

Theme: To protect a local church from false teaching, leaders must work hard to teach the truth, focusing on the great doctrines of God's Word and avoiding useless controversies, and back up their teaching with the power of a godly life.

I. Maintaining A Healthy Body

- A. Paul uses medical language several times in the Pastoral Epistles
- B. In 2 Timothy 1:13 he spoke of "sound teaching" - the word 'sound' means 'healthy'
- C. In 2 Timothy 2:17 false teaching is like gangrene - a deadly infection that can call for amputation
- D. How is a local church protected from the infection of false teaching so that it is healthy?
- E. This week and next - fighting the good fight for the faith

II. The Best Defense Is A Good Offense!

- A. Timothy must work hard to positively preach the truth
Keep reminding them of these things... ¹⁵ Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:14–15
 - 1. Keep reminding - present imperative; constantly
 - 2. Do your best/labor over - this will take hard work (NOTE: not 'study to show yourself as in KJV)
 - 3. To be an approved worker - putting out worthy work
 - 4. Correctly handling - cutting a straight line (Proverbs 3:5-6) - not swerving to side issues
 - 5. Similar points are made in vv24-25

And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, **able to teach**, not resentful. ²⁵ Those who oppose him he must **gently instruct**, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, 2 Timothy 2:24–25

- a. The leader must be able to teach
 - b. The leader must gently instruct, patiently working to help people understand and apply the truth of God's Word
- 6. Paul will stress this positive aspect to Timothy later
Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction. 2 Timothy 4:2
 - a. Positively preach the Word, no matter the season!
 - b. Preach the whole Word - correct, rebuke, encourage
 - c. Do this patiently, carefully bringing out the truths of God's Word, constantly proclaiming the Gospel and the great truths of the faith.
 - 7. The first step in protecting the church from false teaching is a constant practice of teaching the truth of Scripture. The best way to protect from sickness is consistent healthy practices!
 - 8. A local church that does not stress the sustained, careful teaching of the great truths of God's Word will become sick and susceptible to the infection of false teaching.
 - 9. Leaders in the church must give themselves to the hard work of teaching the Word of God, focusing on the essential doctrines of the faith. This is the best antidote to the infection of false teachings.

B. Timothy must not be distracted by useless quarrels

Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen...

Avoid godless chatter,

because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly...

Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels.

2 Timothy 2:14, 16, 23

1. Avoid quarrels over words, godless chatter, foolish and stupid arguments - endless quarreling
2. These are of no value and ruin the people who engage in them, leading to ungodliness, and producing more quarrels
3. Timothy must warn other believers (v14) against these behaviors as well - this applies to all believers not just church leaders.
4. These types of quarrels are at best a distraction from the healthy teaching on which the church should be focused, wasting energy on wild speculations and conspiracies, and at worst they eventually draw one away from the truth and degrade one's character.
5. Leaders must not allow the church to become distracted by secondary or tertiary issues but must labor to keep the church on mission.
6. We will look at this more next week.

III. The Power of A Godly Life

A. Timothy must reinforce the truth with a godly life

Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness." ²⁰ In a large

house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. ²¹ If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. ²² Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 2 Tim 2:19–22

1. Confesses name of the Lord - Lev. 24:16 & Is 26:13
2. Must turn - a command, not an option!
3. In LXX to not turn from wickedness is blasphemy of the name of the LORD!
4. To be a noble useful vessel Timothy must cleanse himself from false doctrine and sin (v21)
5. Timothy must flee evil desires and pursue righteousness, etc - character
6. Paul had already told Timothy something very similar before!
Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 2 Timothy 2:22
But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. 1 Timothy 6:11
 - a. It is clearly essential for Timothy to flee evil and false teaching and to actively pursue godly character
 - b. This is essential for all leaders in the church - and all believers (all who call on the Lord out of a pure heart)
7. One of the problems of the false teachers is that it did not lead to godly living.

- a. We will see more next week but the false teaching in Ephesus appears to have been an early form of speculative Gnosticism
- b. These groups denigrated the body, and many thus said your bodily conduct did not matter.
- c. In contrast with this, Timothy must pursue godliness in his own life and teach others how to do the same!

B. The great promise to Timothy - and us!

Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress.

¹⁶Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. 1 Timothy 4:15–16

- 1. Timothy must diligently give himself and keep growing in these areas.
- 2. Two key areas - his life and his doctrine. He must give himself to staying healthy and growing in both of these.
- 3. If he will do this it will protect him and the whole church from the infection of false teaching that leads to ungodliness and slavery to sin.
- 4. What a great promise for the church of God!

IV. Applying the Word

A. Fighting the Good Fight as a church

- 1. This text obviously applies to the church & leaders
- 2. The church must be built upon the clear, consistent teaching of the Scripture, with a great focus on the actual text and the essential doctrines of the faith.
- 3. Church leaders must be selected based on their ability to properly handle and pass on the Scripture, as well as their godly character.

- 4. Too many local congregations have turned Sunday morning into a “show” rather than being centered on Word and sacrament, and the teachings that are more like motivational TED talks than the careful teaching of the Word of God.
- 5. Congregations can also fail in choosing leaders who are great motivational speakers or chief executives but who do not fulfill the qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 - which are primarily about character.
- 6. Never choose a church because it is popular, feels motivational, has the popular worship team or the “cool kids ministry” - go where the Word of God is clearly taught (and prayed and sung and practiced), and where the leaders display godly character!
- 7. Parents - this includes youth ministry. The most popular youth ministries of recent decades have NOT focused on teaching Scripture - and it has been an unmitigated disaster.

B. Fighting the good fight as individuals and families

- 1. The same principles apply to my individual and family life
- 2. Only the sustained intake of the Word of God can protect me from being infected by the false ideas that surround us - and may even be promoted by churches!
- 3. How is my intake of the Word of God?
 - a. We’re too distracted by #trending words to savor the timeless Word. Brett McCracken
 - b. Our ratio of Word to world is way out of balance - Ken Boa

- c. Do I soak in the Word first, or the news, social media, or sports page?
- d. Do I spend more time in the Word or the news, social media, or sports page?

4. Families **MUST** regularly teach the Word to our kids and grandkids! If you are too busy to do this - CUT OTHER THINGS OUT - this is the one essential.

C. Do I display godly character?

1. A godly life is not just for leaders; it is for all of us!
2. Am I growing in godliness, putting away sin and practicing righteousness?
3. Parents must display a love for the Word of God and godly character - your kids will become what you are, not what you want them to be!
4. Do my words, attitudes, and actions show others what God is like, or do I speak one thing and then act another way?
5. Let the Spirit help you grow in this!

D. The Lord's Table

Fighting the Good Fight for the Faith - Part 1

2 Timothy 2:14-26
 March 20, 2022
 Communion
 Acts 20:32

Teaching keywords: Word of God; leadership; character; godliness; false teaching and heresy

Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. Acts 20:32

Keep reminding them of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. ¹⁵ Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

¹⁶ Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. ¹⁷ Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, ¹⁸ who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some. ¹⁹ Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness."

²⁰ In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. ²¹ If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. ²² Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. ²³ Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels.

²⁴ And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. ²⁵ Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, ²⁶ and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will. 2 Timothy 2:14-26