of others. We correct, so that we can help to restore others in right standing with the Lord. Paul even notes this purpose when he states that **if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil** (v. 26). The reason Paul says **if perhaps** doesn't mean that God may or may not forgive them; God always stands ready to forgive when we ask Him! He says **if** because it depends upon the people. As the old expression says, we can lead a horse to water, but we can't make him drink. So, it is with people; we can lovingly correct them and show them how to have restoration, but it depends upon them acknowledging the need and surrendering to Christ. We can't make them ask for restoration!

In the face of doctrinal error and sinful practices, we cannot compromise our faith and turn from the truth of God's Word. We must remain grounded and rooted firmly in the gospel. We must confront error and sin with love, but we must also do so with humility, having a firm grasp and understanding on the content of Scripture. We can't arrogantly attempt to teach something that we ourselves don't know ([1 Tim 1:7](#))! Moreover, we need to refrain from arguments that have no redeeming quality or basis and focus on the absolute truth of God's Word which reveals exactly what we should believe and how we should live. Therefore, let us **pursue righteousness** and all its associated traits, so that we can become **useful vessels** which God can use for the purpose for which He created us.

Because we live in a world that constantly bombards us with man's philosophies and opinions as well as ungodly and sinful acts, we need to cleanse ourselves from these things and allow God to work through us to make us into a vessel whom He can use to fulfill His purpose and bring honor unto Him. In the same way that Sarah A. Kleen disinfected everything in her house in the introduction in order to prepare to receive her guests, we ought to prepare ourselves "for every good work." We ought to be a community unstained by fleshly desires and one that pursues righteousness in every way, so that we are set apart from the world. When we are set apart from the world, they will see the difference that Christ has made in us and it allows us to become more effective ambassadors who bring glory to Him.

As we close this lesson, we must ask ourselves in which of the two categories we fall: do we bring honor to Christ because we pattern our lives after Him or do we bring dishonor because we live like the rest of the world? Prayerfully ask the Lord to help you have an honest evaluation of your life and respond to what He shows you. As His community, let us be that "great house" which works together to bring honor to the Lord. Let us stand firm upon Scripture without compromise no matter what culture may say. Let us put aside endless debates and arguments that don't matter and focus on the truth of the Lord which enlightens, saves, and transforms all who hear and respond. Let us "pursue righteousness," so that we can become a community set apart for the purpose for which God has designated us. May all the world see Christ in us, so that they may recognize the errors of their ways and seek the forgiveness of the Lord through repentance just as we have done according to His grace.

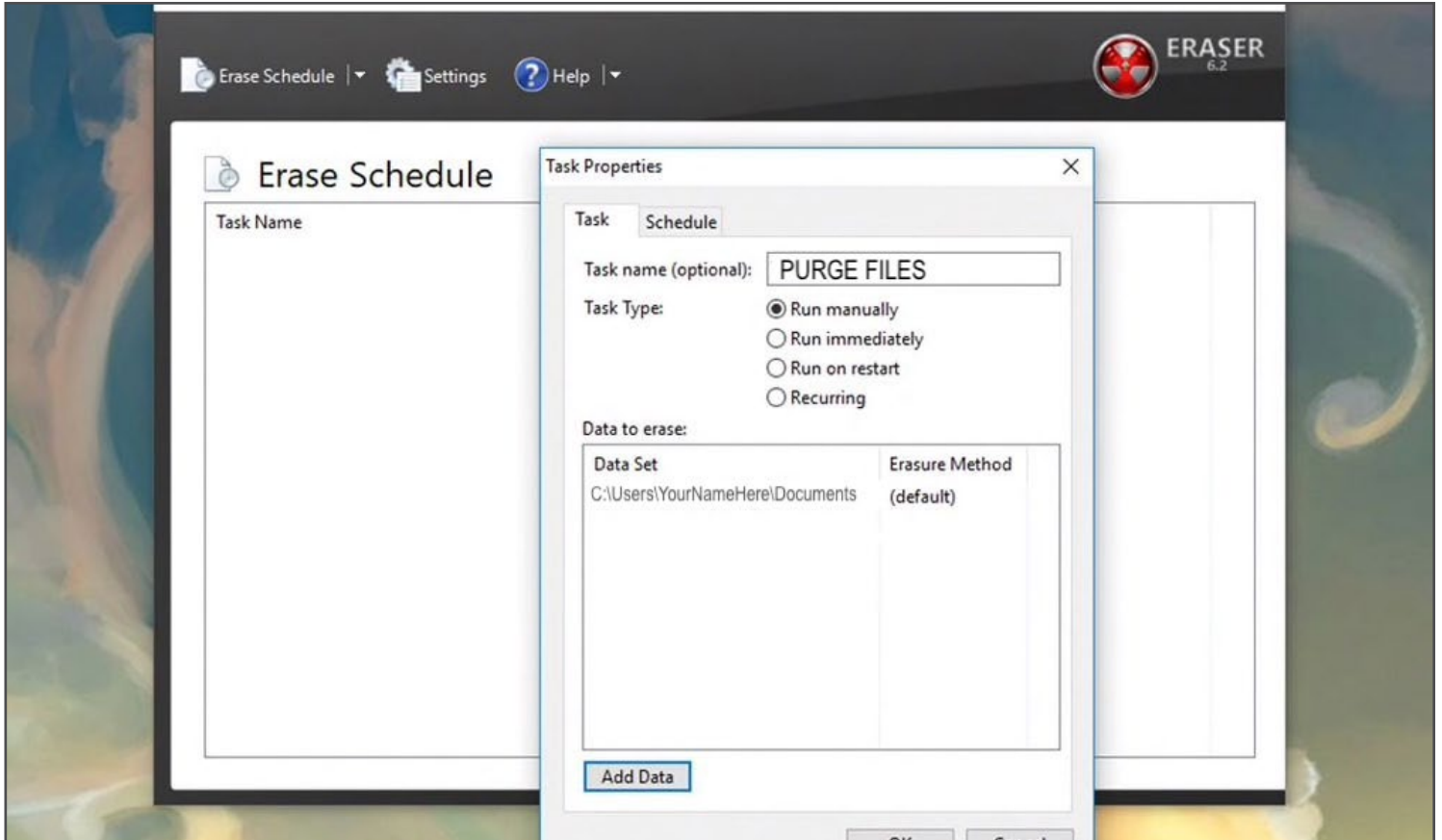
Incorporate

How can we as a church help prepare ourselves and others for good works that honor Christ?

What are some discussions that may occur among believers today that have no eternal value? How do they often lead to disunity in the church? How can we re-orient ourselves to focus only on discussing things that matter?

Why do we need to correct others kindly and humbly when they err in matters of doctrine and sin as clearly defined in Scripture rather than simply overlooking them?

November 10, 2019



Purge Worldly Influences

2 Timothy 3:1-9

Focal Verse:

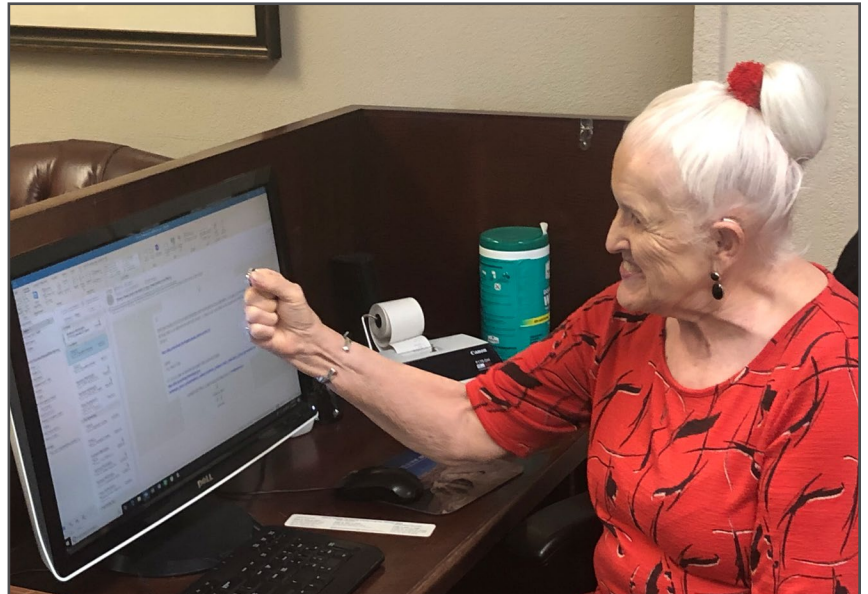
“Having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!”

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2 Timothy 3:5

Introduce

For several years, I've had the honor of working with Ms. Barbara Wellman who serves as one of our financial secretaries; she keeps track of all the tithes and offerings, making sure they are designated into the right accounts. As long as I've known her, she has often encountered problems with her computer data entry system. Although at times she experiences great frustration and has threatened to quit or make the pastor fire her, we all know that she is an indispensable part of the team and we couldn't do what we



do without her. Therefore, many of us have also had the privilege of trying to help her when she's not on speaking terms with her computer.

One such time, she had worked countless hours on the missions report trying to update all the files for the various missionaries and agencies that we support as a church, but she couldn't reconcile the funds because the formula in the database didn't work. No matter what she did, it wouldn't add the total amount in one column to another. While helping her, we erased the formula and re-entered it; that didn't work. We deleted the entire column, added a new one, and then re-entered the formula; that didn't work either. We couldn't repair the file in any way, so that the formula would work properly—even after several minutes of trial and error. Somehow the entire spreadsheet had become corrupted and the old files needed to be purged and the data completely re-entered for it to work.

We knew that we couldn't simply open a new spreadsheet and cut and paste the data because this would carry over the corrupted file with it and we would have the same problem repeated! Consequently, we needed to purge the files where everything must go and begin afresh. In our lives as followers of Christ, we must purge all the corrupt worldly influences. We can't simply transfer everything to the Lord while at the same time keeping the old files of the things we formerly did. These old, worldly influences will tend to corrupt our life in Christ. Instead, we need to get rid of this corruption completely and start over in Christ!

Introduce

For this reason, Paul explains to Timothy, “For men will be lovers of themselves . . . having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away” ([2 Tim 3:2-5](#)). This doesn’t mean that we can’t develop relationships to witness and share the love of Christ with such people. It does mean, however, that we cannot fellowship intimately with them where they become a negative influence on our lives. We must put off all negative influences in our lives and focus on Christ! In the world during the last days, we will see a love of pleasure, a loss of perception, and a lack of progress toward maturity. In contrast, we as followers of Christ must display a love for righteousness, an ability to perceive truth through God’s Word, and a progression toward maturity through the imitation of our Savior. Therefore, let us be a community that purges worldly influences and promotes righteous living in Christ Jesus.

Key
Question

What worldly pleasures seem to influence you the most?

2 Timothy 3:1-5

THE LOVE OF PLEASURE IN THE LAST DAYS:

In [chapter 3](#), Paul continues his remarks about the false teachers and those who follow them by demonstrating how their error leads to ungodliness and eventually the rejection of everything holy and good. He gets right to the point about what he wants Timothy to **know: in the last days**, people will love pleasure because they have become thoroughly self-centered in every way (v. 1)! **The last days** refer to the period after Jesus' resurrection where we wait for His imminent return or second coming. Thus, we are **in the last days** as His return continues to draw closer, so we should expect **perilous times** to **come**. If we have a relationship with Christ, we need not fear these **perilous times** and shrink back, but we do need to be prepared for His return which could come at any minute. Therefore, we must purge worldly influences from our lives and pursue the righteousness which we studied in last week's lesson. For the next four verses, Paul lists the characteristics of the false teachers and their godless followers, so that we may not follow their pattern and become swept away by their teaching. At the head of this list of godless traits found **in the last days** stands the affirmation that **men will be lovers of themselves** (v. 2). Paul places this declaration first because self-centeredness is the root of all the sinful characteristics and problems that follow in the list! Rampant self-centeredness dominates our society today and we don't have to look very far to find examples.

We easily observe self-centeredness in obvious areas such as arrogance, pridefulness, greediness, lack of self-control, and failure to share, but we often overlook subtle acts of self-centeredness in the church. For example, serving (or giving) with the wrong motives is a form of self-centeredness! Rather than serving because they love the Lord and genuinely want to please Him, some serve because of how it makes them feel



Instruct

good or it makes them look good in front of others so that they take notice ([Matt 6:3-4](#)); while others may serve because they want to receive a specific blessing from the Lord that they themselves have pre-determined!

In addition, some view their participation in church through the lens of their personal preferences and needs. Unfortunately, I've heard people say on more than one occasion and tell others that they ought to go to the church that can give them the most! They don't look for a church where they can give of themselves the most! Moreover, personal preferences, not leadership of the Spirit, often play the most-important role in where people choose to attend church or why they change churches. When some people consider changing churches, they will often find a self-centered motive behind it if they will honestly evaluate the reason and allow the Spirit to work in their lives; even though they attempt to couch it in spiritual terms, it really is about what they want rather than how the Spirit leads them to serve the Lord.

Finally, our worship can become self-centered if it revolves solely around how it makes us feel and our personal preferences. Worship does involve emotion and feeling because it draws us closer to the Lord when we devote ourselves to praising Him, but we don't participate in worship because it makes us feel a certain way! Therefore, we should not primarily base our worship on feelings, although it can lift our spirits, encourage us, and even unify us as a church. Rather, worship is about knowing Christ our Savior and declaring who He is and what He has done! Worship, consequently, should always focus on Christ and never on us!

In what other ways does the world (and some believers) manifest self-centeredness?

Question
1



In [1 Timothy 6:10](#), Paul stresses to his protégé that “the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil,” but here in [2 Timothy 3:2](#) he announces **in the last days** that **men will be lovers of money!** From the beginning, mankind has had a problem with coveting, whether people's possessions, talents, or successes ([Exod 20:17](#)). As we can clearly see, greediness leads to a materialistic

society in which possessions become more important than integrity or relationships! The day before I wrote this lesson a well-known running back who had broken his contract and refused to participate in team training signed a new multi-year deal. Rather than fulfill his contractual obligations for which he did receive a hefty fine, he held out for more money. Although we should receive fair pay for the work in which we engage and we can debate whether or not this much money should have been dispensed, it all boils down to greediness. Rather than do the right thing and practice while negotiating a contract extension, this player broke his current contract and didn't act with good faith and integrity! Even with this one example, we can see how much greed and materialism has affected our world.

How does the love of money cause strife in our world today—even in the church?

Question
2

In this list, Paul identifies three characteristics in which people seek to draw attention to themselves to the exclusion of giving attention to the Lord: **boasters**, **proud** (v. 2), and **haughty** (v. 4). Each of these three categories center around placing confidence in one's own abilities and engaging in skewed self-promotion for the attainment of notoriety. These individuals take all the credit for themselves rather than glorifying the Lord ([Rom 12:3](#)). Quoting [Jeremiah 9:24](#), Paul reminds the Corinthians that "he who glories [boasts], let him glory [boast] in the Lord" ([1 Cor 1:31](#)). However, we live in a society in which everyone craves some form of attention; they may attempt to get attention by making outrageous claims or performing crazy stunts, by embellishing their story or resume, or even by becoming a "victim" of something, someone, or some circumstance. Rather than move forward in life, some become stuck or fixated on something so that people will pay attention to them. We can certainly tell people our story and we need others to help and encourage us through difficult times, but our focus should be on the Lord—not our circumstances and not getting attention for ourselves through pity and compassion.

How do we see pride or haughtiness in the church today?

Question
3

Next, Paul describes how people will become **blasphemers in the last days** (v. 2) because they will have **a form of godliness, but deny its power** (v. 5). Technically, blasphemy refers to the rejection of God and the slander of His holy name by usurping

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His authority and putting ourselves in His rightful. In fact, the rejection of Christ, or blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, is the only unforgivable sin ([Matt 12:31-32](#)). Although they attempt to remove God from every facet of life and reject His plan for their lives, they still try to live outwardly religious lives to fool other people into thinking they are moral and decent people. They perform these rituals and traditions which make them seem good to others, but they really have no relationship with Christ, thereby lacking integrity and righteousness.

In the last days, we will also experience dysfunctional and broken families which Paul encapsulates with three more terms: **disobedient to parents** (v. 2), **unloving** (v. 3), and **traitors** (v. 4). Our society has a pathological rejection of any type of authority whether police, teachers, ministers, or leaders in the community, but it starts at home



with lack of respect for **parents**. Rebelliousness begins at an early age and grows in severity as children age, especially if **parents** don't know how to discipline properly or fail to discipline at all. Yet, no matter what **parents** may do some children will always push the limits and act disobediently by defying the boundaries which they have been given. Just as we do

with our earthly **parents** at times, we also become disobedient to our heavenly Father. Overall, these disobedient and dysfunctional families will continue to become more problematic as society moves further from the Lord and continues to reject his holy purposes.

The term **unloving** actually means to not have normal affection or love for family members as well as other relationships in general. Because **men** are **lovers of themselves**, they cannot truly love others; they only see relationships as objects of gratification which they exploit for selfish purposes. People become pawns which they use to pursue their own pleasures. For this reason, people in the last days will become **traitors**. Paul doesn't go into detail about how these people turn on their family or friends, but we often see it happen in our own time when people don't get what they

want, perceive their needs aren't being met, or have a falling out over a difference of opinion. Consequently, they will attack each other, slander each other (v. 3), and leave a trail of broken relationships in their wake.

How can the church help families overcome dysfunctional relationships?

Question
4

In addition, we encounter many ungrateful (i.e. **unthankful**) people in the world (v. 2). Recently, I read an article about a boy in India whose parents bought him a brand-new BMW. The boy, however, wanted a Jaguar which he claimed would hold all his friends. Because he didn't get the car he wanted, the boy showed *gratitude* to his parents by pushing it into the river and sinking it. This isn't an isolated incident either; many ungrateful, spoiled, and entitled individuals throw similar tantrums. Yet, we must realize in Christ that we don't *deserve* anything, but everything we have comes as a blessing!

In Reference



See Shanti Priya, ["Arrogant' Son Pushes BMW Given to Him in the River because He Wanted a Jaguar," available from www.foxnews.com](http://www.foxnews.com) (August 12, 2019).

A general lack of morality also characterizes **the last days** whereby Paul depicts people as **unholy** (v. 2), **despisers of good** (v. 3), and **lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God** (v. 4). As **blasphemers** who have removed the Lord from everything, the only "standard" for people to follow comes from themselves which makes morality subjective and flawed! Thus, just as in Judges, "Everyone [will do] what [is] right in his own eyes" ([Judg 17:6](#))! When left only with this flawed and selfish standard, mankind becomes confused and, like in the book of Isaiah, people begin to "call evil good, and good evil [and] put darkness for light, and light for darkness" ([Isa 5:20](#)). As a result, people no longer ask if something is right or wrong; they ask does it bring me **pleasure** or how does it benefit me. They are more concerned with how something feels and whether they enjoy doing it than with the morality of it. In the end, however, sinful choices only bring ruination



and despair even though they may promise a lifetime of self-gratification and **pleasure**.

How can we prevent worldly pleasure from skewing our view of holiness in Christ?

Question
5

Paul also portrays the world apart from Christ as **unforgiving** which leads to unrestrained violence or brutality (v. 3). In Christ, we should forgive as He has forgiven us ([Eph 4:32](#)) and stand ready to forgive at any time ([Matt 18:21-35](#)). The world, however, teaches us that we ought to seek revenge and get even with people who hurt us or persecute us, but Christ teaches that we should love our enemies and seek to lead them to repentance ([Rom 12:19-20](#)). When we fail to forgive, it ultimately leads to bitterness and anger which can easily turn into violence in a world that is self-centered. Not only do we see violence in retaliation for perceived wrongs, such as road rage and domestic violence, but we also see brutality for no apparent reason in our world today. With man at the center of the world and in control of morality rather than God, a person's conscience has become desensitized to brutality and we see a lust for violence which permeates every aspect of society.

Finally, Paul specifies that the world lacks **self-control** (v. 3) which causes people to make reckless (i.e. **headstrong**) decisions (v. 4). The lack of **self-control** corresponds directly with the predominance of self-centeredness; people today want instant gratification, so they readily participate in their fleshly desires. They don't evaluate the consequences of their decisions and their long-term effects; they only seek momentary satisfaction for the cravings and lusts which usually results in addictions. Rather than logically assessing their actions, they react immediately based upon feeling and the excitement of a new experience. We see a lack of **self-control** in almost every facet of life: sexual impropriety, indiscretion about what we say, spending habits, work ethic, slothful management of time, the inability to make wise (**headstrong**) decisions, and so forth. Unfortunately, this lack of discipline carries over into the church because it causes people to fail to worship corporately each week, to serve and share the gospel daily, to give tithes and offerings regularly, and to cultivate a relationship with Christ through daily prayer and meditation on Scripture.

In what areas do you struggle with self-control?

Question
6

Above all, Paul urges Timothy to **turn away from such people** who exhibit these worldly characteristics (v. 5). This doesn't mean that we shouldn't witness to them or befriend them to share the gospel, but it does mean that we shouldn't have close fellowship with them so that their sinful choices rub off onto us! In other words, we shouldn't follow the pattern of the world and allow them to influence us. We, on the other hand, must be a positive influence upon the world! If we don't live holy lives before the world and present them with a positive influence, where will they find truth and righteousness? We are to be that beacon of hope and truth for the world by pointing them to Christ!

2 Timothy 3:6-7

THE LOSS OF PERCEPTION IN THE LAST DAYS:

The world has a devious plan to manipulate **gullible** people by destroying families and impeding the **learning of the truth** (vv. 6-7). In verse 6, Paul addresses a specific problem in regard to Ephesus where those of worldly influence **creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins and led away by lusts**. Because Paul speaks to a specific problem in Ephesus, it doesn't mean that he views all **women** as **gullible** and swept **away by lusts**! Paul's comments do not demean **women**, but address a



specific problem with specific individuals from which we all should learn!

Men or **women** can be **gullible** and **loaded down with sins**; therefore, we must all exercise caution not to become caught up with worldly influences and take steps to protect ourselves and our **households** from secular pressure that seeks to conform us to their own evil desires. Worldly influences, as portrayed in this passage as **those who creep into households**, sneak in with false promises. They make attractive claims which may sound good and appear true, but in the long run they only lead to disappointment and destruction.

Even more disconcerting, these **gullible** people never learn from their mistakes because they have become blinded to **the truth** (v. 7). Their consciences have become

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deaden to sin because they lack the ability to perceive or understand; instead, they follow the desires of their hearts rather than **the truth** of Christ. Thus, Paul says that they are **always learning**, but **never able to come to the knowledge of the truth**. These people seek out others who will tell them what they want to hear rather than **the absolute truth** ([2 Tim 4:3-4](#)). When they find someone who agrees with them and their perception of life, it appeases their conscience and allows them to act sinfully without feeling remorse. We see this in many areas of life today; rather than **seeking the truth**, people look for others who will support them and even affirm what they are doing—regardless of what **the truth** may be! They learn to act sinfully at the peril of rejecting **the truth** which ultimately leads to destruction.

In what ways do people seek to find others who will agree with them rather than seeking the truth?

Question
7

2 Timothy 3:8-9

THE LACK OF PROGRESS IN THE LAST DAYS:

Finally, because they **never come to the knowledge of the truth** and are carried away by **various lusts**, the people who succumb to such worldly thinking **will progress**



no further in their growth and maturity (v. 9). Paul uses **Jannes** and **Jambres** as examples of those who opposed **Moses** and **resisted the truth**; he calls them **men of corrupt minds** who **disapproved concerning the faith** (v. 8). Based on Jewish and other secular historical accounts, but unnamed in the Old Testament, **Jannes** and **Jambres** were two of Pharaoh's

magicians who sought to replicate the plagues that the Lord performed through **Moses** ([Exod 7:11](#)). Paul's point in this comparison is that these worldly people oppose God and deny **the truth**. They foolishly look within themselves and to other flawed individuals for guidance and answers to life's questions.

Today, many people try to navigate life on their own and they never turn to the Lord for help and guidance. God warned against this type of arrogance in Proverbs 3:5: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding.” When we lean on our own understanding, our **folly** becomes **manifest to all** (v. 9). In other words, we display our ignorance when we fail—which apart from Christ we will always fail! Therefore, Proverbs 14:12 warns us, “There is a way that seems right to man, but in the end is the way of death.” The simple gift of salvation serves as an excellent example because man often tries to add his own ideas about how we can experience it. God’s plan for salvation is straightforward: we must acknowledge that we have sinned, accept Christ’s complete payment for our sin through His death on the cross, confess our sin and repent, and surrender our lives to His control.

Man, however, tries to obscure this simple truth from God and make it more difficult than it really is. Some, especially today, will say that each person finds salvation according to his own truth or beliefs, but the Bible says that we only have one way of salvation through Christ ([John 14:6](#)). Still, others will aver that salvation comes through good works; we must earn it! However, the Bible clearly states that salvation is a gift of grace through faith ([Eph 2:8-9](#)). Yet, others will assert that we must follow certain rituals or be members of a specific church. On the contrary, God doesn’t delight in a multitude of sacrifices performed ritualistically, but rather an obedient and contrite heart which shows remorse and repents ([1 Sam 15:22](#)). In the last days, we must exercise great caution not to follow the world’s version of **truth** or even what we may desire **the truth** to be for us, but we must follow **the truth** of the Lord which He has clearly communicated to us through His written Word and by which He reminds us through His Holy Spirit. Therefore, let us not repeat the **folly** of the world whereby we lack perception and progress toward maturity, but rather let us mature in Christ by knowing His Word and applying it in our lives so that we may honor and glorify Him with our lives!

In what other ways do we see a lack of progress in the last days among the secular world?

Question
8

In the introduction, we saw how one of Ms. Barbara Wellman's files had become corrupted on her computer which required her to delete the entire file and purge the affected formula so that the data could be calculated properly and the spreadsheet function in the way that she had designed it. We can also think of this in terms of a computer virus which spreads and corrupts perfectly healthy computer programs, but eventually can shut down the entire system causing the computer to have multiple errors, crash, and cease to work altogether. Sin in our lives is the same way. When we have sin in one area of our life, it affects every other area and keeps spreading; we can't isolate or contain its effects. Instead, we need to purge that sin or worldly influence from our lives for us to function in the way that God has designed us and called us from the very beginning. If left uncontrolled, sin will eventually "crash" our system and cause death and eternal separation from the Lord. Therefore, we need Christ to help us purge sin from our lives and start afresh in a new relationship with the Lord.

As we end the lesson this week, pray faithfully and ask the Lord to help you identify any specific areas of sin in your life. Then, through Scripture, prayer, and guidance by the Holy Spirit, ask Him to purge these sinful actions, attitudes, or thoughts. Too many times, we make broad statements in our prayers: "Lord, forgive me of my sins." Certainly, there is nothing wrong with praying such a statement, but we need to know the specific areas in which we need to change and how we need to mature in the Lord. Consequently, we need to pray specifically so that we can know what we must change and how we must grow. When we pray faithfully and specifically, God will reveal these areas unto us and we can then allow Him to work through us to correct our understanding according to the truth of His Word and purge any sinful activities from our lives. Let us not follow the way of the world and seek the convenient truth that we want to hear, but let us hear God speak; let Him speak specifically to us so that we can perceive the truth, progress in maturity in our faith, and rid ourselves of any worldly pleasures that do not please Him.

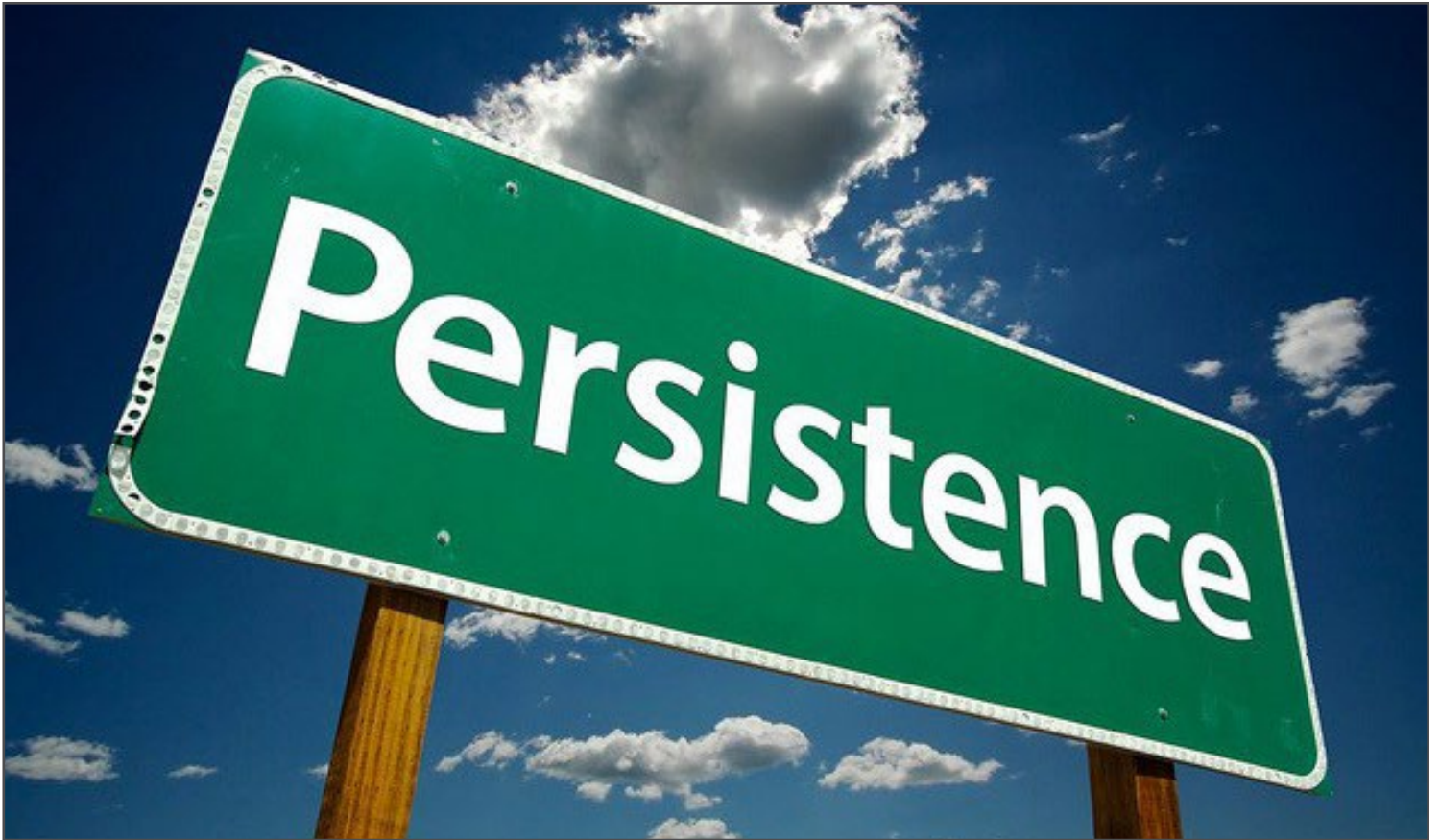
Incorporate

As a community, how can we help each other resist sinful pleasures and purge worldly influences from our midst? Why is it important that we purge worldly influences from the church?

In what ways do we see a lack of perception and understanding of the truth in our world today? How can we as a church combat this lack of perception and understanding in the body of Christ?

In what ways do we see a lack of growth and progress in the church today? How can we make sure that as the body of Christ we are sufficiently maturing and progressing in Him as a whole?

November 17, 2019



Persist in the Word

2 Timothy 3:10-17

Focal Verse:

"But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them."

2 Timothy 3:14

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Most of us probably know the story of the tortoise and the hare; slow, methodical persistence ended up rewarding the tortoise in the end who continued along at a consistent pace while the hare became complacent and ultimately distracted causing him to lose the race. Similarly, there were two football players who desperately sought to make it to the professional league. One player had amazing skills and extraordinary natural talent which seemingly could compete with anyone in the Hall of Fame; the other player had far fewer natural abilities and didn't really stand out from the crowd. Both of these men played the same positions, but they had radically different work ethics.



The gifted player rarely practiced hard because he thought it was too demeaning since he already knew the fundamentals. He usually came late to practice, often defied the coach's orders to run as punishment for his errors, and spent more time signing autographs and showing off for the fans than learning the playbook and his routes. Viewing himself as in shape and toned, he never participated in conditioning and strength exercises and never even cared much about his diet. The other player, however, showed up to practice early, watched countless hours of film, and spent time repeatedly practicing the fundamentals. He knew everything about his position and his responsibilities with the team. He also hit the gym early and stayed late for conditioning and exercise, carefully watching his diet as well. He persistently worked hard to refine his skills and improve his game.

After a long season, draft day had finally arrived. The gifted player entered the venue for the draft with a swagger, assured that he'd go in the top five picks. The other player entered humbly, hardly even noticed by the throng of people pressing around him. As the draft began, a few players had already been selected with number five on the tip of the commissioner's tongue. Suddenly, the commissioner announced the name of the other player much to everyone's surprise! The gifted player, as the draft came to a close,

Introduce

never once heard his name; no team had selected him. Whereas his inconsistency and lack of effort caused him to fail and miss his goal, the persistence of the other player paid off.

In [2 Timothy 3:10-17](#), Paul encourages Timothy to persist in the Word; so also, must we persist in knowing, living, and applying the Word in our own lives. In these verses, we see that we must persist despite suffering and persecution; we must persist in knowing the truth about salvation in Christ rather than what the world says saves us; finally, we must persist in the study of Scripture because it reveals the Lord's character, His plan for us, and how we should live. Let us not be a lazy community, like this gifted player, thinking that we have it all together; let us strive daily to seek the Lord and mature in our faith. Let us persist in the Word, so that we can honor Christ with what we say and how we live.

Key
Question

How has persisting through difficult times helped you to grow in your faith?

2 Timothy 3:10-12

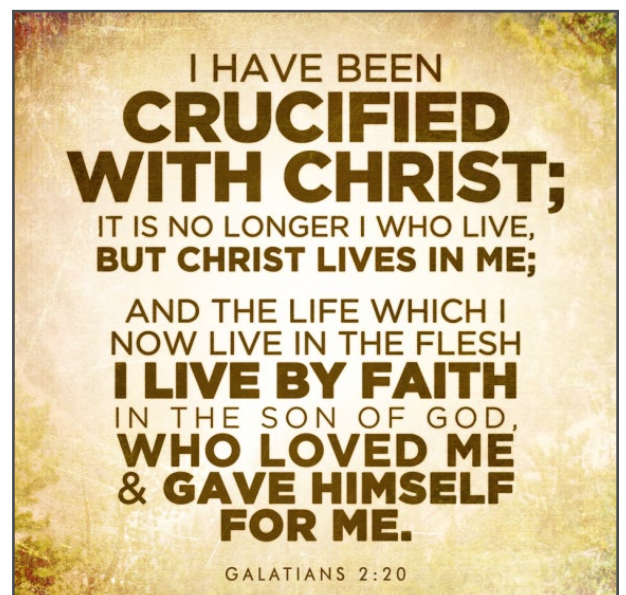
PERSIST IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING:

In contrast to the “men of corrupt minds” who “progress no further” which we met at the end of last week’s lesson ([2 Tim 3:8-9](#)), Paul urges Timothy to persist in following his teaching and example even in the midst of any suffering or persecution that may come. As a challenge to his young protégé, Paul lists nine areas in which he ought to continue in following the examples he has seen in him: his **doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, and afflictions** (vv. 10-11). The verb translated **you have carefully followed** indicates that Timothy had first-hand knowledge of Paul’s life and observed how faithfully he applied these principles in his own ministry; in other words, he saw Paul practice what he did indeed preach! Therefore, he should continue to follow Paul’s example and exemplary pattern for living a Christ-centered life no matter what external circumstances may happen in his own life. In the same way, we also ought to mature in our faith by living a consistently holy life that honors Christ which others can also use as a model for their own lives because they can visibly see His transformative power at work in us.

Who do you know that lives a Christ-centered life which could be a good model for others? Why must our faith and practice ultimately depend upon Christ and not other human models?

Question
1

First, Timothy should continue to follow Paul’s teaching (i.e. **doctrine**) because it comes directly from Scripture and has the power to change as evidenced by his own radical transformation from one who persecuted the church to one who fully trusted in the Messiah, Jesus (see [Gal 1:13-24](#)). Based on this passage here in 2 Timothy, Paul’s teaching centers on two areas: 1) the gospel which communicates God’s plan for salvation accomplished in Jesus ([2 Tim 3:14-15](#)) and 2) God’s instruction about how we should



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live righteously conformed to His holy character ([2 Tim 3:16-17](#)). Timothy, and we for that matter, can trust Paul's teaching because it comes from the Lord and not human tradition or philosophy. In Galatians 1:11-12, Paul reiterates, "But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Moreover, we can trust Paul's teaching because the transformed life he lived after his conversion on the road to Damascus reflected the principles of Scripture rightly applied! Through Him, we can see Scripture lived out. This leads to the second principle which he wants Timothy to imitate: his conduct (i.e. **manner of life**). In every way, our conduct ought to reflect the standard by which Christ Himself lived during His earthly life and ministry as well as what He expressly taught in the principles of His teaching. Broadly, we can identify three areas in which we should exhibit impeccable conduct: we should *administer* self-control in everything, *avoid* the appearance of evil at all cost, and *act* wisely in every situation.

We live in a world that frequently lacks self-control and seeks to live for the moment or for the experience regardless of what the cost or consequence may be. The world, as we learned in [2 Timothy 3:6](#), is "gullible" because they easily become ensnared by "sins" and "various lusts." They exercise no restraint, but readily participate in the desires of the flesh for the momentary promise of contentment and satisfaction. As followers of Christ, however, we must surrender our lives to the Holy Spirit who produces self-control as one of His nine fruit that we should manifest daily in our lives ([Gal 5:23](#); [2 Peter 1:6](#)). To maintain self-control, we ought to do three things. *Consult* Scripture: we must know what the Bible says and base our decisions upon the boundaries in His Word rather than our feelings or emotions ([Matt 4:1-11](#)). *Consider* the cost: evaluate the outcome of a particular action and weigh its consequences as to whether it honors and glorifies the Lord in righteousness ([Rom 6:12-14](#); [Jas 2:10-13](#)). Finally, *concoct* a plan of action: don't get caught off guard, but have a plan before a tempting situation even arises ([1 Peter 1:13-21](#)).

In what areas has the Lord revealed in which you need to exercise more restraint or self-control?

Question
2

In addition, we must *avoid* the appearance of evil and not place ourselves in situations where our integrity can be questioned or the conduct of others can influence us to commit sin and cause the world to associate their sinful actions with us ([1 Thess 5:22](#)). Therefore, we need to choose our relationships wisely so that the world doesn't influence us, but instead we can positively influence them by reflecting the character of Christ. Thus, Paul points out, "Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good morals" ([1 Cor 15:33](#)). Lastly, we must *act* wisely by pursuing an intimate relationship with the Lord where we understand the call He has placed upon our lives and apply the principles which He has communicated to us. For this reason, we need to know His Word, follow the direction Spirit to rightly apply it, and seek godly counsel from other Spirit-led believers who live consistently with the principles in Scripture ([Prov 3:5-6](#); [Psalm 119:104-105](#)).



Third, Paul wants Timothy to remember his **purpose** whereby he expresses his full commitment to finish the task to which Christ has called him ([1 Tim 4:7](#)). For Paul, this means his ministry to share the gospel with the Gentiles ([Acts 9:15](#)) and for Timothy this means to continue spreading the gospel while at the same time safeguarding the churches from doctrinal error. Likewise, God has called each one of us to a specific ministry here at FBCFW to share the gospel in specific ways with the nations right here in Fort Worth; we must also be faithful and committed to complete the task to which He has called us! Fourth, for this reason, we must exercise **faith** in two primary ways: 1) we must put our full trust and devotion in the Lord by submitting to His plan for our lives and 2) act faithfully to live and minister in the way in which He has called us according to His Word.

For what purpose and ministry has God called you here at FBCFW?

Question
3

Fifth, Paul stresses the need for Timothy to maintain patience (i.e. **longsuffering**) and **perseverance** to concentrate on the mission and goal Christ has set for him and not become distracted by life's circumstances or frustrated by the world's response. Since

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we live in a world of almost instantaneous results where we have same-day delivery and instant online downloads, we have come to expect instant results with people when we share the gospel and invite others to church. Although at times we may see instant results as people respond, most frequently we must patiently persist in doing the right thing and sharing the gospel before we see fruit ([2 Peter 3:9](#); [1 Tim 1:16](#)).

Sometimes this may even take years of patiently praying and gently prodding people through the Scripture! Regardless of how long it may take, we should never quit! We must persist in communicating the good news with everyone whom we meet.

Sixth, Paul reminds us that the basis for everything we do is **love**. Our **love** for Christ should compel us to **love** others. **Love** for fellow believers, our neighbors, and even



our enemies should distinguish us as His followers from the secular world. For this reason, Jesus Himself interjects, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” ([John 13:35](#)). More importantly, Christ’s **love** manifested through us should compel us to share the gospel with everyone and to live a transformed life that honors

Him! Hence, Paul writes, “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again” (2 Cor 5:14-15).

In what other ways should we display our love for Christ?

Question
4

Finally, Paul warns Timothy to endure **persecutions** and **afflictions** for the sake of the Lord that will inevitably come to all believers. Over the course of his ministry, Paul experienced tremendous suffering and persecution from mockery, threats, beatings, shipwrecks, and imprisonments ([2 Cor 11:22-28](#)). In fact, he even lists three episodes from his second missionary journey in which he faced extreme opposition to the gospel: **Antioch** ([Acts 13:14-52](#)), **Iconium** ([Acts 14:1-5](#)), and **Lystra** ([Acts 14:6-19](#)).

Although Paul endured many perils and faced near-death situations throughout his ministry, God **delivered** him **out of** these predicaments, so that he might continue

sharing the gospel and glorifying Him (v. 11). As much as these words of deliverance can offer comfort, Paul wants us to know that **all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution** (v. 12).

If we live for Christ and proclaim the truth, we *will* experience opposition from the world! Anyone who claims that believers will always prosper and lack trouble in their lives has not read all Scripture. For Jesus Himself emphatically announces, "A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" ([John 15:20](#)). We must expect persecution and prepare for it; we cannot let it catch us off guard nor can we allow it to keep us from living for Christ. Regardless of what may happen to us, we have something greater that still awaits. Therefore, live for Christ by doing the right thing, continue to share the truth of the gospel, and don't compromise your faith to appease the world, but build firmly on the foundation of Christ alone! Above all, persist in the Word despite suffering!


What persecution and affliction have you experienced? How can we as a community encourage one another in the midst of such persecution?

Question
5

2 Timothy 3:13-15

PERSIST IN THE TRUTH OF SALVATION:

In these perilous times of increased opposition, we can expect **evil men** and **impostors** to **grow worse and worse** (v. 13). Although the world hopes that mankind will become better and more mature on his own, the truth is that when we attempt to remove Christ from our lives and worldview things consistently become **worse!** Man cannot solve his own problems; in the end, he always makes things **worse**. Moreover, charlatans or tricksters make things **worse** because they think they have wisdom to answer life's tough questions apart from the Lord. Some may pretend to have a word from the Lord or act outwardly religious to gain followers and justify their own actions, but their beliefs



"IF YOU LOOK AT THE WORLD,
YOU'LL BE DISTRESSED.
IF YOU LOOK WITHIN,
YOU'LL BE DEPRESSED.
IF YOU LOOK AT GOD
YOU'LL BE AT REST."

— Corrie ten Boom

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contradict Scripture ([Matt 7:15-20](#))! Whereas others may not necessarily pretend to be religious or philosophical, they have truly **deceived** themselves and believe their own false teaching which also leads others astray and deceives them as well ([1 Tim 1:7; Prov 28:9-11](#))!

In what ways does the world attempt to deceive us?

Question
6

Timothy, and we also, must not succumb to the deception of **evil men** and **impostors**, but he must **continue in the things which** he has **learned** from trusted people who have taught him over the years (v. 14). In other words, Timothy shouldn't just follow the teaching of anyone as a "gullible" young man, but he should follow the teaching of trustworthy and faithful people who proclaim the Word of the Lord correctly. As followers of Christ, we must exercise discretion and discernment in knowing what teaching or counsel comes from the Lord. We shouldn't just believe anyone who claims to have a word from the Lord without validating it and confirming it through Scripture. The message of Scripture never changes, but remains consistent from Genesis to Revelation. We may discover different ways to apply it in our lives as we grow and mature in Christ, but the principles of Scripture still remain the same!

Moreover, the trusted people whom Paul has in mind are probably Timothy's grandmother and mother as well as himself since he emphasizes that **from childhood** he has **known the Holy Scriptures** which contain God's plan for **salvation through faith in Christ** (v. 15). Through the Old Testament, we can see man's *predicament* (sin), God's *plan* (salvation by grace through faith), and God's *promise* (a Savior or Messiah) fulfilled in Christ Jesus. In addition, the Old Testament describes how we ought to live and serve the Lord by conforming to His holiness of which Jesus has now become the greatest living example for us to follow ([Lev 19:2; Matt 5:48](#)). Therefore, let us turn to the right source, Scripture, and the people who faithfully teach and practice these principles which God has ordained; let us not become deceived by the world and the things that appeal to us personally, but let us know the truth about salvation and find it in Christ Jesus, for there is no other way!

Why is the Old Testament still important for us to read and understand today?

Question
7

2 Timothy 3:16-17

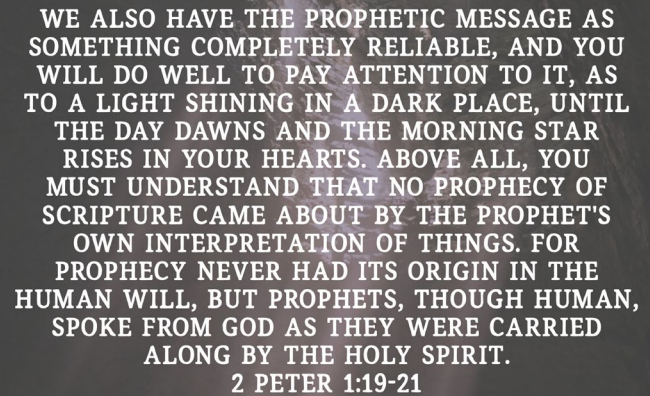
PERSIST IN THE STUDY OF SCRIPTURE:

To endure the opposition and persecution that will inevitably come, we must have a strong foundation built upon the truth of **Scripture**, so that we may not be deceived by errant teachings and philosophies of men but that we may know with certainty God's plan for **salvation** and how we ought to live.

Therefore, Paul reminds us that **all Scripture is given by inspiration of God** (v. 16). Literally, in the Greek, Paul states that *every*

Scripture is God-breathed. In reference particularly to what we would call the Old Testament, Paul shows God's hand in the entire process. He divinely inspired every part of **Scripture**: every verse, every story, and every event! He orchestrated men to record how He worked among His people, how He would bring salvation to all the peoples of the earth, and by what boundaries He expects us to live.

Although Paul speaks directly to the divine origin of the Old Testament in this verse, the same applies to what we would call the New Testament as well. God inspired men to write His revelation to all mankind without error at specific times in history, to particular audiences and cultures, and for specific purposes and reasons. When studied within the historical and literary context in which God spoke, **Scripture** communicates timeless principles for all generations which still instruct us how to have salvation and how to live *today*. **Scripture** has extraordinary value for us because it communicates God's Word clearly. This isn't man's opinion; it's God's holy and perfect Word by which we must live and order our lives. It's not merely an ideal which no one can attain or just a suggestion that we should consider following, but it's God's perfect plan for us; therefore, we must surrender to Him and abide by it!



WE ALSO HAVE THE PROPHETIC MESSAGE AS SOMETHING COMPLETELY RELIABLE, AND YOU WILL DO WELL TO PAY ATTENTION TO IT, AS TO A LIGHT SHINING IN A DARK PLACE, UNTIL THE DAY DAWNS AND THE MORNING STAR RISES IN YOUR HEARTS. ABOVE ALL, YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT NO PROPHECY OF SCRIPTURE CAME ABOUT BY THE PROPHET'S OWN INTERPRETATION OF THINGS. FOR PROPHECY NEVER HAD ITS ORIGIN IN THE HUMAN WILL, BUT PROPHETS, THOUGH HUMAN, SPOKE FROM GOD AS THEY WERE CARRIED ALONG BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.
2 PETER 1:19-21

How can we be certain that Scripture is inspired by God?

Question
8

Because **Scripture** is true and God-inspired, it **is profitable** in four particular areas:

Instruct

for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. First, Paul describes **Scripture** as useful **for doctrine** which is literally the Greek word for



teaching. **Scripture** teaches us the truth; it teaches fact and shows the way the world is and not the way we as men may want it to be! Therefore, it teaches us a multitude of foundational principles for understanding our world and the condition in which we as mankind live. It communicates: 1) how the world came into existence from nothing through a divine act of

the Lord; 2) who God is, what He has graciously done, and how much He loves us; 3) how sin and evil destroyed a perfect world; 4) what God's perfect plan for us is and how He wants to redeem us by grace through faith; and 5) what God expects and how we all have fallen short of those expectations. Overall, the goal of teaching is to know the content and apply it correctly in our relationship with the Lord through Christ Jesus our Savior in a way that we can know God more intimately.

Second, Paul points out that **Scripture is profitable for reproof**. We don't often use the word **reproof**, but in this context it means to test by proving. **Scripture**, as a result, serves as a measuring stick which helps us to test things in our lives. It helps us to determine good from bad, right from wrong. Consequently, it enables us to evaluate our actions and attitudes, looking at the morality of our choices and how they reflect upon Christ. In addition, **Scripture** helps us to test whether things are from God or not. In [1 John 4:1](#), John cautions, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits whether they are of God." **Scripture** determines what we should believe and how we ought to apply it in our lives. It keeps us on track because it distinguishes God's Word from cultural opinion.

In what other ways does Scripture help us to test or reprove things?

Question

9

Because **Scripture** helps us determine right from wrong and evaluate our own

actions, it is also useful **for correction** which is the third use Paul describes. When we honestly allow God to evaluate us through **Scripture**, He will clearly show us areas in which we need to change. **Scripture** offers us a course **correction** when our lives don't match Christ's character. Finally, it helps us to conform our lives to His by providing **instruction in righteousness**. The Bible teaches us how we ought to live morally pleasing lives which honor the Lord! It gives us moral and spiritual guidance which outlines God's expectations for us; it gives us all the principles we need to live a successful and content life. Above all, we need to know the content (**doctrine**) of God's Word, allow it to evaluate (**reproof**) our behavior, heed its **correction**, and apply its **instruction in righteousness**.

In what areas through Scripture has God shown you that you ought to conform more closely to His character?

Question
10

Paul concludes by defining the result or purpose of the proper application of Scripture: **the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work** (v. 17). How does Scripture equip or prepare us **for every good work**? We can list three primary ways. First, Scripture keeps us in right standing with the Lord by offering **reproof** and **correction**; this enables us to stand genuinely before others without hypocrisy. When we live in right standing with the Lord, others will not have ammunition to charge us with sinful acts nor will we hurt our testimony by participating in evil deeds. Second, Scripture gives us the proper context by which we ought to serve and use our spiritual gift which the Lord has given us to glorify Him and build His church. Third, Scripture keeps us focused on Christ and helps us to maintain the right attitude and perspective when we serve Him. In a world that bombards us with peer pressure to conform to its ways, we must rely wholly upon Christ so that we can persist in the midst of suffering, persist in the truth of salvation, and persist in the study of Scripture in order that we might not be blown off course by the winds of false doctrine or mere opinion. As a community, let us stand squarely and securely on the truth of God's Word!

In the introduction, we met two athletes who had the same goal, but very different perspectives and work ethics. One athlete persisted and achieved great things, but the other failed because he lacked direction and became overconfident with his natural ability. Scripture clearly tells us that on our own we have no hope, but in Christ we can overcome obstacles to achieve great things. To achieve great things, we must persist in Christ. We must persist despite the inevitable suffering that will come upon us at times; we must persist in the way Scripture says that we obtain salvation through Christ; we must persist in the study of Scripture, so that we can know the truth and won't be overcome by error and sin.

How do we persist and not stray off course? We must know the content of Scripture intimately by meditating upon it. We should read it daily, not to check it off our list, but to understand it and apply it. We shouldn't read it hurriedly or in a room full of distractions which many of us do at times, but we must concentrate on it; read it slowly and methodically for comprehension so that we don't misunderstand what God has said or take it out of context by reading our own thoughts into it. Once we understand the context, we need to allow the Spirit to direct our paths, so that we can apply it. We need not only read the Bible; we need to live by it. To achieve great things for the Lord, we must persist in the Word! Therefore, let us be a community that persists in the Word, so that the Lord can strengthen us and equip us for every good work for which He has prepared and called us.

Incorporate

Why can the church expect suffering today? How can we overcome suffering and persist in the truth of Christ as a church?

In what ways does culture misuse Scripture? As a church, how should we properly handle Scripture to hear God speak and apply the principles that He clearly gives?

To what “good work” has Christ called you? How does Scripture help equip you for that “good work?”

November 24, 2019



Preach the Word

2 Timothy 4:1-8

Focal Verse:

"I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom."

2 Timothy 4:1

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Introduce

For several weeks, one of the greatest baseball players to have ever worn the uniform flirted with breaking the all-time home run record. Now, the team was returning home for the final home stand of the season, so fans scrambled for tickets in the outfield in case he happened to break the record in one of those games. One young man had been lucky enough to score tickets to the first game of the series. On that opening night of the series,



the young man excitedly took his seat with glove in hand in case the ball happened to come his way. Fans had packed the stadium in anticipation for his first at bat, but it ended with a strike out. He fared no better in his second at bat either. He hit a weak pop fly that barely made it beyond the infield. Nonetheless, the young man always stood at the ready in the outfield bleachers each time, waiting for the ball to be hit his way.

Standing at the plate for his third at bat, the player swiped at the dirt with his cleats, adjusted his gloves, and took a few practice swings with his bat. Finally, he stepped into the batter's box, taking a pitch low and away. The count went to three balls and one strike when the pitcher threw one right down the middle. The bat cracked loudly and the ball flew in a line drive, sailing over the wall. It hit the young man squarely in his face, knocking his cell phone to the ground and causing him to drop his glove which he had placed under his armpit. The ball then gently flopped into the glove of a fan in the row in front of him as the crowd began to roar feverishly.

Because of the history of the moment, the television station replayed the video over and over again. The young man stood out in the video not just because the ball hit him, but because he wore a black shirt with bold white letters that read "*Carpe Diem!*" The replay showed the young man with his head lowered, typing something on his cell phone; he had his glove safely tucked under his armpit, so that he could type more quickly. The announcer began to mock the young man and his shirt saying, "Looks like the day seized him right on the forehead. Guess he really wasn't ready to seize the day

Introduce

or he'd have caught the ball." The announcers were right. The young man had let this golden opportunity pass because he wasn't ready; he wasn't paying attention. Unfortunately, many believers become preoccupied and unready to act just like this young man when it comes to sharing the gospel. In word, they may talk about the importance and necessity of sharing the gospel, but they never put it in action. They become distracted for whatever reason and miss opportunities to share! We can't afford to miss any opportunity to share a life-changing message! As a result, Paul reminds Timothy, "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season" ([2 Tim 4:2](#)). We need to be ready at all times to preach the Word; we need to have it on the tip of our tongue and allow the Spirit to guide us when we speak. Therefore, let us not be a distracted community which forgets one of our primary functions and goals, but let us be a community that preaches the Word at all times and in all circumstances, so that the world may hear the good news of salvation and have no excuse for not surrendering their lives to Christ.

Key
Question

What opportunities have you missed to preach the gospel?
What distracted you from doing so?

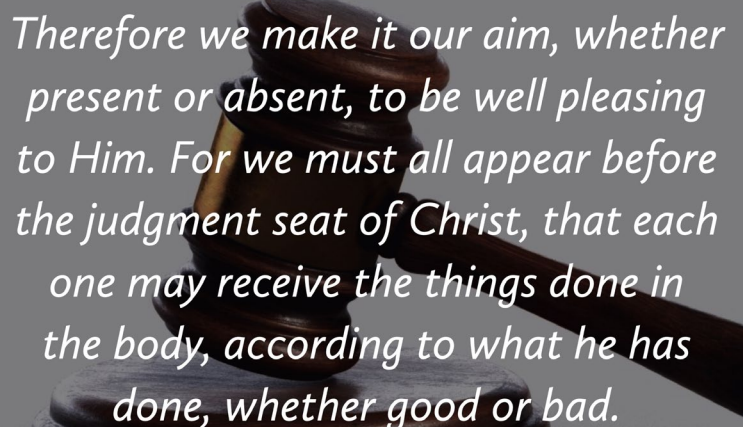
2 Timothy 4:1-2

BE READY TO PREACH THE WORD:

As his letter comes to a close, Paul reminds Timothy of his solemn duty in Christ to **preach** the gospel. To help him see the importance of this task, he gives him a **charge**, or mandate, **before the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearance and His kingdom** (v. 1). Through this declaration, we see that Timothy's commission to **preach the Word** comes from the Lord Himself. Paul didn't call Timothy and command him to do this work; Timothy didn't decide on his own that he would make an effective evangelist. God called him and directed him to that task! Since God has called Timothy, it carries more weight and significance because he will be judged based upon how faithfully he has executed his responsibilities.

At **His appearance**, that is Jesus' return or second coming, He will establish **His kingdom** in full ([Dan 7:14](#)) and **will judge the living and the dead**. In general, this description refers to every person who has ever lived upon the earth since the creation of man. No one will escape judgment ([2 Cor 5:9-10](#))! Just as those who have died await judgment upon Christ's return ([Heb 9:27-28](#)), so also do those who remain alive at the moment that He parts the eastern sky to gather His bride—the church ([1 Thess 4:16-17](#)). Although both believers and non-believers will face a pronouncement of judgment by Christ, they are two drastically different kinds of judgments. For non-believers, they will receive the penalty of their sins in full because they have rejected Christ and refused to repent; therefore, they will be sentenced to a second death in eternal torment apart from the Lord ([Rev 20:11-15](#); [Matt 7:21-23](#)).

As believers, on the other hand, we will not receive judgment based upon our sins because Christ has washed them away when we repented and no longer holds them against us ([Isa 1:18](#); [Psalm 103:12](#); [Heb 8:12](#)). Since Christ has taken our guilt upon



Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

2 Corinthians 5:9-10

Instruct

Himself and died in our place ([John 1:29; 2 Cor 5:20-21](#)), we can have eternal life with our Lord and Savior ([Matt 25:21](#)). Even though we will be invited into His presence forever in heaven and we will not be judged for our sins, He **will judge** us based upon how faithfully we have lived according to our calling and the transformed life we now have in Christ ([Gal 2:20](#)). We can never lose our salvation, but God does judge our works after we have been saved ([1 Cor 3:12-15](#)). He judges our obedience to His Word, our faithfulness to His calling, our attitudes, our perspectives, our motives, and our actions. For this reason, we must be careful to live by the standards which God has given us and serve Him faithfully out of genuine love, so that He may receive honor and glory.

Knowing that God will judge us, how would you evaluate your life according to His Word? How does / should this change how we live?

Question
1

After encouraging Timothy to faithfully execute his responsibilities in the Lord and do what is right in the face of opposition and doctrinal error ([2 Tim 3:10-17](#)), Paul commands him to **preach the word** (v. 2). We often only associate the word **preach** with a full-time vocational minister in the church. Timothy did indeed have a role as a leader in the church at Ephesus, but this command to **preach** doesn't merely apply to leaders. It applies to every believer! God has called us all to **preach** or proclaim the gospel—not just the staff. The staff should lead the way by setting the example, but everyone who has a relationship with Christ has an obligation to **preach the word!** In fact, Jesus gave this same charge to all His disciples with slightly different wording: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" ([Matt 28:19](#)).

How are you fulfilling your obligation to preach the gospel?

Question
2

Think of the limited scope that the gospel would have if only the staff preached or proclaimed it. Certainly, the staff may have many connections with people on their own, but multiply that by hundreds or even thousands when we think of the connections and acquaintances that each believer in the church has! As believers in the church, we come from neighborhoods all over the city and region; we have a wide

range of jobs that bring us into contact with many different types of people. We frequent different restaurants and stores. We enjoy various kinds of activities, sports, and hobbies that vastly increase our sphere of influence. Collectively, we have more influence than just a few full-time staff members; therefore, we must all **preach the word** just as God has commanded us!



Who is one person for whom you can commit to pray for and share the gospel?

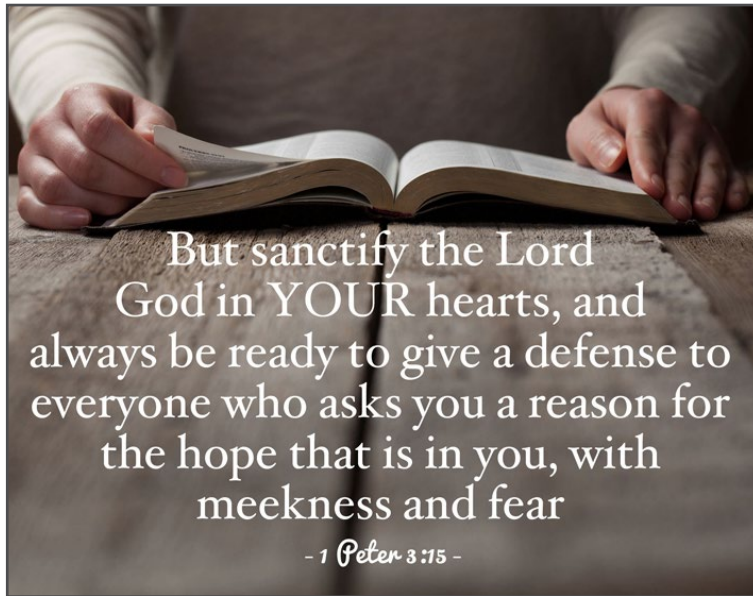
Question
3

Not only must we **preach the word**, but we must **be ready in season and out of season** to proclaim the gospel. We should never miss an opportunity to share the gospel and we should always intentionally seek opportunities to witness as the Spirit leads whatever the circumstances or situation may be. The phrase translated **be ready in season and out of season** more aptly means in English to **be ready** when it's convenient or when it's not. From our perspective, we may find it inconvenient to share the gospel because we're in a hurry all the time. We overlook clear occasions to witness because we fill our lives with a busy schedule of activities and we don't find the time to share the gospel. In our busyness, we run from point A to point B and miss many chances which God grants us to point people into a relationship with Him! What could ever be more important than telling someone how he or she can have eternal life? None of the activities that we do here on earth, other than finding salvation in the gospel, have eternal consequences!

At other times, we may be unprepared because we haven't spent time in Scripture and prayer like we should. God has already given us everything we need to be effective witnesses for Him. He has given us clear instruction in His Word which even a child could understand ([Mark 10:15](#)) and He has sent His Spirit to guide us ([John 14:26](#)). We have no excuse! People may ask difficult questions at times, but God has given us the answers in His Word if only we would study and seek Him ([1 Peter 3:15](#)). To share the gospel effectively, we must spend time in preparation beforehand, but also be sensitive

Instruct

to the Spirit as He leads us to speak and proclaim the truth of the gospel.



Sometimes we are unprepared to share the gospel because it brings opposition. We shouldn't be offensive or obnoxious in the way that we present it so that it turns people off; neither should we back down because the gospel itself is controversial and offensive to others because it requires them to admit they're sinners and repent. Like Timothy, we must expect opposition and persecution ([2 Tim 3:10-17](#)), but we cannot

let that deter us from preaching **the Word!** We need to stand firm on the truth in Scripture, recalling that "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and a sound mind" (2 Tim 1:7). We must be prepared to do whatever it takes and face whatever challenges or consequences may come when we share the gospel.

How prepared are you to share the gospel?
What can you do or we do as a community to
be better prepared?

Question
4

Paul lists three ways in which Timothy ought to **be ready** to proclaim the gospel: **convince**, **rebuke**, and **exhort**. To **convince**, in this context, is better translated as convict or correct. For non-believers, the Spirit moves to convict them through **the Word** which constitutes the initial stage of salvation whereby they recognize they're sinners in the need of a Savior. For believers, to convict means that **the Word** keeps us on the right path and draws us back to the Lord when we err. To **rebuke** significantly overlaps with convict, but it primarily applies to believers or those who profess to be believers. When one is rebuked, he is shown the error of his ways in Scripture, so that he might repent and be restored in right fellowship with the Lord.

Finally, Timothy should use the gospel to **exhort** or encourage believers. The gospel encourages because it always provides hope and comfort in the midst of despair and persecution. It also encourages because it outlines the plan for a successful life when we abide in Christ and keep His commands. Above all, Timothy should **preach the**

Word with patience (i.e. **longsuffering**) and **teaching**. Timothy should never give up, but he should patiently continue to teach the truth. Change, especially with hard-headed, stubborn people like every one of us, can take significant time. We must continue to ground ourselves in Scripture as well as point others to Scripture whether we think they're listening or not. Think about how God waited patiently for each one of us! So also, must we patiently proclaim the gospel so that God can move in the lives of the individuals with whom He has given us contact.

In what ways does preaching the gospel require patience and persistence?

Question
5

2 Timothy 4:3-5

BE READY TO PERFORM THE LORD'S WORK:

Unlike the unstable people who reject **sound doctrine** in the last days, Timothy should faithfully continue in the ministry to which Christ has called him. He should **preach the Word** because **a time will come when people will not listen to sound doctrine** anymore (v. 3). Instead, **they will find teachers according to their own desires** who will tell them what they want to hear. Paul describes this urge for false teaching as having **itching ears**. Specifically, he points out that **they will turn their ears away from the truth** and believe in **fables** (v. 4). In other words, people at this time will believe outlandish lies and fanciful tales because they suit their purpose and quell their consciences rather than listen to **the truth**. In fact, people will seek new and exciting ideas to draw attention to themselves and distinguish themselves from the rest of society—the more outrageous, bizarre, and far-fetched the idea the better!



How has society turned away from sound doctrine?

Question
6

Instruct

We live in a society which has made “truth” relative to a particular individual’s opinion; therefore, we often hear phrases like “my / your truth” which in turn places individuals in God’s position because they then determine what’s right or wrong for them! However, humans don’t determine **truth**; **truth** is **truth** regardless if one believes it or practices it! **Truth** is God’s prerogative and domain. To have a functioning society, we must have a pre-determined, objective, and absolute source of **truth** which comes from the Lord and does not depend upon man. Without absolute **truth**, society breaks down into chaos and disorder. Dysfunction becomes rampant because no one can agree upon one standard which determines how we order our lives and behave!

Moreover, **truth** does not depend upon how we feel and we should never allow our emotions to dictate what we view as **truth**. By definition, **truth** remains consistent and constant at all times; it doesn’t change based upon circumstances. Emotions, however, constantly change upon a whim; if we base **truth** upon something that constantly changes, we have no solid ground upon which we can stand. For example, we should worship the Lord alone for who He is and what He’s done—that **truth** never changes. Our worship may involve emotion, but it shouldn’t change based upon our emotion. In the contemporary Christian song *Beautiful Day*, Jamie Grace pens a line which declares, “This feeling can’t be wrong; I’m about to get my worship on.” Unfortunately, feelings not based upon immutable, unchangeable **truth** can be, and are, frequently wrong! We should base our worship upon what we *know* about Christ through His Word and how He has used His Word to establish a relationship with us and transform us to match His image. Our experience, therefore, is based upon our knowledge of the **truth**. Our experience doesn’t determine the **truth**!

How has society confused emotion with the truth today? How has that affected society?

Question
7

Because the world has turned away from sound doctrine, Paul reminds Timothy to **be watchful in all things, endure afflictions**, continue to share the gospel as **an evangelist**, and **fulfill** his **ministry** (v. 5). Timothy must remain vigilant so that the false doctrines postulated by the world don’t throw him off course. He must remain grounded in Scripture, so that He both teaches the **truth** and applies it in his life by how he lives. In the face of relativism and the disdain for **truth** by our culture today, like Timothy, we must **fulfill** our obligation in Christ to teach the **truth** and live by it. In

everything we do, we must proclaim the gospel; we must announce the **truth** to the world around us no matter how opposed some may be or even how antagonistic they may become. We must complete the task or ministry which God has given us—just as Paul has done and to which we will now turn.



How has God given you opportunity to practice and proclaim the truth before others?

Question
8

2 Timothy 4:6-8

BE READY TO PASS ON A LEGACY:

Paul concludes his personal remarks to Timothy by reciting his own testimony about the legacy he is leaving in order to spur him to continue serving faithfully. Paul has come to a point in his life that death is inevitable; therefore, he announces that he is **already being poured out as a drink offering** and his **time of departure is at hand** (v. 6). At the close of the book of Acts, we find Paul under house arrest in Rome, but it's likely that he received a pardon and was released to continue his ministry. He had most likely traveled to Spain to share the gospel to unreached people there, but on the way back home to the East, he was again arrested and now faced execution under the emperor Nero. Whatever the circumstances that he may have faced at the time, Paul now reflected upon the legacy he was leaving and encouraged Timothy to finish strong as well. As he pondered his life, Paul recognized that he had **fought the good fight** and **finished the race** because he **kept the faith** (v. 7). He used these athletic metaphors to describe his journey in life with Christ. The way he wrote these three phrases in the Greek indicate



Instruct

that the race is over, but the resulting victory remains because he has remained faithful in Christ! He had faithfully fulfilled his calling; with every breath that the Lord had given him, he glorified Christ and proclaimed the gospel. Even though he had his faults and even erred at times ([Rom 7:15](#)), he surrendered himself to Christ and lived consistently by following His holy pattern.

As a result, Paul will receive **the crown of righteousness** which **the Lord will give on that Day** (v. 8). He isn't alone, however, in receiving this **crown**, but so also will **all** those **who have loved his appearing**. In other words, every believer will receive such a **crown** because he has a relationship with the Lord who has transformed him according to His own righteousness. We don't receive this crown based upon the good works we do, but God graciously gives it based upon our relationship with Him. By virtue of the **righteousness** that Christ gives, we can have eternal life. Because Christ gives us eternal life based upon his **righteousness**, it ought to spur us on to **finish** the **race** with strength and honor. We don't serve and glorify Christ because of what we receive, but we serve and glorify Him because of how much love He has shown us and how much we love Him!

As we look on our own lives, we must evaluate our journey in life in order to assess how we're running the race. We should focus on running the race consistently in Christ and properly according to His Word, so that we cross the finish line and bring honor to Him. We must serve the Lord faithfully and not become sidetracked by the culture; we must remain faithful to adhere to sound teaching and the principles found in the gospel which outline the only way we can have eternal life. Above all, we must leave a legacy in which we're ready to **preach the Word** at all times and perform **the work of an evangelist** to which He has called us. Therefore, let us be a community that leaves a positive legacy which honorably reflects Christ, so that we can remove any obstacles in proclaiming the gospel. Let us not succumb to the culture, but continue **to preach** the truth found in Scripture as the Lord gives us opportunity daily!

How would you evaluate your legacy in Christ?

Question
9

In the introduction, we met a baseball fan who had taken all the steps to prepare for the big game in case the player chasing the home-run record broke it the night he attended. He had everything he needed and paid close attention the first few at bats, but when it came to the actual moment he had become distracted; he failed and literally dropped the ball as it bounced off his forehead. Sometimes, unfortunately, as believers we become like this fan. We seem to be prepared to share the gospel, but when the exact moment comes we become distracted. We know the content of the gospel as well as how Christ has personally transformed us, but when the opportunity comes something happens. We remain silent or, even worse, we allow culture to get us off course!

However, we need to be prepared at any moment to share the gospel. Consequently, we shouldn't engage in sinful cultural activities that distract us and ruin our testimony. On the contrary, we need to live an exemplary life conformed to Christ's holiness as detailed in Scripture. We can't allow the world to corrupt our view of Scripture; we need to read it and meditate on it to hear God speak! We shouldn't care what man thinks or believes; what God has said in His Word has eternal consequences. Let us not become corrupt and filter God's Word through culture, but let us hear what He says in the context of His written Word to us. In order to remain unstained by worldly influences and free from doctrinal error, we must spend time daily in Scripture. We must know the truth and apply it in our lives with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, we need to attend church regularly to have fellowship with other believers who will encourage us in the Word to remain accountable to our Lord and Savior. Therefore, let us be a community that doesn't compromise the Word, but preaches it and lives by it as a testament to the love and transformation of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Incorporate

In what ways has the Lord called you to preach the gospel right where you are: to your family, in your neighborhood, at work, and as you go about your daily routine and activities?

How can we keep ourselves from succumbing to culture and accepting or participating in their errant ways and teaching?

What kind of legacy should we leave in Christ? What kind of legacy are we leaving as we walk daily?

Journal: Document God's Work

Journal: Document God's Work

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