

**Approved and Disapproved Workers
& Using the Bible Properly
Workers 14 & 16-19**

v14

- **Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers**
- **‘Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them in the sight of the Lord, that they do not strive about words, which is profitable for nothing, to the subverting of those who hear.’**
- **In our study of the Apostle Paul's second letter to Timothy, today we come to a major division of the epistle. Paul has been addressing the question of how to stand firm as a Christian, how to maintain the truth in a world that is falling apart.**
- **Paul has been urging Timothy to be strong in endurance, to bear trouble and suffering with brave patience. All these things are very relevant issue to our own times, and we have seen much of great help to us in this letter.**
- **But now, a new division of the Epistle begins with this 14th verse, and a new subject is introduced, because Paul is addressing a new tactic of the enemy., who is very clever in his attack upon Christians and Christianity.**
- **This verse is thus transitional.**
- **Paul now proceeds to charge Timothy concerning the special work he has to do, by first dealing with his duties as a teacher of truth brought face to face with teachers of error.**

- Paul is saying that...
- The first thing we should note (and it should startle us) is:
- **1. It is possible to use the Bible to make progress in ungodliness (2:14, 16-18).**
- **Paul mentions three improper ways of using the Bible:**
- A. TO USE THE BIBLE FOR KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT OBEDIENCE IS TO USE IT IMPROPERLY (2:14).
- B. TO USE THE BIBLE FOR WORLDLY ENDS IS TO USE IT IMPROPERLY (2:16).
- C. TO USE THE BIBLE TO TEACH HALF-TRUTHS AS TRUTH IS TO USE IT IMPROPERLY (2:18).
- ***While the misuse of the Bible leads to ungodliness, God's people should use the Bible to grow in godliness.***
- The first thing we should note (and it should startle us) is:

- One has said “The devil is no mere pimple squeezer; he goes for the jugular vein.”
- That is true. Living in a world that is under the control of the one whom Jesus himself called “the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4, Luke 4:5-8) is not a game.
- The devil has many tactics. He may seek to destroy the truth by patronizing Christianity and Christians. He may try to do so by popularity -- by diverting the attention of Christians away from why they are sent into the world. He has destroyed many a Christian witness that way.
- He may, as we have been seeing in this letter, bring about sharp persecution; he may try to paralyze us by fear, and by societal rejection; or he may bring about a polarization, an attempt to divide the body.
- That is what we find introduced in this section, where the apostle is dealing with the two-front war that these Ephesian Christians are facing -- **persecution from outside, and polarization from within the body.**
- In this verse the apostle is moved to instruct Timothy with regard to the false teachers who had emerged in Ephesus, and to set before Timothy how he is to conduct himself in regard to the heresy appearing in the church.
- In 2 Timothy 2:14, Paul basically tells Timothy to solemnly charge those under his pastoral ministry “in the presence of God” that if they misuse the Bible, it will lead to ruin. We get our word “catastrophe” from the Greek word for “ruin.” Paul means, ultimate spiritual ruin!
- He later names Hymenaeus and Philetus, who had gone astray from the truth, upsetting the faith of some with their misuse of the Bible!

- **A. TO USE THE BIBLE FOR KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT OBEDIENCE IS TO USE IT IMPROPERLY (2:14).**
- **1. It is possible to use the Bible to make progress in ungodliness (2:14, 16-18).**
- **That's why Paul here warns Timothy, "Remind them of these things and solemnly charge them in the presence of God" (2:14).**
- **Paul starts verse 14 with the words Remind them of these things.**
- **The "them" Paul is referring to are the "faithful men" he wrote about in verse 2 of this chapter, the ones to whom Timothy is to entrust what he's learned from Paul.**
- **The "them" Paul is referring to are those who were under his charge- those over whom he presided (c.f Titus 3:1).**
- **The "them" Paul is referring to are US also.**

- **Remind *them* of these things,**
- **After reminding Timothy of the essential points of the gospel, Paul adds that Timothy must always remind his hearers of these things.**
- **Timothy's job as a pastor was to keep his congregation always focused on the gospel.**
- **The church is constantly tempted to get its focus off of the message that really matters, and is tempted to become an entertainment center, a social service agency, a mutual admiration society, or any number of other things.**
- **But this temptation must be resisted, and the church must keep focused, and not be distracted by unprofitable things.**
- **Instead, the church should keep paying attention on the most important things.**
- **God's purpose is not to pander to our inquisitiveness but to give us profitable instruction. Away with all speculations that produce no edification!"**
- **The church should constantly remember these things →.**

- The “these things” that Timothy was to keep reminding his “faithful followers” were the things Paul had already communicated in this letter, and had just brought back to his own recollection, (i.e, the instructions and truths of 2 Timothy 2:2).
- The “things” Paul told Timothy to put them in remembrance of were the things of his gospel that he told Timothy himself to remember in v.8
- God’s people are continually to be put in remembrance of ‘these things’ of 2 Timothy 2:8 about Jesus Christ the Risen One and Jesus Christ, God’s ruling King.
- They were to be reminded also of the salvation which is in Christ Jesus alone with eternal glory in 2 Timothy 2:10, and of the fact that our Saviour Christ Jesus has nullified death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel (2 Timothy 1:10), and of all God’s requirements that we endure as good soldiers of Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 2:3), and especially of all that us summed up in the trustworthy saying in the hymn mentioned in verses 11-13 thus.

- If we have died with Him, we will also live with Him;
- if we endure, we will also reign with Him;
- if we deny (reject) Him, He will also deny (reject) us;
- if we are faithless, He remains faithful—for He cannot deny Himself.
- **Maybe they had already heard it, but he was to remind them again!and do so in the presence of God!**
- **Because these great principles in regard to the kingdom of Christ would be as useful to Timothy, and us, as they were to others to whom they were specially addressed.**

- Surely such lofty, soul-inspiring thoughts as these would form the best safeguard against the pitiful controversies and disputes about words, which were occupying the thoughts and wasting the lives of so many of the believers in Ephesus.
- It was these things that must possess their minds, rather than words and arguments about things which are not only not beneficial ('profitable for nothing'), but are actually harmful (they subvert those who hear them).
- The Christian is under a duty to Jesus Christ to concentrate on the essentials of the Gospel, and not to be taken up with peripheral arguments and extraneous doctrines which can divert their minds and the minds of others from Jesus Christ Himself.
- O how many unnecessary things are thus unprofitably, and contended for, instead of contending for the faith as enjoined in Jude v 3.

- **put them in remembrance**
- Having pointed out **WHAT** was to be put in remembrance, let us now state **WHO** was to be put in remembrance
- Maybe they've already heard it, but he was to remind **them** again!
- **Them**
- No persons have been mentioned, but Paul clearly has in his mind from the context especially the teachers who tended to strive about words.
- **Them** might also mean
- the Christians under his care in Ephesus over whom he was placed and presided i.e: the members of his Ephesian flock
- all his hearers,
- those other teachers (i.e the "faithful men" of v.3,) to whom he was to commit the things he had heard of the apostle, and who must expect to suffer afflictions, and endure hardships, for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel
- He was to remind all these of the soul-inspiring truths just enunciated in the faithful saying of verses 11-13; for to remind them of the above sayings would be no doubt of great use and comfort to them.
- So this warning was *very* important.
- **So in verse 14, the first instruction is about right doctrine, about the set of beliefs held by the Church, and for Timothy to preach them, teach them, and continue to do so.**
- (Titus 3:1; 2 Peter 1:12)

- **charging them before the Lord**
- The seriousness with which Paul viewed this injunction comes out in his words, 'charging them before or as in the sight of the Lord', i.e the omniscient God, who not only most certainly observes and takes notice of them, but who will one day call them to an account, and require them to give an answer to him (c.f. 1 Timothy 5:21.) In the presence of the Lord, therefore implied that this was a very important matter.
- **The Greek word translated "charging" means "adjuring them" or to "testifying solemnly, earnestly and continually." Charging is diamarturomenos, (c.f Acts 2:40): the "dia" implies interposition of witnesses or- 'testifying. i.e. In all Timothy's solemn addresses to his flock he was to solemnly call God to witness the truths which he announced to the faithful.**
- This is a very earnest, solemn thought for every public teacher, and one calculated now, as then, to deepen the life of one appointed to such an office...the calling God to witness, or as a Judge: as Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and Paul himself did, in Acts 13.
- The most awful solemnity in this charge plainly shews the great folly and mischief of striving about little controversies, mentioned later, and it would be well if all the ministers of Christ were deeply affected with a sense of this, lest what they profess to hold most sacred, be itself torn in pieces, while they are struggling in debate about its fringes.

- **that they strive not about words**
- **In the Greek it is thus translated by many: Warn them of these things, in the name of the Lord not to amuse themselves with disputes about words.**
- **That they strive (Greek *logomacheo*) not about words.**
- **Word apparently coined by Paul is used only here. The noun *logomachia* (is used in 1 Timothy 6:4.)**
- **The oldest Vulgate manuscripts put a stop at “charging them before the Lord” and reads the imperative, “Strive not thou in words,” i.e. this was a command. (Logomachei, 'instead of logomachein, as the English version).**
- **One translation reads ‘Put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord; strive not about words,’ but the text is preferable.**
- **They were not to have a mere logomachy' A mere war of words displeases Paul where vital matters are at stake. (Titus 3:9); (2 Timothy 2:23-24; 1 Timothy 6:4), (2 Timothy 2:17-18; Acts 8:15).**
- **The term "strive" is "to wrangle about empty and trifling matters" - argue about what color of socks women ought to wear under their long skirts - socks that are never seen any way... or the number of angels that can stand on the head of a pin.**

- **“Wrangling about words”** was a notorious characteristic of the false teachers in Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:6; 2:8; 6:3-5, 20-21).
- They liked to display their “knowledge” on peripheral matters that did not lead to godliness, but only to pride over “being right.”
- Paul said (1 Tim. 1:5), **“But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”**
- Paul warned them against such nit picking, and emphasizing hair-splitting controversies in their ministries, since these do more harm than good (cf. 1 Timothy 1:4; 1 Timothy 4:7; 1 Timothy 6:4-5).
- They were not to strive about mere words, and especially such as were to no profit (cf 1 Timothy 1:6; 1 Timothy 6:4).
- Instead, they were to strive with words” rather than “to have a (mere) *war of words*” (2 Timothy 2:23 & 24; 1 Timothy 6:4) where the most vital matters are at stake (2 Timothy 2:17 & 18; Acts 18:15).
- They were to contend for the form of sound words, for the wholesome words or doctrines of our Lord Jesus, but not about words.

- **There was a grave danger that such empty, profitless disputes about words and expressions, which, apparently, occupied the attention of many of the Ephesian so called Christian teachers, would end in distracting the minds of the members of the several congregations, who would naturally take their tone, in matters connected with religious life, from their teacher**
- **In this way, words would soon come to be substituted for acts in the lives of those men and women called by the name of Christ in Ephesus. (cf 1 Timothy 6:4, where these “strifes of words” are mentioned among the special characteristics of the false teachers.)**

- Words, not **“these things”**, mentioned in v 2, 8 & 11-13, have been a most fruitful source of contention in the Christian world; and among religious people, the principal cause of animosity has arisen from the different manner of apprehending the same term, while, in essence, both meant the same thing.
- All preachers and leaders should be very careful, both in speaking and writing, to explain the terms they use, and never employ them in any sense but that in which they have explained them, so as to avoid division about words resulting in unnecessary dispute.

- **that they strive or wrangle not about words to no profit,**
- **Any time you use the Bible to grow in knowledge apart from godliness, you're heading for spiritual trouble. One of the most common sins Satan uses to trip us up is spiritual pride—puffing us up with supposed knowledge (1 Cor. 8:1).**
- **To know God truly in His holiness and majesty will humble us. When you study the Bible, always ask, “What does this teach me about God and about myself? How should I apply this to my life?”**
- **We need to be careful not to misinterpret what Paul is saying here. We would be wrong to conclude that “wrangling about words” means that the precise words of Scripture do not matter. The Greek word Paul used actually means a “word fight” or an argument, and he’s saying not to get into an argument over the doctrines that Timothy is teaching.**

- In Galatians 3:16 Paul builds an argument over the fact that the promise given to Abraham uses “seed” (singular) rather than “seeds” (plural). Jesus argued for the resurrection based on the present rather than past tense of the Hebrew verb in Exodus 3:6 (Matt. 22:32). He taught that the smallest letter of the law would not pass away without being fulfilled (Matt. 5:17). It is important to study the precise words of Scripture and to understand the nuance of the original languages so that we interpret it properly.
- **Also, Paul is not saying that growing in spiritual knowledge through Scripture is unimportant. He often mentions the need to grow in spiritual knowledge and understanding (Eph. 1:17-19; Phil. 1:9-10; Col. 1:9-10). As we’ll see in a moment, accuracy in handling God’s truth is crucial. So Paul is not discouraging careful Bible study. Truth matters greatly and error always causes harm.**
- Rather, Paul is here combating those who like to get into intellectual banter over obscure points of doctrine, but who are not seeking to grow in obedience to God.
- **These scholars like to prove their superior intelligence by winning theological debates. But the point of Scriptural knowledge is not to fill our heads but to change our lives. To use the Bible for knowledge without application is to misuse it.**
- **The church must stand for the truth, but it must not become a debating society.**

- **to no profit,**
- **The** phrase - to no profit is the key in this injunction - not that words aren't important.
- They were not to spend their time in their pulpits in contests about words which tend to no solid advantage to truth of their hearers, nor to themselves nor others.
- They were not to spend their time in their pulpits in contests about words that were not to spiritual edification, to godly edifying, according to "the faith" (pistis.)
- They were not to engage in teaching that was to no profit i.e., literally, "**profitable for nothing**", and thus the opposite of "**meet for the master's use**" (2 Timothy 2:21).

- **Needless and useless argumentation have been the bane of historical Christianity. At the time of the great Communist revolution in Russia, the Orthodox Church was engaged in a tremendous argumentative crisis over the making of church vestments!**
- **Many a time, Christians have plunged into useless and silly arguments while the citadel of their faith was destroyed.**
- **Not only are such arguments of no profit, as Paul said; but they are actively mischievous, destructive and subversive of true faith. Christians?**
- **They are commanded not to do it!**

- **but to the subverting or the ruin of the hearers.**
- This shows that it is a serious matter and there is much to lose.
- If we take the focus off the message of God, and put the focus on human opinions and endless debates, it will result in **the ruin of the hearers.**
- The Bible says, *faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God* ([Romans 10:17](#)).
- But if people do not hear the word of God, then **ruin** comes by hearing the opinions and speculations and entertainment of man.

- The English ‘but,’ (which has nothing answering to it in the Greek), introduces a touch of sarcasm. Paul says simply ‘*useful for nothing,*’ working for the ruin or subversion of them that hear.
- To the subverting is the Greek word *katastrephō* to turn down or over, *used* only here and 2 Peter 2:6. It gives us the English word catastrophe.
- Paul is saying here that there is a sort of “preaching” that leads to catastrophe, since not only is it the opposite of “edifying” (building up) (2 Corinthians 13:10), but it instead subverts or overturn the hearers-in Bajan palance it cat spradles them or licks dem up, and tends only to turn some hearers off, and away.
- Such “preaching” is not only unprofitable, but hurtful and pernicious, and by all means to be avoided.

- Such “preaching” is useless because such war of words merely upsets the hearers, and may tend to their subversion, or overturning, by confounding their minds, destroying their steadiness in the faith, and turning them away from the simplicity of faith, overthrowing their faith and misleading their judgments, drawing them into parties and factions, the fruit of which is nothing but envy, and contentions, and different opinions in matters of faith; contrary to what has been always observed.
- That type of teaching is rightly condemned on the sole ground that it does no good.
- The understanding of this verse, then is that in Timothy’s public ministry he is to preach the truth, right doctrine, and at the same time not to get into debates or arguments over it.
- The reason is that those that would argue or debate don’t want to know the truth, they are trying to push their own beliefs on you and others and thereby sway the crowd.
- That’s the danger and warning here and that’s what Paul means by it only ruins the hearers, and causes catastrophe for them.
- The instruction here then, was that Paul was to insist that there be not quarrel about words with others, because it does no good but only ruins the hearers

- **In the end disputing about words seeks not the victory of truth but the victory of the speaker.**
- **It is rare, indeed, that a religious controversy does not produce this effect, and this is commonly the case, where, as often happens, the matter in dispute is of little importance.**
- **The subverting of the hearers is the general tendency of all polemical divinity and controversial preaching, when angry passions are called in to support the doctrines of the Gospel.**
- **Not only are such arguments and disputes useless and profitless, but they are positively mischievous as we get distracted by endless discussion or strife over things that don't have central importance.**
- **In the long history of Christianity, St. Paul's repeated warning respecting the danger of these disputes about theological terms and expressions has been sadly verified.**
- **Such contentions serve only to unsettle the mind, only to shake true faith, only to distract the one who gives himself up to this fatal pursuit, from real, earnest, patient work for Christ.**

- **"Words, not *things*, have been a most fruitful source of contention in the Christian world; and among religious people, the principle cause of animosity has arisen from the *different manner* of apprehending the same *term*, while, in *essence*, both meant the *same thing*." (Clarke)**
- **We would assume doing anything to the destruction or detriment of others would be non-productive or at least should be.**
- **Might I suggest that we all use some amount of wisdom? We all know when things are getting heated, we all know when someone is getting upset, we all know when we are being offensive, we all know when we are hurting another's feelings, so why do we continue on to the detriment of someone else?**
- **Such a warning! There is an area where we need to stop things. When we see something going on in our sphere that is getting out of hand it is easy to let it slide but it should be stopped - allowing it to slide will mean it will be back being a bigger problem next time.**
- **Don't make an issue over minor words to the detriment of others – whether in church, in class, in fellowship, or at the dinner table.**
- **Why? So the listener isn't subverted or overthrown, and so that there is no katastrophe" the word from which we gain the English word catastrophe.**

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

- **Note the things which ought not to be matters of contention among Christians; namely,**
- **1. Such things in which we differ from each other, rather in words, than in sense; oftentimes opponents mean the same things, but differ only in the way and manner of expression.**
- **2. Such things as tend to little or no profit, either as to edification in faith, in love, or in practical godliness.**
- **Observe also, The apostle's argument, why we should not contend about these things; because they tend to beget strife and contention among Christians, by dividing them into factions and parties, and also tend to the subversion of the hearers, causing them to doubt of the truth of the faith, about which the contending parties cannot agree.**

- **John MacArthur** writes: One of the most popular and seductive false teachings is the promotion of high self esteem as a Christian virtue, when, in reality, it is the very foundation of sin.
- Such destructive notions are inevitable when Christians listen to the world above the Word, and are more persuaded by men's wisdom than by God's.
- Far too few leaders in the church today can say honestly with Paul that their "exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit" ([1Th 2:3](#)).
- As Christians become less and less familiar with Scripture and sound doctrine on a firsthand, regular basis, they become easy prey for jargon that sounds Christian but strongly mitigates against God's truth.
- Such unbiblical and arbitrary ideas as being "**slain in the Spirit**" and "**binding Satan**" frequently replace or are valued above the clear teaching of and submission to Scripture

- **Interesting thoughts for consideration?**
- If a grace pastor re-minds his people of Paul's gospel it will keep them from "words to no profit." Those words "no profit" are associated with *idolatry* (Isa.44:9,10; Jer. 2:8-11; 16:19,20).
- **The spiritual Ephesians to whom Timothy ministered wouldn't bow to idols of wood or stone, but Paul is talking about "words to no profit." That's a reference to religion (Jer. 7:8-10), the religion of Judaism.**
- Since Paul is talking about words of no profit that "subvert" the soul, we know he was talking about *the law* (cf.Acts15:24).
- The Jews of the circumcision were subverting believers with the law in those days (Tit.1:10,11; 3:9-11). So Paul was warning Timothy about striving about the words of the law.
- "You can make an idol out of the law?" The Jews did! They trusted in the law of Moses (John 5:45) rather than in the God of Moses (II Sam.22:31). They rested in the law of Moses (Rom.2:17) rather than in the God of Moses (Ps.37:7).
- When the Lord tried to introduce the New Covenant, they made a god out of the Old Covenant. It happens whenever God changes things (II Ki.18:1-4). We know the Galatians made a god out of the law for Paul compared their worship of idols to turning to the law (4:8-10). Keeping Paul's gospel in remembrance prevents this.
- We know this is important, for Paul *charged* them not to fall for the law, a word he only used for important things (I Thes.2:11,12;5:7).

- **Observe here, the excellent advice which Paul gives to Timothy, to all the ministers of the church, and to all the Christian churches far and near, that they spend not their time in disputes, that they contend not about words, which have no tendency to make men either wiser or better, but serve only to violate the laws of charity, and cause men to wrangle eternally, and persecute one another with hard names and characters of reproach.**

- **TO USE THE BIBLE FOR WORLDLY ENDS IS TO USE IT IMPROPERLY (2:16).**
- In 2:16, Paul refers to **“worldly and empty chatter.”**
- In 1 Timothy 6:20 he uses the same phrase in reference to **“the opposing arguments of what is falsely called ‘knowledge.’”** He may be talking about a different aspect of “wrangling about words.”
- The word **“worldly”** means, “permitted to be trod under foot,” hence, “profane, unhallowed.”
- **It has the nuance of trafficking lightly in the things of God or of using God and the Bible for worldly gain.**
- This sort of thing is rampant in much of what is called Christianity in our day. The “health and wealth” heresy is perhaps the most blatant form of it.
- **2 Timothy 2:16 -18 deals with the price of not keeping focus: The result is that the faith of some is overthrown.**

16

- ¹⁶ But shun profane *and* idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.
- The third thing the apostle says to Timothy about handling church squabbles is in Verse 16:
- Avoid such godless chatter, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, and their talk will eat its way like gangrene. (2 Timothy 2:16-17a RSV)
- The word for *avoid* or *shun* is really the word, "walk around."
- Skirt it; do not get involved; do not join the clamor; do not let yourself be down into these kinds of word battles because, if you get involved, it will only escalate the problem.

- The term he uses, which is translated, *godless chatter*, is literally "**empty babblings**," or **profane and idle babblings**.
- These **babblings** refers to anything that takes the focus off of the gospel and God's Word.
- They are **profane** because they are unholy in contrast to the holiness of God's Word.
- They are **idle**, because even though people like to hear them, they don't have lasting value.
- Man's opinions, man's teachings, man's opinion polls, man's stories, man's programs, are all **profane and idle babblings** compared to the simple Word of God.
- **Profane and idle babblings** refers to the utterances of people who shoot off their mouths, and who talk off the top of their heads and display a lot of emotionalism.

- Paul says that when these things become the focus of the message from the pulpit that **"It will lead to more and more ungodliness,"** it will increase to more ungodliness.
- Paul warns Timothy , and us not to get involved with ***godless chatter***, or **"empty profane and idle babblings,"** because it will escalate and lead to more and more **"unwholesomeness,"** literally.
- The servant of God in verse 15 is thus in stark contrast with the false teachers in verse 16, who are known for their ungodly talk and the errors in their interpretation and communication of the word of truth.
- The bottom line is this, irreverent or irreligious and pointless babble leads the speaker and the listener away from the truth and into more and more ungodly behavior.

- The words , “it will lead to further ungodliness,” are literally, “they will make further progress in ungodliness.” The false teachers claimed that their teaching would help you move ahead in your spiritual life. Paul sarcastically says, “Yes, you will make progress all right—progress in ungodliness!”
- Paul piles up words to drive home this frightening point: “useless,” “ruin of the hearers” (2:14); “further ungodliness” (2:16); “spread like gangrene” (2:17); “gone astray from the truth,” “upset the faith of some” (2:18).
- The improper use of the Bible is not a harmless activity. It destroys lives!
- That’s one reason James 3:1 warns, **“Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment.”**

- **and their talk will eat its way like gangrene. 17 a**
- **Paul warns in v 16 against getting caught up discussing insignificant questions that use a lot of time and are not really edifying.**
- **Furthermore, such empty talk is like a cancer and does much harm, in fact says the apostle, it will "eat like gangrene."**
- **Gangrene is an infection of the bloodstream that not only spreads rapidly through the body, but smells horribly.**
- **Foul, suppurating wounds keep increasing in size, so that it is one of the most difficult problems to handle, medically. God's view of a church squabble is that it spreads like gangrene. It smells bad, it spreads quickly, and a whole congregation can be infected by it.**
- **Paul has an example right at hand in Ephesus which he offers as a case in point in verse 17b, by reporting that the false teachings of men like Hymenaeus and Philetus are examples of such poisonous infection.**
- **These men had misinterpreted the Bible, and injected their own theories about the resurrection, and their teaching did a tremendous amount of damage to the faith of some believers.**

17

- **17 And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort,**
- **Their message will spread like cancer:**
- **The message of profane and idle babblings was apparently somewhat popular and tended to captures a wide audience and spread quickly like a cancer or gangrene .**
- **Paul gives the example of two men he mentions in verse 17, Hymenaeus and Philetus, who are known for their irreverent babble that was leading people into more and more ungodliness.**
- **Hymenaeus and Philetus:**
- **This is the only place where we hear of Philetus, but Hymenaeus is mentioned in 1 Timothy 1:20 as a man whom says he had, "delivered him unto Satan in order that he may learn not to blaspheme," Paul delivered to Satan that [he] may learn not to blaspheme.**
- **That was several years earlier. But, evidently, it had not done Hymenaeus any good, because he is still spreading his false doctrine throughout the church, teaching that the resurrection was already past.**
- **of this sort**
- **Here Paul tells us that these men were of the sort that presented an erroneous message full of profane and idle babblings that tended to spread quickly .**
- **See verse about likiong their ears tickled**

18

- **18 who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some**
- **Who** in [2 Timothy 2:18](#) “Implies that Hymenaeus and Philetus were only the more conspicuous members of a class of false teachers.” (White)
- They had **strayed concerning the truth:**
- **Apparently, these men had started out correctly, and had then wandered or swerved and strayed from the truth (or correct position) and were now claiming incorrectly that the resurrection is already past: It seems they were teaching that we were already in God’s millennial kingdom, or that there was no resurrection to come since it had already occurred.**
- **The result was that they were thereby upsetting the faith of some**

- It is possible to trace how he got into that kind of teaching. Undoubtedly, he took some of Paul's teaching about what happens to a non -- believer when he becomes a Christian, that he is baptized into the death and resurrection of our Lord.
- In some way we have been made to partake of the death and resurrection of Christ so that we die with him and we are risen again with him in the spirit.
- Evidently, Hymenaeus taught that is all there is going to be; that spiritual resurrection that you experienced when you were born again is all the resurrection there is going to be.
- That probably was an accommodation to the Greek philosophy which was prevalent in Ephesus at that time, which said that the body was evil, so it was unthinkable that God would ever be concerned with resurrecting bodies; they were tombs from which we ought to be glad we have escaped.
- In teaching that, Hymenaeus was accommodating to the doctrine of the world by taking only partial truth from the revelation of the Scriptures. That is how heresy starts.
- Hymenaeus ignored the Lord's own words when he predicted that the hour was coming when "all who are in the grave shall hear the voice of the Son of God and shall come forth, some to a resurrection of condemnation and some to a resurrection of redemption," (John 5:28b-29).
- The resurrection is not only spiritual, it is also literal. Those teachers in Ephesus were ignoring that, as a result, "they upset the faith of many."

- Though the only false doctrine Paul mentioned regarding these two is that they taught that **the resurrection is already past**, the effect was to **overthrow the faith of some**.
- Undoubtedly, this was not their *only* error; and a fundamental error in such an area often leads to many more strange beliefs, until one has abandoned Jesus and His truth all together.
- Many today accept and honor teachers who are way off in one area or another; and they justify it by saying, “I eat the meat and spit out the bones.” This kind of thinking will *certainly* **overthrow the faith of some** because some will *certainly* choke to spiritual death on the bones you say you spit out.
- Notice Paul said, **they overthrow the faith of some**. We shouldn't require that *everyone* be led astray by a teacher before we avoid them; even if *some* are having their faith overthrown, it is bad enough.

- In First Corinthians 15, the Apostle Paul himself tells us that if we lose the resurrection we have lost everything.
- The whole of Christian truth rests on whether Jesus was actually bodily raised from the dead -- and as a consequence we too will be raised from the dead -- or not. If we lose that, Paul says, our faith is vain and our preaching is vain (1 Corinthians 15:17); we have no hope beyond the grave.
- Here was a serious deviation from the revelation of the Scripture. It illustrates how error can take form and rapidly spread throughout a congregation.

- **C. TO USE THE BIBLE TO TEACH HALF-TRUTHS AS TRUTH IS TO USE IT IMPROPERLY (2:18).**
- These men were not totally wrong. They were teaching a half-truth as if it were the whole truth, which is often Satan's method. They were teaching that the resurrection already had taken place. They had verses from Paul to back up their views. He wrote often of the fact that Christ is risen and that we are risen with Him.
- **But he also taught that there is a future resurrection of the body, which these men denied. They argued that the resurrection was only spiritual and thus was an accomplished fact.**
- **You may wonder, "What's the big deal? Why was this worth contending about?" Paul answers that question in 1 Corinthians 15, where he says that if there is no future, literal, bodily resurrection, then Christ Himself is not even raised and our faith is worthless.**
- **Mark it well: Heresy always begins as truth out of balance! There is always an element of truth in the teachings of the cults. That's how they entice people. They even have verses to back up their errors. So they prey on the untaught who are looking for "something more" in their faith. But they lead people away from dependence on the living God.**
- If somebody handed you a three-dollar bill with a picture of Frank Sinatra on it, you wouldn't be fooled. **A counterfeit always looks genuine at first glance. That's why we have to examine the popular worldly teachings cleverly cloaked with the Bible that are flooding the church in our day. They promote half-truths as if they were the truth of God.**

- Also, many “Christian” self-help books approach the Bible from the perspective of how to gain what *you* want in life, rather than reverently coming to it to learn how to please God (Col. 1:10). It is using the Bible for worldly success.
- Note two things: First, such false teachers are always popular. “Their talk will spread like gangrene.” You don’t have to help gangrene to spread!
- Because they appeal to the flesh, these false teachers never lack a following.
- Some of the largest churches in the world use the Bible to help people succeed in their worldly, selfish goals.
- But don’t judge a church by how big it is, but rather by how sound is the teaching in producing genuine godliness.
- People who buy into this kind of false teaching often testify of how much they’ve been helped, and often, outwardly, it seems true. But any time people are helped out of their troubles without learning to depend more on the living God and submit more fully to His lordship, it is false help.
- Second, Christians are to avoid such teachers and their teaching . Steer clear of them. Don’t waste your time watching them on TV or reading their books.
- By appealing to the flesh and the lure of the world, these false teachers draw away after them people who are not fully submissive to the lordship of Christ and His gospel of the cross.
- To use the Bible for worldly ends is to misuse it.

- Before we look at the positive side of how to use the Bible to grow in godliness, here are three tests of sound doctrine that will keep you from being taken in by false teaching:
- ***First, does it honor God and exalt Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord?*** Sound doctrine always lifts God up in His majesty and holiness. It exalts Jesus as fully God and fully man, who gave Himself for our sins and was raised bodily from the dead.
- ***Second, does it humble proud, fallen sinners?*** Sound doctrine always brings sinners to the foot of the cross where they come to the end of their own pride and self-sufficiency.
- ***Third, does it promote holiness?*** Sound teaching always results in obedience to the Word of God and progress in holy living. It leads to genuine love for God and love for others.
- **The fact that in four out of six verses here Paul presents the negative should alarm us enough to examine ourselves.**
- **Using the Bible is not enough! You can use the Bible to your own destruction!**
- **Using the Bible for knowledge without obedience, to promote worldly goals, or to teach half-truths as the entire truth will lead to spiritual ruin.**
- **We need to be careful to use the Bible to grow to know God and to grow in submission to Him. But two verses focus on the positive:**

VERSE 19

19) The reward of focus:

The solid foundation of God.

Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

- **Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands,**
- In verse 19 brings the certainty we can have in the word of truth.
- The last thing the apostle says is, remember that God's firm foundation stands.
- In the preceding verses , Paul expressed caution against the rising tide of deception and wickedness. But here, in verse 19 he brings the certainty we can have in the word of truth, and makes it clear both to Timothy and to us that the kingdom of God cannot be shaken.
- In effect, he says "Timothy, don't panic over these things. Yes, there may be heresy in the congregation, there may be dissension, and you may have to do battle against it, but, remember, '**God's firm foundation stands.**'"
- Though men like Hymenaeus and Philetus make dangerous attacks against the church and their message spread like cancer, and even though the faith of some might be overthrown, **nevertheless, the solid foundation of God stands.**
- God has a plan, God has a purpose, God has a strategy, and it is not going to fail. It doesn't matter how many fall away, how many reject the truth, how many go their own way after *profane and vain babblings* .**God's firm foundation stands.**
- It is good for believers to know that “**the solid foundation of God stands.** Since it isn't going to change; therefore, we can keep our focus on it.
- It is hard to focus on something that often changes, so God gave us a solid foundation in His Word to keep our focus on.

- **D. THE PROPER USE OF THE BIBLE REQUIRES THE PROPER FOUNDATION.**
- It's kind of scary reading about professing Christian people who have been ruined (2:14), who have gone astray from the truth (2:18), and who have been upset in their faith (2:18). We may wonder, "How can I keep on the path? How can I keep from being ruined?"
- Well Paul reminds Timothy, and us of the foundation of the Christian life.
- Paul points out that those who truly belong to the Lord are not carried away by false teaching. The foundation refers to the true people of God, the church.
- The seal on the foundation, or cornerstone, has two statements that reflect two important aspects of our salvation.
- These two statements come from the story of Korah's rebellion against Moses. Moses said in Numbers 16:5, "the Lord will show who is His, and who is holy, and will bring him near to Himself; even the one whom He will choose...." and then he warned the congregation to depart from the tents of these wicked men before God destroyed them Numbers 16:26.

- **Paul says that the first part of the seal is, “The Lord knows those who are His.”**
- **Salvation does not begin with** man; it begins with God. He planned it and He executed it. **“He chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world”** (Ephesians 1:4). **“In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth”** (James 1:18). **We can’t know God’s truth until God has first laid hold of us and saved us from our sins by His grace alone.**

- **Having this seal:**
- **Paul refers twice to the Old Testament to communicate this..**
- **The first reference quoted here in Verse 19 seems to relate to the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram recorded in Numbers 16, when God was dealing with those who chose to revolt from Moses' leadership as if Moses wasn't the only leader God could use.**
- **The reason for the usage of this verse is to say of the cases of false teachers, mentioned in verses 17& 18 that God knows who are his and who are proving themselves to not be His.**
- **What is being communicated here, as in the next phrase of this verse is that if you claim to be God's, servant as these men in Numbers 16 did ; or if we claim to be a Christians, and followers of Jesus, then we must turn away from sinful behaviors, and leave them behind**
- **Recal that during Israel's wandering through the wilderness, those three men challenged the authority of Moses, saying, "Why do you listen to Moses? He is no different than we are. We are men of understanding like Moses."**
- **Why don't you listen to us, was their implication. Moses took the problem to the Lord, and the Lord said, "Bring them here. Let me give them an examination." Korah, Dathan and Abiram and their families all stood together.**
- **Suddenly, before the eyes of the whole congregation, the ground opened up, down they went into the pit and the ground slammed shut behind them. God said, "Any more questions?"**

- **“The Lord knows those who are His,”**
- **The words “The Lord knows those who are His “are taken from Numbers 16:5. ‘In the morning the Lord will show who are His.’”**
- **This is the first inscription on the seal. If Hymenaeus and Philetus continue their destructive ministry, **the Lord knows those who are His.****
- **If profane and vain babblings sweep through the church like cancer, **the Lord knows those who are His.****
- **If the faith of some is overthrown, **the Lord knows those who are His.****
- **It is like a coin with two sides, God's side and man's side.**
- **On God's side is, "**The Lord knows them that are his.**"**
- **God does not sit in heaven, wondering and worrying if you are saved or not. He does not hope or wonder if you will make it to the end. He knows. **The Lord knows those who are His.****
- **It is remarkable to recognize in the Gospels that Jesus knew that Judas was a traitor from the beginning. The Scriptures tell us that Jesus knew before he chose him that Judas was a devil, because He knew those who were his, and those who were not his.**
- **Paul reminds us that God's church is never going to be altered, shaken, or diminished, even by the heresies that may rage among us. God knows them that are his.**

- The other side of the coin is that man can know those who are God's when he sees them departing from forms of iniquity such as false doctrine and false teaching among us.
- So the second inscription on the foundation of God is **“Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”**
- **Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness.”**
- As Ephesians 1:4 points out, God chose us **“that we would be holy and blameless before Him.”**
- We can be assured that we belong to the Lord because we see Him progressively working His holiness into our daily lives.
- **So the foundation for using the Bible properly is that God knows us as His own and that through our diligent, careful study and application of His Word of truth, we are growing in godliness.**

- It is true that God knows those who are His; and He calls those who are His to leave their sin behind.
- The second bible reference is not as clear. The language is perhaps another echo from the story of Korah in Numbers 16:26-27 or possibly from Isaiah 52:11, which states **“Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean *thing*; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.**
- Some might say, “I belong to the Lord, I know I’m His. I am going to heaven. It doesn’t matter so much how I live.”
- Yet, such a son has forgotten that there are *two* inscriptions on the foundation of God – and those who **are His** will have the desires and the actions to **depart from iniquity**.
- If someone does not have the desire or the actions to **depart from iniquity**, it is fair to ask if they really belong to Jesus or if they have just deceived themselves.
- **We can be confident that those who really are Christians will ultimately see the error that is involved, and leave it. That is where our faith can rest.**
- **The key here to this is the name of the Lord, that’s where the power to turn away comes from, but the desire to do so must come from within.**

- The apostle says that those who are genuine will depart from iniquity. That is the test of a true believer.
- There is a life in him that will not let him compromise himself with evil and iniquity forever, even though there may be a long-term struggle, sometimes over a period of years, for God will not let them go on.
- They must leave the false teaching at last because they cannot live with themselves any longer.
- Speaking of certain apostates, the Apostle John said, "They went out from us that it might be evident that they were not of us, for if they had been of us they would have continued with us," (1 John 2:19).
- That is the mark that will encourage and enlighten Timothy.
- We don't always know those who are His, but we can know for ourselves, for as [Romans 8:16](#) says, The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.
- But with others, we cannot always know those who are His.

Conclusion

- To summarize the teachings of 2 Timothy 2:14-19, Paul tells Timothy that God has his own ways of dealing with the problems addressed.
- God's way to handle disputes about words in the congregation is to
- First, plead with them for unity, and urge them before the Lord to remember who they are and to stop quarreling;
- Second, require labor for accuracy in understanding the Scriptures;
- Third, avoid complicity with *godless chatter*, or "*empty profane and idle babblings*"; and,
- Finally, to remember that God is still in control, and His firm foundation will stand, for God knows those who are his and they will manifest themselves sooner or later by departing from iniquity.
- That wonderful word of advice is how God urges us to handle quarrels like that in this 20th century day as well.

- **Spurgeon opines on verse 19 thus: “The first seal marked it for the Lord, the second secured its removal from the common stones around it. First comes election, and sanctification follows.**
- **I want every professing Christian to have that double mark, and so to be Christ’s man, known of all to be such by coming out from the unclean, and being separated unto the Lord.”**
- **White suggests that ...There are two seals on the solid foundation of God. “The one seal bears two inscriptions, two mutually complementary parts or aspects.”**