

**PART ONE: Recipient (1:1-2)**

*2 Timothy 1:1* - By way of review, Paul stands as a model leader in the New Testament. He knew what his spiritual gift was. All spiritual leaders are expected to know what their spiritual gift or gifts are. Obviously, those whom he leads are to be expected after they have been discipled to know their spiritual gift. It is important to understand for leaders and followers alike to understand that spiritual gifts are not some kind of attainment. They are received at salvation by the will of God (1 Cor. 12:11, 18). The promise of life in Christ Jesus is eternal life (1 John 2:25) which is given to those who trust Christ at the moment of initial faith (John 3:36; 5:24). We are told in 1 John 5:11-12 that this life is in Christ. When we trust Christ as savior, we are baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-13; Gal. 3:26-27). We know that we now possess this eternal life if we have trusted Christ because He so testifies in His word (1 John 5:13). This promise is clearly appropriated by faith (Rom. 4:16) and is provided by God's grace. A leader's spiritual gift as a role in the body of Christ is stated to be in harmony with this promise. Our job is to express this new life in our thoughts and deeds on a daily basis.

*1:2* - One of the tasks of a spiritual leader is to produce spiritual children. This is true whether we lead only by example or in some official capacity. Spiritual children occur when we share the gospel and someone responds in faith (1 Cor. 4:14-15). That individual becomes our spiritual child. One does not bring a child into the world and then abandon it. One cares for and guides that child. Jesus in the Great Commission told us to do just that. He said to make disciples in Matthew 28:19-20. This includes baptizing those who believe and teaching them to obey everything Christ commanded (This includes everything taught during His earthly ministry per John 14:26 and everything that He taught by the Holy Spirit to the Apostles and their close associates per John 16:12-15). By way of review, the need for God's enabling grace is set forth as needed for one who would lead or for any Christian (James 4:6; 1 Cor. 15:10-11). God's mercy is also important because it withholds much adversity that we might otherwise experience (Heb. 4:16; Prov. 28:13; Mt. 5:7). Finally God's peace is vital. This is not peace with God but the peace of God at work in our lives and hearts (Rom. 5:1 cp. Col. 3:15). The source of these enablements and benefits is both God the Father and Jesus Christ. This shows their equality in the Godhead. As leaders or followers, we are responsible to God and dependent on Him to build into the lives of believers.

**PART TWO: Reminders for Leaders (1:3-18)**

*1:3-4* - One of the important disciplines for any believer to practice is the discipline of prayer. It involves praying for specific people as Paul prayed for Timothy. It is important to pray for other believers whom we are working to develop - whether it is for basic discipling or mentoring for leadership. These prayers need to include a balance of thanksgiving and request. Notice that prayers of leaders are to be on a consistent ongoing basis. Obviously, Paul prayed at least twice a day as shown by the terms "night and day". We are to be thankful for what is going right in the midst of bad situations (Eph. 5:20) and making request for what is not going right (1 Pet. 5:7). We are also reminded that it is important to serve God with a pure conscience.

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Conscience in a believer serves two purposes. It reinforces what God's word says is right and wrong. It also guides us on questions of right and wrong not commanded or forbidden by scripture. To serve God with a pure conscience, it is important to walk in the light of God's word (1 John 1:7; Ps. 119:105) and to not try to cover sin but to confess it to God and forsake it (1 John 1:9; Prov. 28:13). Looking at the example of believers who have gone before us is very helpful in serving with a pure conscience. In view of Timothy's grief over Paul's imprisonment, Paul was eager to see Timothy. In the same way, we are to have an eagerness to see and meet with other believers (Heb. 10:24-25). The outcome of this is to be filled with joy. Many believers neglect the discipline of seeing other believers by meeting with them and so rob themselves of full or complete joy (cp. 2 John 1:12). In this case Paul was prevented by his imprisonment from doing this. In the same way sickness can sometimes hinder us. In summary we should ask ourselves how we can improve our prayer life, keep our conscience in top working order and insure that our desire to meet with other believers is what God says it should be.

1:5 - As leaders, it is important to encourage the development of family legacies. In this case there was a legacy of faith. Timothy's mother was Jewish and his father was Greek. We know from 2 Timothy 3:15 that Timothy was taught the scriptures from childhood. Based on this verse, it would appear that his mother and his grandmother probably were the ones who taught him. Both of them were women of faith who had placed their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and had lived this out in their daily lives. The combination of instruction and real faith as a model laid the foundation for the authentic faith of Timothy. The fact that there was genuine (literally, "non-hypocritical") faith would show us that there is faith that is not genuine such as in Luke 8:12-13 where we see the example of a temporary faith. A temporary faith is a faith of convenience rather than a faith of conviction. It does not save but is like the faith of James 2:14. How often we see people go to college or the military and "lose their faith". This is a faith of convenience not a faith of conviction. A faith of conviction is not something for the moment but something permanent for a lifetime. On a number of occasions, these people later on after losing their false faith come to a genuine faith in Christ. Bible teachers and parents often push young children into a faith of convenience which comes about as a matter of accommodating to what others are doing or to the desires of the teacher or parents. People like to fit in and when they are among Christians, a profession of faith is one of those things. To be clear on this issue, I am not talking about failing to trust Christ for the day to day issues we encounter but people who profess to trust Him for salvation from the penalty of sin and then abandon or renounce that aspect of faith. As leaders, time, expressed beliefs (and the basis for them) along with deeds show us the authenticity of faith in those we lead. John 3:36 is a very interesting verse, notice how it is translated in two different ways. *He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.* (NKJV). *He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.* (NASB). Notice that the underlined words in each of these verses is translated by the Greek word "apeitheo" which simply means "unpersuaded." This helps us to see the difference between genuine faith and a faith of convenience.

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1:6-7 - Several important truths are set forth for spiritual leaders and those that follow their leadership. They are commanded to fan into flame the gift of God. The gift spoken of here was given to Timothy through the laying on of the hands of Paul, an Apostle. During the lifetime of the Apostles, Jewish believers – even part Jewish believers received the Holy Spirit sometimes after salvation (Acts 2:38; 8:14-17; Acts 19:1-6 cp. Acts 13:24). It would appear that Timothy was saved by the time of Acts 16:1-3. The gift of God through the laying on of hands by Paul the Apostle would have imparted the Holy Spirit to Timothy. The Holy Spirit is called a gift in Acts 2:38; 10:45. This is not referring to Timothy's spiritual gift which was given through the word of prophecy with the laying on of hands by the elders (1 Tim. 4:14). The Holy Spirit does not produce fear or timidity but boldness (Acts 4:29, 31). The Holy Spirit produces power to witness (Acts 1:8). He also produces love as we walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 22). Finally the Holy Spirit produces a sound mind (translated "right mind" in Mark 5:15; Luke 8:35). This is a mind that is submissive to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5) and is not impulsive. We must not be retreating but moving forward for Christ because we do this not on our own but in partnership with the Holy Spirit who lives in us and wants to fill or control us (Eph. 5:18) for God's glory and our good.

1:8 - This verse is very instructive for leaders and the people they lead. We are not to be ashamed to tell others about the Lord Jesus Christ. Many times, believers find themselves having an aversion to doing so. There is the fear of ostracism. In short, they find themselves fearing the frown of people more than the frown of God. The message is offensive to many people who have confidence in rituals, in their character or conduct or their church. To tell them about trusting Jesus is offensive to them. However, God wants us to make the effort to tell them. Also there is sometimes an aversion by some believers to associating too closely with spiritual believers who have made themselves outcasts by their bold stand for Christ. We are to be proud of such believers and not ashamed of them. God's expectation is for us to suffer with these believers in whatever suffering they are encountering because of their bold testimony concerning Christ. Luke 6:22 lists small persecution that people in the free world encounter in testifying of Christ. These are: hate (either hostility or indifference), ostracism, insults and loss of reputation for being culturally correct. In other societies the persecution is more severe and consists of: 2 Cor. 11:24-25 (assault and beating), Heb. 10:34 (loss of property and possessions), Revelation 2:10 (imprisonment and even being put to death). We cannot bear this testimony of Christ and closely associate with those who are so doing by our own power. We must appropriate God's power by trusting Christ to work through the Holy Spirit in our inner being (Eph. 3:16; 6:10; Phil. 4:13). Apart from Christ we can do nothing (John 15:5).

1:9 - Leaders and those that they lead must be clear regarding how salvation from the penalty of sin is received. They must also be clear on why God did this for this and when He planned it. This salvation comes at a fixed point of time at the moment of faith in Christ (John 3:18; 5:24). God's call came to us at a fixed point of time. This call came through the gospel (2 Thes. 2:13-14). The call has to do with inviting us live a holy life after we are saved. This salvation and this call or invitation does not come to an individual because of their good works. It is

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based on God's purpose for saving us which is to live a life of good works (Eph. 2:10). It is also based on God's grace (=His goodness that we do not deserve). The time that this grace was planned to be given to us was eternity past prior to the creation of the world. In short God removes the penalty of sin and gives us a purpose. Our present responsibility is to live a holy life because we are children of God who are to imitate God our Heavenly Father in being holy (1 Peter 1:14-16). Keep in mind that sanctification is in four phases: (1) Pre-sanctification prior to our salvation (2 Thes. 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2), (2) Positional sanctification which is permanently given to every believer at the moment of faith in Christ 1 Cor. 6:11; Heb. 10:10, 14; Acts 26:18). In and of itself, this does not change our behavior or state but it does confer a perfect standing on the believer before a holy and righteous God. (3) There is progressive or practical sanctification which is an ongoing process in which the believer seeks to live a Christ-like life so that people can see God (Heb. 12:14; 1 Pet. 1:14-16; 1 Thes. 4:3). (4) Finally, there is perfect sanctification which occurs when Christ returns and we are made to be like Him in our character and behavior (Eph. 5:27; 1 John 3:2). It is this progressive or practical sanctification which is to now occupy everyone who has placed their faith in Christ. In summing this up, keep this in mind concerning the words sanctification and holiness, sanctify and make holy, sanctified and made holy, holy one and saint. Each word pair is the identical Greek word and all the words are part of the same word family like run, ran, running and see, saw and seen.

*1:10* - Leaders and those who are led are to be clear on what Christ's death accomplished not only in saving us but what He accomplished in relation to death and the quality of life He gave us. What this verse tells us is that God's grace has now been revealed by the first coming or advent of Christ. When it states that Christ abolished death, this could be misleading since Christians and unsaved people continue to die. The Greek word for abolish is "to render powerless". Christ's death on the cross and His resurrection rendered death powerless over Him (Acts 2:24). Believers will share this victory when He returns and raises them from the dead (1 Cor. 15:51-54). Christ's death and resurrection provided spiritual life for us which we received by faith. This was brought to light or to our understanding through the gospel. Not only did His death and resurrection provide life but also provided immortality. The Greek word translated "immortality" is actually "incorruptibility" which simply means that the spiritual life we receive is not subject to decay like our physical life. In other words it will not be reduced or diminished in any way. To be sure our new body will be immortal as well as not subject to decay when Christ returns (1 Cor. 15:51-54). These truths give everyone who has trusted Christ not only confidence concerning the present but confidence for the future.

*1:11* - Leaders and those that they lead are to recognize their responsibility in relation to the gospel. We are all called upon to share the gospel with people even though we do not have the spiritual gift of evangelism (Mark 16:15). However, some believers will have a spiritual gift in this area (Eph. 4:11). People like Billy Graham and Luis Palau obviously have a spiritual gift of evangelism.

Some believers have this spiritual gift and are very effective in one-on-one evangelism but would never be effective with large crowds. The second spiritual gift is that of an Apostle. It appears very likely that this spiritual gift was foundational to the church at large (Eph. 2:20). It

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served as a basis for authority in the church until the completion of the New Testament. Anyone claiming to be an Apostle should be tested (Rev. 2:2). This would include the signs of an Apostle in 2 Cor. 12:12 and Mt. 10:1-8 which are healing every kind of sickness, casting out demons, cleansing lepers and raising the dead back to life. An Apostle must also have personally seen the resurrected Jesus Christ (Acts 1:21-26; 1 Cor. 9:1). Apostles served the early church by seeing that the gospel was clear and uncorrupted. The third spiritual gift is that of a teacher. When someone trusts Christ as Savior because we obeyed Matthew 28:19-20, we have a responsibility to teach them all the commandments of the New Testament, i.e. all that Christ commanded. We may not have the spiritual gift of teaching (1 Cor. 12:28; James 3:1), but we have the responsibility to grow in our Christian life so that we could teach new believers what they are commanded to do and not do (Heb. 5:12-14). Finally, we know that we all have at least one spiritual gift (1 Cor. 12:7; Eph. 4:7; 1 Pet. 4:10), but some believers have multiple spiritual gifts. By obeying God's word, we learn what we do well and what we do not do well. We also learn what others in the church communicate that we do well. This is how the Holy Spirit shows us our spiritual gift or gifts as in the case of Paul and other believers.

*1:12* - This verse is very central for leaders and for those being led. Using our spiritual gifts to communicate the gospel or simply obeying God's word in communicating the gospel brings a certain amount of suffering which was described in previous paragraphs. Keep in mind that Luke 6:22 details the minor suffering involved in western culture and 2 Cor. 11:23-26; Heb. 11:34 and Rev. 2:10 detail the major suffering that may be involved. The suffering and rejection are no reason to be ashamed because the gospel is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes (Rom. 1:16). There are three additional reasons not to be ashamed. The first of these is our knowledge of Christ. This involves saving knowledge as in John 17:3 and sanctifying knowledge of Him by obeying His word (John 14:21). To the extent we obey, to that extent we know Christ more fully. The second reason not to be ashamed when suffering for the gospel is that we are secure. This means that once we receive Christ by simple child-like faith, our salvation is forever secure. It does not depend on our guarding it, but Christ guarding it (see also John 10:28). The third reason that we do not have to be ashamed is that we can know we have salvation, and we can know that it is secure. The word "convinced" speaks of this assurance and is harmony with 1 John 5:13 which tells us we can know we have salvation if we have trusted Christ for salvation.

*1:13* - One of the important essentials for leaders and those that they lead is holding fast the pattern of sound words. Paul refers to the words which he had communicated to them and are now part of the New Testament scriptures. The New Testament scriptures when heard, read and taught leave a pattern or imprint on our minds and hearts. It is important to hold fast in being loyal to this pattern of what is referred to as sound words. The Greek word for "sound" means "healthy". What this is saying is that the words from Paul, i.e. the words of the New Testament are words that promote spiritual health. This is why it is important for believers to act in faith and obedience to the words of the New Testament as they hear them (Rom. 10:17), read them (Rev. 1:3), study them (Acts 17:11), memorize them (Ps. 119:11) and meditate upon them (Josh. 1:8). We do this not by trusting ourselves but Christ (Gal. 2:20) who supplies us

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with the ability and strength to hold fast (Eph. 6:10; Phil. 4:13). We are also to do this in love. Love builds up in promoting the likeness of Christ in other believers (1 Cor. 8:1). It also shows the unsaved world that we have been truly taught by Christ (John 13:34-35). To be truly taught by Christ is to be His disciple. Finally our love for God and fellow-believers is shown by our obedience 1 John 5:2-3; 2 John 1:5-6) to God's word. To love is to care what God thinks about our choices and thoughts and to care for what people need – even if they are unaware that they need it.

*1:14* - Leaders and those whom they lead have a responsibility in relation to the sound words, i.e. the words of the New Testament. God has entrusted this word to us just as we entrust our money to a bank. It is called a deposit. To guard God's word requires that we do not let errors creep in. One of the ways that we guard God's word is to rightly divide it as 2 Timothy 2:15 teaches. Another way that we guard God's word is to not let those who are unstable and those who do not know better twist it to their own ruin and the ruin of the hearers (2 Pet. 3:15-16). Another way that we guard it is to stay away from those who cause divisions based on teachings that are contrary to God's word (Rom. 16:17-18) and take action to get them out of the fellowship if they persist and do not repent (Tit. 3:10-11). Another way that we guard God's word is to see that no one within the fellowship of the church adds or subtracts from it (Deut. 4:2). We are to see that no one subverts it through man-made commandments (Col. 2:20-23) or through traditions that are not scriptural (Mt. 15:3-9). The quality used to describe this deposit of God's word with it "good" in the sense of "honorable." God's word is to honor Him and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot carry this responsibility alone. God has given us the Holy Spirit to indwell us. It is His help that enables us to carry out the responsibility of guarding God's word.

*1:15-18* - We know that when severe persecution is on, there is danger for anyone who associates himself with a Christian leader. Nero had blamed the Christians for setting a large fire in Rome because there were rumors circulating that he had himself had the fire started. Paul was arrested. For this reason, it was dangerous to visit him to bring needed items to him or just to encourage him. All the believers from the Roman province of Asia in the western part of modern day Turkey had turned away from Paul and were avoiding him. In view of the terrible things that Nero had inflicted on many Christians, this was understandable but not approved by God (Heb. 13:3). However, Onesiphorus was not ashamed of Paul and obviously had aided Paul. In fact when he arrived in Rome, he made an intensive search for Paul. Paul prayed for mercy to him and his family from God. Several points stand out. God expects us to stand up and help fellow-believers when they are jailed or suffer in any way for their work of evangelism and disciple-making. On the other hand, there are believers who find it difficult to do so. That is why we as believers are to draw on the power of the Holy Spirit who does not cause us to fear (2 Tim. 1:7) but gives us boldness (Acts 4:29, 31). There is also a need for those of us who are helped when suffering because of evangelism or discipleship to pray for God's mercy for the one or ones who help us and their families. As leaders and as those being led, these are our responsibilities. "That day" may refer to the day of Christ in which case it would refer to mercy in the sense of special consideration in relation to rewards at the judgment seat

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of Christ. On the other hand "that day" may refer to the day of Paul's trial before the Roman court or if Onesiphorus and His family had been also arrested, it could refer to the day of their trial before the Roman courts in which case Paul would be praying that God would extend His mercy to them in sparing them from being tortured and/or killed by the Romans.

### **PART THREE: Roles of Leaders**

2:1 – As stewards of God's grace, this verse and verse 2 are important from the standpoint of leaders or followers. It is an encouragement that those who are spiritual fathers (1 Cor. 4:14-15) are to give to their spiritual children. Because believers are in Christ not only have they received saving grace with abiding results (Eph. 2:8-9) but they have the grace that keeps them saved with abiding results (Rom. 5:2). However, there is additional grace that is available to the believer because he is in Christ. This grace enables the believer to labor for Christ (1 Cor. 15:10). A mindset of humility also appropriates God's enabling grace for Christians (James 4:6). Humility is the recognition and expression of the fact that apart from Christ we can do nothing (John 15:5) but with His help we can work for Him (Phil. 4:13), that our sufficiency is not of ourselves but Christ (2 Cor. 3:5), and that Christ must become greater in importance in our thinking and behavior while we become less in our thinking and behavior (John 3:30). We appropriate this grace by coming to the throne of grace in prayer to find grace and mercy to aid us in time of need (Heb. 4:16). As we come to know Christ and the Father more intimately, this grace is multiplied in our lives (2 Pet. 1:2). Finally, we are to find His grace sufficient for the times of trials and unanswered prayers (2 Cor. 12:9-10).

2:2 - This is definitely a responsibility of church elders/pastors. Those under their leadership should insist that this be an ongoing process by the leadership of the church. If it is not, questions need to be asked as to just how leadership are investing their time. Are they involved in ministries that are very good that could be given to others or dropped to see that this responsibility is carried out. First of all this passage is not talking about the discipling of those who trust Christ for salvation. This is preparing people for the teaching phase of leadership roles in the church. However, this passage has suffered at the hands of parachurch organizations and pastors who should know better. They have made it equivalent to the thought in Matthew 28:20. The responsibility is clear, the information is to be deposited or entrusted to faithful people not just any Tom, Dick and Harry or Sally, Sue or Mary who wants to be a part of leadership training. Believers who have some obvious issues in their lives are not to be a part of this training. The Greek word for "men" can be used specifically for men or can be used generically as in the English to designate people regardless of gender. This does not make it okay for women to teach men as 1 Tim. 2:11-12 clearly states. What does a faithful believer look like. First of all, he is a member of Bible-believing local church so that he is fully accountable to the process of Gal. 6:1; Mt. 18:15-17. He has been fully discipled and tested on responsibilities within the church. He is an individual of consistent prayer and regular personal study of God's word. He is able to introduce people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and following up with them in a discipling relationship. He is committed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in his daily life. The intent of this instruction is that those who have been instructed will

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be able to instruct others and continue the process of multiplying leaders. When churches neglect this over a period of years, they tend to produce believers who are not committed and start the process of decline and disbanding. Whether you are a leader or a member, your job is to work to see that this verse is carried out faithfully as commanded.

2:3-4 - Those who are spiritual leaders must stress to those that are being led that we are part of Christ's army. We are in a spiritual war with Satan and his angels, i.e. demons (Eph. 6:10-13); the world system (James 4:4; Eph. 2:1-3) and the enemy within referred to as the flesh, i.e. the sinful nature (Gal. 5:16-18). The Greek word for "good" means good in the sense of being honorable. We are soldiers for Christ, and we are called upon to be honorable not dishonorable. That is why we are to suffer hardship (just like battlefield soldiers do) with spiritually minded believers. We are called upon to share in those sufferings which are for the gospel and the whole word of God. Some suffering comes our way because we live in a fallen world (Rom. 8:19-23). Other sufferings come our way because God is disciplining us because of sin (1 Cor. 11:30-32) or because he is working to develop and mature us (Deut. 8:2-3, 16). The suffering in this case is suffering because we are believers (Mt. 5:10-12). Just as a soldier does not entangle himself in matters not related to his mission, we are likewise not to entangle ourselves in the affairs of everyday life. We can participate or engage in the affairs of everyday life, but we are not to be entangled. For instance, we may work at a job, but we are not to become so engrossed in it that we neglect our responsibilities to Christ and believers. We may participate in family tasks and recreation but not to the point that we fail to meet with other believers and practice the other disciplines of the Christian life. The purpose of avoiding this entanglement is to please Christ, the one who enlisted us in His army. We are called upon to be God-pleasers or godly and not to be mere man-pleasers (Gal. 1:10). We are at war with formidable enemies. Let us go forth in His strength and His might and not our own (Eph. 6:10).

2:5 - Leaders and those whom they lead are to be knowledgeable concerning the issue of rewards which are like competing as an athlete. Salvation is a free gift received by faith (Eph. 2:8-9) whereas rewards are due to our efforts. Salvation is received at the moment of faith (John 3:36; 5:24) whereas rewards are future (1 Cor. 3:14-15). Salvation cannot be lost once it is received (John 10:28) whereas rewards can be lost (2 John 1:8; Rev. 3:11). The illustration of the Christian life as an athletic contest is discussed in 1 Cor. 9:24-27 and Heb. 12:1-2. It is basically an endurance race. What this verse is saying is that a believer is not going to be rewarded unless he lives His life after salvation according to God's rules, i.e. the commandments of Christ (Mt. 28:20). It is also clear that we will fail to be rewarded if we do not obey the commandments of Christ. While blessings are for this life, rewards are for the life to come. Even if we live 120 years, our time in eternity will be much longer. Rewards have to do with our quality of life in the life to come. How we live in eternity has to do with the choices we make today. Choose well that you may be rewarded.

2:6 - The emphasis for leaders and for their modeling and instruction of those that they lead is the communication of being fruitful. Our labor for God's work as believers is compared to



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farming. In farming, the farmer has to plant, cultivate (in some cases irrigate) and harvest. God's part is to provide abundant sunshine and moisture. Even in areas where there is irrigation, God is the one who supplies the water. The farmer is dependent on God for these things. In the same way, to live the Christian life requires labor – hard labor – on our part. At the same time we are dependent on God to teach, guide and empower our lives with the power of Christ by the working of the Holy Spirit. If we labor without depending on the Lord, our efforts will yield little or no fruit. Col. 1:29 explains that we must strive in harmony with God's working which works mightily within us. God's blessings in this life go first to yielded believers who labor hard for Him to produce spiritual fruit in their own lives and the lives of others (Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 5:9). These blessings are the result of our labor. In addition there are rewards to be received in the life to come (1 Cor. 3:10-15). The main teaching is that God's primary blessings for this life and rewards for the life to come go to believers who work hard for Him. Let us not be negligent in doing the work of the Lord (Jer. 48:10).

2:7 - This verse refers back to the leader and the ones he leads viewing the Christian life like being a soldier, one who competes in sports and one who farms. Each of these illustrations emphasize pleasing Christ, obeying His commandments, i.e. the New Testament, and planting, watering and harvesting the seed of God's word (cp. 2:3-6). An important principle of this verse is to consider what God is saying to us in His word. The Old Testament speaks of this as meditating on God's word as in Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 1:1-3. If we do this the Lord Jesus will give us understanding of His word. He will give us clarity instead of confusion. To consider God's word, it is important to look at what it says and also to look at what it is not saying. We also are to look at verses and notice, what subjects are under discussion and relate what the verse states to those subjects. Then it is important to know what other scriptures bearing upon those subjects say in other parts of God's word. As we do our part in considering what God is communicating to us, then the Lord Jesus will give us the understanding we need through the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26).

2:8 - Leaders and those that they lead must keep in mind the central point of the gospel. Jesus was raised from the dead. This was not a spiritual resurrection but a bodily resurrection (John 2:19-22; Luke 24:3). When people trust the Lord Jesus in response to this good news/gospel, they are trusting Him with His substitutionary death on the cross (1 Pet. 3:18) and His resurrection (Rom. 10:9-10) as full and sufficient payment for their salvation from the penalty of sin. A gospel presentation that does not include Christ's resurrection is not a gospel presentation. As leaders and as followers, this is the message we are to tell others. Jesus is also referred to as the Christ meaning the anointed one. Christ is the Greek form of the Hebrew word Messiah. This simply means, He was anointed to be the king over Israel. The fact that He is a descendent of King David makes Him eligible to sit on the throne of David. David had prophesied in Ps. 16:8-11 that Christ would be raised from the dead to sit on his throne. Christ is currently on the Father's throne (Rev. 3:21) at the Father's right hand (Rom. 8:34) but because He was raised from the dead, He will be sitting on the throne of David in the future 1000 year kingdom and eternal state (Luke 1:31-33). He will not sit on David's throne until He

returns to the earth (Mt. 25:31). His resurrection only made Him available and eligible to sit on that throne.

2:9 - Leaders and those who follow them must clearly understand that communicating the gospel message means hardship. In Paul's case, it meant being imprisoned as a common criminal. Phil. 1:29 explains that just as our faith in Christ is a gift from God, so also is the suffering that goes with it a gift from God. We may attempt to dodge this suffering by choosing not to communicate the gospel. However, we will suffer discipline from God for our disobedience to His word (Psalm 119:67). So either way we suffer. Peter stated in 1 Pet. 3:17 that it is better to suffer for doing the will of God than to suffer because we are not doing the will of God. Sometimes the hardship lies in the hardness of heart that we encounter among the unsaved. This may be caused by a naturalistic and materialistic world view, or it may be caused by religious views of non-Christians or pseudo-Christians. In any case the word of God is not ever imprisoned. Once it is given out, it continues to work in the hearts and minds of those who heard it (Isa. 55:11). It is the sword of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 6:17) which penetrates every facet of people outwardly and inwardly (Heb. 4:12). This is why when we share the gospel it is important to use the word of God. God does not promise to honor our arguments regarding the truth of the gospel, but He does promise to honor His word. So no matter how restricted we may be in being able to share the gospel, this restriction does not stop the message itself.

*2 Timothy 2:10* - Leaders and those whom they have to come to the realization that they are suffering in minor or major ways because of the people who will at some point in their lives place their trust and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation from the penalty of sin. These people are called the elect or chosen of God. This term bothers many believers. However, we must recognize that while believers are elect or chosen by God, it is not a rigged election. In the words of Norman Geisler, former professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, "We are chosen but free." God chose those of us who are presently in Christ prior to the creation of the world (Eph. 1:4). It does not say that chose our choice to believe in the name of the Lord Jesus. It simply says that He chose us. According to 1 Peter 1:1-2, this choice was based on foreknowledge. While many like to emphasize that fact that this means a prior relationship as in Jer. 1:5, it does not exclude God's prior knowledge of how we were going to respond to the hearing of the gospel. God leaves people free to make the choice to believe in or not to believe in Christ. Our role in suffering is involved in some way of bringing these people to the point that they choose to trust Christ for salvation by simple faith (John 3:18, 36). Most of the suffering is for our communicating the gospel to these people. While salvation is received at a point of time in this present life (John 5:24), the eternal glory which follows extends beyond this life into eternity. This glory will include a new resurrection body that is not subject to decline or decay and that is immortal (1 Cor. 15:51-54). Our bodies will be like the resurrection body of Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:21). We will live in a place specially prepared for us by the Lord Jesus Christ in Heaven (John 14:1-3). Helping people to experience this makes any suffering, including small discomfort, worth it.

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2:11-13 - These are important concepts for leaders to keep in view and to communicate to those whom they are leading. The first of these is that we died with Christ. Romans 6:2-7 develops this truth. When we trusted Christ we were baptized by the Holy Spirit into His death. This separated us from the power of the sinful nature as death does not mean extinction but separation. When the people of Israel were leaving Egypt, they were separated from the power of Egypt at the Red Sea crossing in which they crossed safely on dry ground while the Egyptians ending up being drowned. Egypt still had influence on the people as many of them wanted at various times to return to Egypt. It makes it possible for us to walk in the newness of the spiritual life that we received when we trusted Christ for salvation. According to Rom. 6:6 the fact that we share Christ's death and His resurrection breaks the power of our sinful nature. This sets up an obligation on our part to not serve our sinful nature. Rom. 6:7 tells us the reason is that because we share Christ's death, we have been justified (The Greek word for "freed" is the same Greek word translated "justified in other portions of the New Testament). Because we died with Christ we will one day fully share His resurrection when He returns (1 Cor. 15:51-54; Phil. 3:21). We share Christ's spiritual resurrection now (Col. 2:11-12) through the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit. However here in 2 Tim. 2:11, we are promised that we will share His bodily resurrection. Our responsibility according to Rom. 6:10-11 is to count it true that we are separated from sin, i.e. the sinful nature and that we have this new resurrection life of Christ with the power to live differently than we did before trusting Him for salvation. To count it true requires faith on our part.

These are important concepts for leaders to keep in view and to communicate to those whom they are leading. All believers will be involved in reigning with Christ (Rev. 5:8-10). However, not all will be involved to the same extent (Luke 19:11-27). To endure for Christ means to be strong in His grace (2:1), to leave a spiritual legacy by building into the lives of other believers (2:2), to endure hardship as a soldier of Christ and avoid worldly entanglement (2:3-4), to live according to Christ's commandments as an athlete follows the rule for his sport, to work hard to produce spiritual fruit like a farmer working hard to produce a good crop, to meditate on God's word (2:8), to keep Christ and His resurrection and coming kingdom in view (2:8), to be willing to give up freedom for Christ (2:9) and to keep in view that we endure for the benefit of those who will trust Christ and the future glory to come (2:10). Look at the following diagram:

<b>Salvation: we enter by faith in Christ dying for our sins and being bodily raised and we do not and cannot leave</b>	<b>Fellowship: We enter at salvation but lose it when we sin. We regain it by confessing and forsaking our sin,</b>
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Endurance is the choice to stay in the fellowship block for extended periods of time and also the choice to immediately get back in when we sin.

2 Timothy 2:17-18 and 3:1-5 are examples of those who deny or say "no" to Christ. These are mere professors who lack the reality of eternal life. For example there are the two men in 2:17-18 who were saying that we only have a spiritual resurrection which is when we trusted Christ (Col. 2:13). This is partially true but it does not mean that we do not have a bodily resurrection which is future as in 1 Cor. 15:51-54; Phil. 3:21; Rom. 8:11. These men were essentially denying the hope (=future expectation) of the gospel (Col. 1:5, 23). God makes it clear in 2 Tim. 2:19

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that we make be mixed up about who is saved and who is lost but God knows those whose faith is mere pretension and not genuine such as Judas Iscariot (John 6:64, 70, 71). Another way that denial of Christ is practiced besides the issue of the hope or expectation of the gospel is the character qualities predominately demonstrated in the life of those who profess Christ insincerely. These are listed in 2 Tim. 3:1-5. After listing these qualities, the passage states in v. 5 that these people have a form of godliness, but deny or say “no” to its power or reality in their lives. Finally, those who deny Christ rather than confessing Him show that they have not really trusted Christ (Mt. 10:32-33). This does not speak of temporary denial under persecution such as Peter, but a once and for all denial of Christ. The Greek word for “deny” is in a verb tense which shows a once-and-for-all type of denial. What is in the heart will come out the mouth (Mt. 12:34-35; Rom. 10:9-10). Remember confession of Christ is not a requirement to be saved. However, confession will occur just as certainly as will thunder when the lightning flashes.

The fact that all believers fail to be faithful from time to time is well documented in scripture. Believers fail to be diligent in spending time in God’s word, prayer, witnessing, meeting and interacting with other believers, using their spiritual gifts and financially giving to God’s work. Unfaithfulness can manifest itself in sinful behavior. Fortunately, the security of our salvation does not rest on our faithfulness for if it did, we would certainly fail. Because of God’s faithfulness, Jesus will confirm us as blameless until the end according to 1 Cor. 1:8-9. The final aspect of our sanctification or holiness will give us actual sinless perfection when Jesus returns because of God’s faithfulness (1 Thes. 5:23-24; 1 John 3:2). Paul mentions examples of believers who proved to be unfaithful in sharing his suffering in 2 Tim. 1:15 naming those from the Roman province of Asia as well as two named individuals among them. In 2 Timothy 4:10, Paul mentions the unfaithfulness of Demas, Crescens and Titus. Then in 2 Tim. 4:16-17, he pointed out that no one of the believers were around when his first defense trial occurred yet Christ was faithful to stand with Him so that all the non-Jews might hear about Jesus Christ. While God remains faithful in the midst of our unfaithfulness, we must remember that the degree of faithfulness on our part determines our future reward and the quality of our life in the world to come (Mt. 25:20-23). God’s faithfulness is found when we do sin and confess it that He is faithful and just to forgive us (1 John 1:9). When we are tempted or tested, God is faithful to limit the extent of these so that we may be able to endure (1 Cor. 10:13). God’s faithfulness is not a reason to give into sin but to recognize that we never have to sin.

**2:14-16** - Leaders and those who are lead must understand that scriptural truths have to be taught and taught again. Repetition and reminder of certain truths is needful and valuable. The truths involved here are the fact that we share Christ’s death and so do not have to sin, suffering with Christ brings reward in eternity, we will encounter those who are not genuine believers and finally we serve a faithful savior even if we fail to be faithful. The command or charge before us is one that is solemn or serious. It is not to be communicated in a light-hearted manner. Fights about words are not of any spiritual value and tends to ruin those believers who listen to it. Rather than quarreling over the meaning of a word, it is better to see how it is used in the rest of scripture and looking at what God’s word says elsewhere within the

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immediate and general context and in the rest of scripture. We will see how we can avoid getting involved in quarrels about words by a correct approach to scripture.

Leaders and those who lead must know how to avoid conflicts regarding words. One of the things we must do is accurately handle or better rightly divide God's word. To do this we must compare scripture with scripture and put it into the right category. The Greek word for "diligent" shows us that rightly dividing God's word requires careful effort on our part. The word for "present" is the same word used in Rom. 12:1 and 6:13 where it is translated "present" or "yield". If we want God's approval, i.e. to pass the test for handling God's word, we must be yielded to God Himself. He and His word must be the final authority in rightly dividing it. When we try to read our opinions or feelings into the text or when we try to read what someone else said about it into the text we risk undermining and even canceling what the scripture text is actually saying. Just as a good workman does not have to be ashamed about his work, we are to exercise the careful effort and personal yieldedness to God so that we will not be ashamed ourselves of mishandling God's word. If we do our part, it prevents those whom we are teaching or even those by whom we are being taught from getting caught up in quarrels about words. It is doable, but it takes work and effort on the believer's part.

We continue to examine the issue of quarrels and disputes about words. The solution was clearly stated in 2:15 to rightly divide or accurately handle God's word with careful effort in complete submission to God and His word. In this final verse, we see what to avoid as a solution for the problem of disputes about words. Some might be tempted to avoid confronting errors and misunderstandings of God's word. The word "worldly" simply refers to that which leaves the true God and His commandments out of our teaching, or it just simply disregards what God has plainly communicated in His word. The word "empty" simply means that our teaching lacks spiritual content and emphasis. Many sermons today in too many pulpits lack the content of God's word and God's viewpoint. The word "chatter" simply means "talk." Leaders and those who are being led cannot expect to see people come to Christ if what we say leaves God and His values out of the communication or simply disregards God and His word and lacks spiritual content. Neither can we expect believers to grow with that type of communication. Rather than preventing disputes about words, it will simply promote errors of another kind. The result of Godless and spiritually empty communication is that there will be a lessening of devotion to and love for God. Our job is to do God's work by rightly handling the tool (=His word) that He has given us.

2:17-18 - This stands as an example of godless and empty talk spoken of in 2:16. Those who lead and those who are being led need to be aware that it is important that there be solid spiritual content in preaching and teaching. If there is not, what is communicated will leave God out of the picture and will lack any strengthening value to those who hear. Such communication spreads like gangrene in an extremity of the body. If it is not confronted, refuted and removed from the body, it will cause problems for the entire church body just as gangrene does for the physical body. The specific error was the teaching that the resurrection of believers was already past. What apparently was being taught was that our resurrection was

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spiritual only and not bodily. My wife and I were in a Bible-believing church back in the early 1970's. One of the deacons was teaching that the second coming of Christ was at the time of salvation, i.e. when an individual trusts Christ as Savior. Unfortunately, this church was doing very little or nothing to remove this man from his teaching role and several people were led astray. It is true that we are spiritually raised from the dead with Christ according to Ephesians 2:5-6; Col. 2:12-13). However, it is equally true that we will be bodily raised from the dead when Christ returns (1 Thes. 4:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; Phil. 3:20-21) and given a resurrection body like that of the Lord Jesus Christ. Obviously, this aspect of our resurrection is future. These false teachers were ignoring the scriptures teaching of the future aspect of the resurrection while emphasizing the spiritual aspect as the only thing that was taught. We see that these men had gone astray from the truth of God's word (John 17:17) and were doing much to undermine the faith of some believers. Paul named these men who were promoting error. Despite the fact that some object to naming names when confronting false teaching, it is important because people are more readily able to be more discerning when they know who is promoting error and what the error is. This is why it is important that leaders teach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27) so that believers do not become confused.

2:19 - I have heard teens complain. "So and so" is a Christian and God has not disciplined them for such and such sins, but if I do like they do, I end up being disciplined. God is not fair to me." For this reason and based on this scripture and other scriptures, leaders must continually remind those whom they lead that not all people or even a majority of those who profess to be believers are in fact believers. Hebrews 12:8 states that those who are not disciplined by God even though seeming to get away with sin are not genuine believers. There are some who are obviously not genuine – those who teach against what the scripture says about Christ (2 John 1:9-10) and those who sin more than ever after their profession of faith (1 John 3:6-10; 1 Timothy 5:24). However, in the end the Lord will sort out those who are His and those who are not (Mt. 7:21-23; Mt. 13:36-43). Even the most godly Christians may be confused about who is saved and who is not, but God knows those who are His (John 10:14). Despite such promoters of error as the men mentioned in 2 Tim. 2:17-18, God will expose them completely and deal with them in His time. The response to this truth is that everyone who sincerely names the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is to depart from unrighteousness. All unrighteousness is sin (1 John 5:17) because it is a failure to live according to God's standard. Those who have sincerely trusted Christ for salvation are secure because God's foundation is standing firm with the seal or certification that He knows those of us who have in truth trusted Christ.

2:20-21 - It is important to realize that as believers, we are part of a large house containing many people referred to as vessels. This appears to refer to those who name the name of Christ or the visible church. Some are dishonorable and some are honorable. The exhortation is for the believer to clean out these professing believers who are dishonorable from our fellowship. A good example are professing believers living in open sin like in 1 Cor. 5:9-13 or those who are promoting heresy or error as in Titus 3:10-11 and Rom. 16:17-18. This decision is to be a point of time decision in cleansing ourselves from them. By doing this, we are a vessel for honor to Christ. The two men in 2 Tim. 2:17-18 are prime examples of those with whom we

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should not be having close fellowship. By following this command, churches and individual believers stay out of compromising situations. It greatly simplifies the type of people believers choose for close friends and for marriage or business partners and for church fellowships. Those who have errant convictions or no convictions on biblical doctrine and biblical morality qualify as dishonorable vessels. In addition, we will be sanctified which means that we will be set apart for God's purpose and in this way will be useful to Jesus Christ as our master. This will occur at a point of time with ongoing results. In addition, we will be prepared for every, i.e. every kind of, good work. Church leaders must model this kind of separation in their personal life and in their relationship to other churches and parachurch groups. Those who are being led should be exhorting their leaders and fellow-believers to this very thing.

2:22 - Staying away from believers who are unsound either in doctrine or deed is important as we saw in 2 Tim. 2:20-21. However, staying away from the desires characterized by youth is important as well. Most of these desires would fall into three categories as found in 1 John 2:16, pleasure – the lust of the flesh, possessions – the lust of the eyes, and prominence – the pride of life. We are not only to stay away from the actions or behaviors involved but from the very desires. We are not to see how close we can come to these sinful issues but to behave in ways that move us away from them. To do this, we have to choose what we pursue or run after. We are called to pursue righteousness. This involves thinking, speaking and behaving so that we meet God's standards. Jesus referred to it as hungering and thirsting for righteousness. We are to pursue faith in the way we live. Faith is not a leap in the dark. It is taking God at His word for directing our lives and trusting Christ to empower our lives through the indwelling Holy Spirit (Col. 2:6; Gal. 3:1-5; 2:20; 5:16). Thirdly, we are to pursue love. This includes love for our neighbor including our enemies (Rom. 13:8-10; 5:44) and for our fellow-believers (John 13:34-35) and foremost our love for God (Mt. 22:37-40). These are defined as obedience to the word of God (1 John 5:2-3; 2 John 1:5-6). Finally, we are to pursue peace, i.e. getting along with other believers (Rom. 14:17-19) and with all people. Heb. 12:14 tells us that this helps people to see or understand God. We are called on to be peacemakers and not trouble-makers (Mt. 5:9). We are to do these things with believers who are calling on the Lord from a pure heart, i.e. believers who are committed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in their lives. The Christian life is not a "Lone Ranger" affair. It is working interactively with other believers to promote and encourage mutual Christ-likeness.

2:23 - Leaders are told to reject or stay away from certain types of controversies. As leaders - whether officially or by example – we cannot avoid all controversy. There are issues that are definitely a matter of right or wrong (Gal. 5:19-23; 1 Cor. 5:9-11; 6:9-10; Gal. 1:8-9; 2 John 1:9-10). On these we must take a clear stance and teach those whom we lead to do so. Some controversies are based on ignorance. The Greek word means the lack of instruction. Because a believer is uninstructed, he or she may promote teachings that are not balanced or completely accurate. This, of course, can cause strong quarrels within the church. The other type of controversy that leaders must avoid is one based on foolishness. These are people who know what God's word says but choose to promote a different viewpoint based on emotions. Rather than embroiling ourselves in the controversy, our job is to help these types of believers

or unbelievers to see that their basic assumptions which are driving their promotion of this controversy are in error. For example, a believer strongly believes that it is wrong to spank his children because he or she feels that it is unloving. We must gently bring these people back to understanding what the Bible says love is (Proverbs 13:24; 2 John 1:5-6). Other times, tradition and early training may be responsible for the error. Our job is to train people to use the scriptures to spot and correct faulty and sinful thinking. Teaching the people to distinguish between standards that are scripture-based (e.g. sexual purity, peacefulness, drunkenness, praying to God) and standards that are conscience-based (what not to eat or drink, dancing or not dancing, movies or no movies). The next verses offer further counsel that will help people avoid these types of controversies which we will now examine.

2:24-26 - This verse helps leaders (official or strictly exemplary) to deal with controversies promoted by those who are untaught and those who are foolish (=know what God's word says, but choose otherwise). Jumping into the arena and quarreling with those who are teaching or living in error is not God's way. We are to avoid this. We must remember that we are God's servant to do His bidding. We are to do what He commands and promotes in His word - not our own emotions, thoughts or ways. We are commanded to be kind to all. This word "kind" is translated "gentle" like a nursing mother with her children (1 Thes. 2:7). The Greek word means being kind or gentle with difficult people by being open and approachable. This refers to all people, saved and unsaved. The Greek word for "able to teach" is better translated "skilled in teaching". Skillful teaching is defined as rightly dividing God's word (2 Tim. 2:15) and being able to exhort and convince those who are in opposition (Tit. 1:9). Finally, as God's servant, we must be patient with those who are teaching or living in error because love demands it (1 Cor. 13:4). These people may be wronging us by denouncing us or even persecuting us, but patience is required. This gives the unsaved person time to change his mind and to trust Christ for salvation. This gives the saved person further opportunity to interact with God's word and come to the knowledge of the truth.

People who participate in foolish (instruction but lack of obedience) and ignorant (lack of instruction) controversies need correction. It is to be done with gentleness by leaders or even by those being led. The Greek word for "gentleness" tells us that correction is to be done with sensitivity to the problem of sin or error. It is important to know why those in error or sin have a different view or behavior choice from sound biblical framework. Once we know this we can take them step by step to a clearer understanding of God's word and God's promises. This works to reduce opposition from believers struggling with sin or error and opposition from unbelievers who are wrestling with the need to change their mind and trust Christ. It sets up an opportunity for God to give them the change of mind (=repentance) leading to the knowledge of the truth. For the unbeliever, this would be the truth of the gospel which saves them from the penalty of sin (Gal. 2:5; Col. 1:5) and for the believer this would be the knowledge of the truth which sets them free from the power of sin by abiding in God's word and by this becoming disciples in the complete sense (John 8:31-34). James 1:25 shows that abiding in God's word is hearing and obeying God's word. Repentance for the unbeliever is changing his mind about what is preventing him from trusting Christ as Savior and going ahead and trusting



Christ. Repentance for the believer is confessing his sins and forsaking them (1 John 1:9; Psalm 32:5).

Another result of gentle correction by leaders or those being led is the effect on the thinking processes of the one in error or in sin. We saw that coming to the knowledge of the truth could be a believer abiding in God's word (John 8:31-34; James 1:25) or an unbeliever embracing the truth of the gospel by trusting Christ (Gal. 2:5; Col. 1:5). The Greek for the phrase "come to their senses" may easily be translated "become sober". This word has the idea of putting up the defenses of our mind so that our thinking is guarded from sinful outside influences by Satan and the world. The verse that best defines this Greek word is Proverbs 4:23 where we are commanded to carefully guard our heart or thinking. Finally, the third possible result is escaping the snare or trap of Satan. Ananias was an example of one believer who let himself trapped by Satan in Acts 5:3-4. Unbelievers are under the authority of Satan according to Col. 1:13 cp. Acts 26:18). Finally observe that Satan is a personal being. By this we mean that like people and like God, he possesses personality (possession of intellect, emotion and will). Here we see that he has a will, i.e. a capacity to choose or decide. As we combine God's word (Eph. 6:16) with gentle correction, there is the possibility but not necessarily the certainty that these three results will happen. The one who is captive has the choice to repent, i.e. change his mind and turn the possibility into a certainty. For the unbeliever, it is the repentance or change of mind that turns from whatever kept them from trusting Christ for salvation to trusting Him. For the believer, it is the change of mind that results in the confession and forsaking of the sin issues (1 John 1:9; Prov. 28:13).

#### **PART FOUR: Rough Issues for Leaders (3:1-13)**

3:1-5 - As leaders and as those being led, we must be aware of the times in which we live. The last days refers to the time between Christ's first and second coming according to Hebrews 1:1-2. During this time period, difficult times will come and have come. The first problem is that of self-love. Many false teachings have promoted the idea that Mt. 22:37-40 gives us 3 commandments: love God, love self and love others. However, Jesus stated that there are only two commandments not three in Mt. 22:40. Self-love is a sin and is listed with several other sins. Eph. 5:29 stated that no one ever hated himself. We must reject those teachings which would introduce psychology principles into scripture by twisting the plain meaning of God's word. Self-love has gone so far that there is a magazine titled "Self". While we are to look out for our interests, we are also to look out for the interests of others for this is the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:3-5). This is the aim of God in our lives to conform us to the likeness of Christ from one degree of glory to another (Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18).

Another very obvious problem is that money becomes the most important item in people's lives. As believers, we are warned that we cannot serve both God and money in Mt. 6:24. Many have referred to money as the bottom line. When this becomes the bottom line, our choices become subordinate to money. The real bottom line is how our life measures up to the standard of God's word. Psalm 119:72, 127 say in the NIV. "The law from your mouth is more

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precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold” and “Because I love your commands more than gold, more than pure gold.” Psalm 62:10 warns us that when riches increase, we are not to set our heart upon them. The desire for riches brings all sorts of problems and ruin into the lives of people according to 1 Tim. 6:9-10. In addition those verses go on to say that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. The cure for this is found in Heb. 13: 5. We are told there to be content with such things as we have because God has promised never to leave those of us who have trusted Christ as Savior. We are commanded to be rich in good works in 1 Tim. 6:18. Jesus told us in Matthew 6:19-21 to lay up our treasures in heaven where we could not lose them and not on earth where we easily lose them. Jesus went on to say in Luke 12:15 that an individual’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. We must always be mindful that he who finishes with the most stuff does not win.

One of the sins that characterizes our times is boastfulness. Phil. 3:19 speaks of those who glory or boast about doing what they ought to be ashamed of. For example, “I really told that old buzzard/heifer off.” We are not to boast or glory about people who are great from a human viewpoint (1 Cor. 3:21). In 1 Cor. 1:26-29, we read that we should not boast in such things as our wisdom, our power and our honorable status in society. We are warned not to be boastful in presuming concerning the future as to where we will be, how long we will be there, what activities we will be doing and what the outcome of those activities will be (James 4:13-16). We can say that we will do these things only if it is God’s will. If you are happy about what you have accomplished, let someone else give you praise (Prov. 27:2). Luke 18:9-14 warns us about boasting about our spiritual accomplishments. Our salvation itself is provided and received so as to exclude boasting (Eph. 2:8-9). Our boast is to be in the Lord Himself (1 Cor. 1:31). Finally, in Gal. 6:14 Paul said, *“But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”* We are to save our boastfulness for God and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ and spare everyone else the rest.

The next sin that is dealt with is arrogance. The idea of this sin is that the individual is overbearing because of an inflated sense of power or pride. 1 Peter 5:3 warns the leader not to lord it over those whom he is leading. He is called upon to replace this behavior with being an example or model. This sin tends to make believers self-sufficient rather than God-sufficient (2 Cor. 3:5-6). Such leaders are described in 2 Cor. 11:20 after being identified in 2 cor. 11:13-15 as servants of Satan. They are identified as being very controlling, financially pressuring and exploiting, and they are self-promoting. The measure of any leader or any believer is never how many people we control but how many people we serve (Mk. 10:42-45). Such people elevate themselves by maligning godly servants and not receiving those who are true to God’s word. They work to intimidate other believers to do so. The example of this is Diotrefes in 3 John 1:9-10. 3 John 1:11 instructs to imitate those who are godly and not to imitate those who are arrogant. 1 Cor. 4:7 explains the need for a grace orientation to life because we have nothing that we did not receive.

The next sin that is noted is reviling. This simply means to insult and denounce. 1 Cor. 6:9-10 explains to us that those who are characterized by this sin will not inherit the kingdom of God.

This simply means that such people have never genuinely trusted Christ for salvation. The temptation for the believer to commit this sin often comes we are insulted by others. We are told to never return insult for insult in 1 Peter 3:9. How many marriages could be salvaged if believers were to follow this command? We are told to give a blessing instead. Peter speaking for spiritually-minded believers stated that when we are insulted that we are to bless. In 1 Peter 2:23, Jesus Christ Himself set the pattern for us to follow. When He was insulted by those who arrested Him, He did not insult them in return. We are told that He chose to keep entrusting Himself to the One who judges righteously, that is, God Himself. Genesis 50:20 provides guidance for us. When Joseph's brothers were concerned that he might avenge himself on them for assaulting him and selling him as a slave, he told them, "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good." When you are insulted, try to remember that the person may have meant it for evil, but God meant it for good in your life. Tell the person that you are asking God to bless them. One time a supervisor walked into a restaurant to meet his wife for dinner. As he walked in, he encountered a former employee who had resigned several years prior because of his anger toward the supervisor. He proceeded to cuss out the supervisor, who was a Christian. As the supervisor calmly walked off, he replied to the bitter man, "God's blessing on you, Jay." When you face the temptation to commit this sin, do not respond in kind. Respond kindly.

Another sin that is being discussed is disobedience to parents. "Johnny, if you do that again, I am going to ....." How often, we hear parents repeat that when a child is misbehaving. Parents are too interested in being popular, liked and understood by their children. As a result, they fail to respond to the child's sinful or unwise choices in a way that discourages those choices. By giving in to their children in the name of keeping peace or showing love, they reinforce and guarantee more of the same resistance on the part of the child. The intent is to show love and to keep peace on the part of the parent. However, you get what you reward not what you intend. Furthermore, giving in shows that you hate the child, regardless of how you FEEL (Prov. 13:24)! Love does not consist of how we feel toward people but what we do (1 John 3:18). Sometimes parents respond to a child's misbehavior by under-disciplining the child. They believe they tried to do something when they did not do enough. A number of years ago, a very wise Christian author wrote that children still misbehave as they did years ago but that parents respond much differently. Parents want a just and fair world for their child rather than to prepare their child for an unfair and unjust world. Parents of yesteryear made sure that if the child got in trouble with the teacher that they got into trouble at home. Today's parents are more likely than not, to go to school and attempt to relieve the child of some punishment that they, the parents, believe is excessive, unjust and discriminatory. Too many parents want their children to have a wonderful childhood to remember rather than preparing them to be responsible, respectable, productive and reasonably happy adults ready to face a world that is no friend of Christ. Parents will tell you, "I know but my child is different and has special problems." These parents seem to be oblivious to the fact that their child will not receive any such preferential treatment from the world. These types of parenting behaviors

are significant parts of the issue of children being disobedient to parents. The other factor is the trend of children to imitate and fit in with their peers as they move toward adulthood. Children must understand at an early age their need to trust Christ for salvation and then to make Him Lord of their lives. Part of living out the Lordship of Christ is being obedient and respectful to parents. This requires the child learning to live by faith rather than sight because parents seem to be impractical and out of touch with the child's world. Rather than to trust the Divine Viewpoint of God's word and the authority and counsel of their parents, they consult their peers. Another way the child must be helped to see their dilemma is to realize that if we love Christ we will obey His commandments which include the entire body of the New Testament. The child must learn to think in terms of not just the rule to obey their parents and to respect them. They must also learn to think in terms of their love relationship with Jesus Christ. Disobedience to parents is foundational to the breakdown of order within families and society at large as it leads to insubordination in their future marriages, their relationship with bosses in the workplace and their relationship to government officials. Our job as leaders in the church – official or exemplary only – is to help both parents and children come to grips with the roots of this sin and live for the smile of God rather than the smile of the culture and the times.

Now we see the sin issue of being ungrateful identified. This sin is caused by the lack of a grace orientation to life. We live in a time when many have a sense of entitlement. I must always be first. I must always have the best. I must always have what I want when I want without delay. In Luke 17:11-19 Jesus healed ten lepers. Only one of the ten returned to give Him thanks. This shows that a high percentage of people are very ungrateful. They take benefits from God and assume that they were entitled to these benefits all along. 2 Chronicles 24:22 tells us of what happened to a priest whose grandfather had protected the king from being murdered when the king was a kid. When the grandson confronted the sinfulness of the king, he was put to death. The king did not remember the kindness that had been done to him. Ingratitude is normal for unsaved people. We are told in Rom. 1:21 that people who realize God exists because of creation have a tendency to not give God His rightful place and to fail to give Him thanks. The cure for ingratitude is to give thanks in every situation according to 1 Thes. 5:18. God states that every situation that we encounter is His will for us. In fact we are told in Eph. 5:20 to give thanks for everything. How can we do this? First of all, we must remember that when people do wickedness toward us or our loved ones, that may well mean it for evil but God means it for good (Gen. 50:20). We are promised in Rom. 8:28 that God causes all things to work together for good to those of us who are the called of God, i.e. those who have trusted Christ for salvation. This does not mean that all things that occur in our lives are good but that the good and bad events work together for good in our lives. Rom. 8:29 explains that these are to conform us to the likeness of Christ. A cake consists of good and bad ingredients. Mixed together, they make a wonderful tasting cake. When bad events occur, focus on what is going right rather than what is going wrong. Focus on what you do have rather than what you do not have. In this way, we can avoid the sin of ingratitude.

The term "unholy" grabs our notice. This is not the negative of the normal Greek word used for "holy" or "sanctified" which means to be set apart for God's purpose. The word used here

speaks of those who do not have an equal regard for grace and truth. For those who emphasize grace at the expense of truth, Jude 1:3 states that they have basically turned the grace of God into a sinning license. Rom. 6:1, 15 point out that to continue in sin or to commit acts of sin run afoul of the fact that we share Christ's death and resurrection and that we are now slaves of righteousness and not slaves of the sinful nature. Then there are those who so emphasize truth that grace is ignored. We are to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15) because mere knowledge simply gives us the big head and does not edify or build up, i.e. promote Christ-likeness in ourselves or other believers (1 Cor. 8:1). This does not mean that we disregard or dilute the truth because love rejoices in the truth (1 Cor. 13:6). Christ is the perfect example of one who had equal regard for grace and truth (John 1:17). Mt. 12:18-21 shows His grace, *"Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will declare justice to the Gentiles.<sup>19</sup> He will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.<sup>20</sup> A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench, till He sends forth justice to victory;<sup>21</sup> and in His name Gentiles will trust."* Yet Christ strongly defended the truth of God's word (John 17:17; 10:35; Mt. 22:29). We must avoid the sin of indifference to the truth by being alert and guarded in our thinking (1 Thes. 5:6). We must avoid the sin of self-righteousness which seeks only to condemn rather than restore (Gal. 6:1-2). God wants balance in our Christian lives based on the unchanging truth of His word.

Now we come to an unusual word. The word "unloving" is a Greek word speaking not of "brotherly love" (phileo) or "sacrificial love" (agape). It speaks of "family love" (astorgas) such as parent/child love and is translated by the KJV "natural affection". Here the Greek word speaks of a lack of family love. The high incidence of child neglect and child abuse by parents shows the truth and reality of this scripture. In addition there are many husbands and wives who simply desert their spouse and children. If that were not enough, there is a high incidence of abuse, neglect and exploitation of elderly and disabled adults. The perpetrators are usually adult children. God's word lists this as a sin. God's word makes it clear that God's expectation is that parents bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:4) and save up for their children (2 Cor. 12:14). In turn adult children are to see that their parents are cared for if they are unable to care for themselves (1 Tim. 5:4, 8; Mark 7:9-13). Loving our neighbor, i.e. all people is commanded of each believer (Mt. 22:37-40), but it needs to begin at home.

The Greek word for the sin of being irreconcilable carries the meaning of one who is unwilling to be at peace with others. This person will not let go of differences. In the church sometimes these people create large problems if they are not restored, or removed if restoration fails. These people will make issues out of items that are not commanded or forbidden by scripture and simply will not let go. Romans 14:17-19 instructs us as believers to do those things that make for peace or harmony in these areas. At other times this person may be totally unforgiving. This means that cannot be restored to fellowship by confessing their sins until they let go of this unforgiveness (Mt 6:14-15). Too many believers end up being troublemakers rather than peacemakers when it comes to scriptural issues (Mt. 5:9). We live in a society

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where it is fashionable to bash people who disagree with us politically, socially or culturally. As Christians we are commanded to pursue peace with all people in Heb. 12:14. We are told to do this in so much as it depends on us. This does not mean that we should not be immovable on scriptural norms and the gospel but in that instance, we are to remain steadfast (1 Cor. 15:58). The root of being irreconcilable is self-will and a false belief that life and other people's response to me should be on my terms. When two people become irreconcilable, we as believers have a responsibility to step and try to bring about reconciliation (Phil. 4:2-3 cp. Gal. 6:1). This helps them as well as the church from being conformed to this age.

The next sin, "malicious gossips." Is a term that speaks of those who intentionally speak to tear down others. It is actually what the word "devil" means. You will recall how in Job chapters 1 and 2 that Satan slandered Job before the angels in heaven because Satan stated that Job did what God said because of God's protection and blessing and that he would curse God if those were removed. Such things can come off the tongue of a Christian if does not ask God to guard his lips (Ps. 141:3) and ask God that the meditation of his heart and words of his mouth be pleasing to God (Psalm 19:14). We are called to edify one another or build one another up according to Rom. 14:19 and 1 Thes. 5:11. This is to be the way we speak to one another as believers and to other people (Eph. 4:29). The idea is that what we say should promote the likeness of Christ in the ones to whom we speak. Otherwise our speaking becomes destructive. We are to speak the truth and stop any lying to all people because we who are believers are joined together in one body or group (Eph. 4:25). We are to be sure that when we speak the truth that we speak it in a way that shows love (Eph. 4:15) Love promotes Christlikeness (1 Cor. 8:1). Before we speak we are commanded to think it over (Prov. 15:28). By being slow to speak, we are more likely to avoid the sin of slander and other sins of the tongue (James 1:19).

The following term that we are looking at is "without self-control". One of the problems that we see in western culture and other cultures today is that there is a total lack of self-control of bodily desires and behavior. It is not natural to have this kind of self-control. It is supernatural and is a result of walking in the Spirit according to Gal. 5:16, 22-23). In the area of sexual self-control, single believers need to recognize that if they cannot control this desire, a God-honoring marriage is the way to go. Too many wait in order to have a big wedding rather than just simply doing what God says. Another motivation held out for bodily self-control which is mentioned in 1 Cor. 9:25 is found in 1 Cor. 9:24-27. That motivation speaks of the fact that if we fail to exercise this type of self-control, there will be a loss of future reward (not loss of salvation) at the judgment seat of Christ as emphasized by the word "disqualified". 2 Peter 1:5-9 mentions that this is an area in which believers need to grow and improve. Titus 1:8 also uses this word to identify this matter of self-control as an essential quality for leadership in the church. The concept of self control extends to the tongue or speech in James 1:26;-27, the appetite for food as mentioned in Titus 1:12 (observe the current obesity epidemic in our country), and of our temper according to Prov. 25:28. By depending on Christ working through the Holy Spirit (Gal. 2:20: 3:1-5; 5:6-7, 16) for the power and direction along with obedience to the commandments and motivations found in God's word, we will experience the ability to keep from giving in to the trends of the times in this area.

The word “brutal” is a good description of what is happening in our world today. There is unspeakable violence against all groups of people simply because they are different in some way or because they do not believe and behave in the way that we think that they should. This happens at the hands of criminals, rebels, governments and sadly in the home. A good part of my career was spent dealing with violence in the form of physical abuse and intimidation of elderly and disabled people. Very sadly, this often happened at the hands of adult children. The answer to the issue of brutality is of course self-control an aspect of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). More often than not, the purpose of brutality is trying to control others especially between husbands and wives and in dealing with children. We must develop a servant heart in relating to others especially to those under our authority (Mark 10:42-45). The measure of our relational style is not how many people we control but how many people we serve. By serving, I do not mean enabling people to be irresponsible or sinful (2 Thes. 3:11-12; Gal. 6:5) but doing those things for and with them that will enable them to be responsible and do the right thing even when it’s not convenient or comfortable. It also means we don’t rescue them from the consequences of ill-advised actions (Prov. 19:19). Finally, brutality is associated with getting even. God’s word strictly tells us that vengeance is to be left to God and to His servant human government. We are never to take it ourselves (Rom. 12:19-21; 13:3-4). Remember using violence on a personal level to get even or to hinder the working of God only begets more violence (Mt. 26:51-52).

We observe that there are people who hate that which is good. The Greek word for “good” is the same word form as found in Gal. 5:22-23 in relation to the fruit of the Spirit. The word has the idea of that which is good in the sense of being of benefit to other people or even ourselves. There are people, some of whom are false brethren, who disparagingly refer to Christians who value what as good as “goody two shoes.” When we hate what is good, we sabotage our own lives. The unsaved are often despisers of good and will make fun of and try to discourage those who are living for Christ. Titus 1:8 tells us that one of the characteristics of a Christian leader is loving what is good. 1 Peter 3:10-11 sets the remedy in the life of the Christian for this sin. If we want to enjoy or love life and see good days, it is essential guard our speech from that which is evil and to avoid being deceitful with our lips. There needs to a break with doing anything that is evil and replacing it with doing that which is good. Then we are to seek to get along with others and pursue peace with them. A believer found himself fuming and complaining to himself about people who do not put their grocery cart back in the racks. This did nothing but conjure up ungodly fantasies. So after confessing the sin to God (1 John 1:9), he decided to see that at least one or two carts that were not put in the rack were put there. He replaced his ungodly thoughts with doing something to improve the situation. As Christians, we are created in Christ Jesus for good works which God planned beforehand that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:10). We must overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:21).

The word treacherous speaks of one who is unfaithful to the people and principles to whom and which he professes loyalty. Judas Iscariot is one such person. He professed loyalty to Christ and His teaching yet he departed from them both. Of course, he was not a true believer

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(John 6:64, 70-71). The cure for this problem as it stands is faithfulness. Only one who has the Holy Spirit and is filled with the Spirit, so that he produces the fruit of the Spirit, is capable of producing faithfulness (Gal. 5:16, 22-23). Dealing with this issue requires discernment on our part. 1 John 4:1-6 tells us that there are many false prophets. How people respond to God's word is the real test (1 John 4:6). When we fail to be loyal to the Lord, it requires a turning on our part as in the case of Peter. Luke 22:31-32 mentions that Satan would sift Peter but when he turned, he was to strengthen his fellow-believers. As a result Peter had a long and fruitful ministry. If Peter had not turned, the church would have not had the large growth that it had experienced. Christ challenges us as he challenged the church as Smyrna to not fear what we may encounter but to be faithful even if it kills us.

It is obviously a sin to be reckless. Being reckless simply means indulging in behavior that disregards the actual or possible results of our choices which may harm others and/or ourselves. Prov. 27:12 reminds us that those who do not bother to become knowledgeable regarding a decision plunge on and pay the penalty. Prov. 14:16 tells us that if choose wisely, we will turn away from evil. However, arrogance and carelessness characterize the fool. Prov. 19:2 shows us that if we make a quick decision regarding a matter that is not commanded or forbidden in scripture that we are being rash or reckless. Eccl. 5:4-6 warns against making commitments to God that we do not keep. Joseph's brothers offered to go to prison if his cup was found in their possession (Gen. 44:9). Jephthah, one of the judges of Israel vowed to offer the first thing that came out of his house (Judges 11:31). It turned out to be his daughter. Herod promised his daughter anything she wanted for pleasing him in a dance and ended up killing John the Baptist as a result (Mt. 14:7-9). This sin creeps into believers' lives when we live emotionally and irrationally rather than rationally. The principle of a sound mind mentioned in 2 Tim. 1:7 is the solution to put a stop to this type of thinking and behaving.

The problem of conceit or an inflated self-image is set forth. A large number of books came out in the 70's, 80's and 90's concerning the importance of people having a good self-image. We were to praise people especially children for everything and anything imaginable. This preoccupation has not been healthy for the church and has led to the development of strange and erroneous thinking and teaching. The correction for conceit is not to veer off the other side of the road and see ourselves as being without value. Since the tendency is usually to err on the side of conceit, we are warned in Rom. 12:3 not to think too highly of ourselves (Rom. 12:3) but to think of ourselves in a sound-minded or clear-minded way. To do this, we must reason from the scriptures (Acts 17:2). All believers have at least one spiritual gift (1 Cor. 12:7). However, it is a gift not the result of any merit on our part (1 Cor. 4:7). Apart from Christ we can do nothing (John 15:5). However, with Christ's power, we are able to do anything that God would command us (Phil. 4:13). Practicing the mind of Christ is the way to avoid conceit according to Phil. 2:3-11). We are to do nothing for selfish ambition, to view others as more important than ourselves, look out for their interests and not just our own interests. As Jesus laid aside the independent use of His Divine attributes, we are to lay aside the independent use of our human attributes, to live as servants rather than controllers, to be willing to sacrifice our



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lives and even our reputations to glorify God. Then God can exalt us at the proper time (1 Pet. 5:5-6) if we humble ourselves in this way.

Obsession with bodily pleasure is a large problem of our society. It is a work of the sinful nature and is referred to by the word “sensuality” in the NASB, “debauchery” in the NIV and “lewdness” in the NKJV. This phrase is probably the best definition of this Greek word “aselgia” used for those words. In Mark 7:22 Jesus said this sin starts in the heart or the thought life of the individual. In Eph. 4:17-19 believers are told not to live like the unsaved and this is one of the characteristics of many of the unsaved. Gal. 5:19 lists it as a work of the flesh or sinful nature. 1 Pet. 4:3-4 tells us that the unsaved are surprised when people trust Christ and no longer live this way. Rom. 13:11-14 tells us that in light of the fact that our final facet of salvation from the presence of sin at Christ’s return is drawing nearer, we are to put away this sin. The remedy is to put on the Lord Jesus Christ in the way that we live our lives and make no provision, i.e. compromise, for the flesh/sinful nature. 2 Cor. 12:20-13:2 explain that Paul was very grieved over the fact that some believers were involved in this sin and others. He goes on to point out that the problem is that they have not repented, i.e. changed their mind along with their behavior by confessing and forsaking the sin (1 John 1:9; Prov. 28:13). As a result, the churches-discipline process of Mt. 18:15-17 was going to be used. We live in a pleasure crazed society. 1 John 2:16 calls this obsession the lust of the flesh. Both in 2 Tim. 3:4 and 1 John 2:15-17, we are told the remedy is to love God and to do his will.

As leaders and as those being led, there is a need to identify the forms of Christianity that accept the identified forms of sin as normal rather than separating from them. Some churches have gone to the point where homosexual behavior is considered as being okay so long as it is a committed relationship. These churches pay lip service to Christ but not the Christ of the scriptures. There is the outward form or veneer of devotion to God but by these very deeds, they say no to authentic godliness and the power that comes from living a godly life. We are not to compromise or fellowship with such people who profess to know Christ. Titus 1:15-16 describe them as knowing God but denying Him by doing these kinds of deeds. This type of separation from these pseudo-believers is painful because of friendships and relationships with those who refuse to separate from them are sometimes damaged. The money, property and time invested in that particular fellowship of believers is gone. We must remember that God’s blessing for obedience is more important than any loss. The sins we have looked at in these verses also help believers to be alert regarding prospective marriages, business partnerships and close friendships. Often the only criteria believers use is 2 Cor. 6:14-17 which simply states that these relationships are not to exist with unbelievers. This goes further in showing us specific behavior patterns that we are to avoid as well as professing Christians who are controlled by any of those. We try restoration first (Gal. 6:1; Mt. 18:15-17) and then separation. The tough times in which we live call for tough choices not compromise or going with the flow.

3:6-7 - Leaders (officially or simply just by example) and those who are being led have a responsibility to communicate and understand why we need to separate from those who are

openly and without repentance disobeying God's word and from those who are promoting false doctrine. Professing believers who live in open disobedience and/or doctrinal errors are the ones who get to families through the spiritually immature women (usually wives) in that household. The Greek word for weak women is literally translated, "little women". They actually gain control or extensive influence over these women. The problem that these women have is not a lack of information on what God's word says because our text states that they are always learning. The text states that these women are weighed down with sins. They know what God's word says but instead of obeying what they know, they are led on by various impulses or desires rather than reasoning out their conduct from God's word. They then have the problem that Jesus speaks of in John 8:30-32, *"As he was saying these things, many believed in him. So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, 'If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,'<sup>32</sup> and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free"* (ESV). Jesus had told believers that if they abided in His word that they were truly disciples of His and would know the truth which would free them from the power of sin. The condition for knowing the truth in that way is to abide in God's word. James 1:25 tells us what it means to abide in Christ's word, *"But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does"* (NASB). To abide in God's word means to be an effective doer rather than a forgetful hearer. Notice that we do not know the truth in a way that frees us from the power of sin if we do not obey God's word. As a result, these women may have eternal life but are unable to experience abundant life because they disobey what they have learned. As a result, they want the benefits of abundant life without the obedience and are open to those who live in disobedience and/or doctrinal error for solutions to their dilemma and dig themselves into deeper difficulty. When we live by reasoning from the scriptures (Acts 17:2) rather than by our impulses we know the truth in a way that frees us from sin's power. If we fail to pay the price (of obedience), we will pay the price (of disobedience).

3:8-9 - Leaders and those who are being led need to observe what happened in the contest between Moses and the magicians of Egypt, Jannes and Jambres. These men opposed Moses by duplicating some of his miracles and by doing so hardening the heart of Pharaoh so that he would not let the people of Israel go. The people who promote the sinful trends of the last days along with those who teach false doctrine (2 Tim. 2:17-18) oppose the truth of God's word (John 17:17). Their minds are said to be "depraved". This simply means that their thinking promotes ruin in the lives of those whom they impact. They are stated to be rejected or worthless as measured by the faith, i.e. the standards of God's word. Their ruinous impact will only go so far and then will be stopped. The reason is that their rejection of the standards of God's word will be obvious to everyone. At first Jannes and Jambres appeared to be successful in duplicating the plagues brought by God through Moses. However, there soon came a time when they could no longer do so. When the sins and doctrinal errors of the time appear to be winning, there will come a stopping point based on God's word.

3:10-11 - Leaders and those who are led have a real need to find positive alternatives to the sins and errors of those who deceive and captivate either of them. The Greek word for

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followed speaks of following the pattern set by someone for the purpose of learning that pattern. As Timothy looked at the teaching of Paul which became part of the New Testament later on, he used that as the model from which he worked. In the same way we use the New Testament scriptures as the framework and pattern from which we work. The verb tense of the Greek word for followed is perfect tense and shows that it is something that happened at a point of time in the past and continues into the present time. We make the choice, therefore, to follow the New Testament as our pattern for doctrine and behavior with the result that we are doing so even at the present time. Not only is the content of what we teach from God's word important, but how it is modeled in terms of our thinking, behavior choices and experiences is equally important. For that reason, we must look at the conduct and purpose of Paul as examples to be followed. By doing this, we set a good pattern for others that we teach and influence. How people have come to saving faith in Christ and how they afterward trust Christ for the struggles and difficulties of life become very important as well. How people show patience in the midst of trying people and trying circumstances is another way that a pattern is to be established. It includes our love for God (Mt. 22:37-38), fellow-believers (1 John 3:14), fellow-human beings (Rom. 13:8-9) including enemies (Mt. 5:44). It is shown by obeying God's word, doing no harm and overcoming evil with good (1 John 5:3; 2 John 1:5-6; Romans 13:10; 12:20-21). Perseverance is an important quality in the Christian life. It is shown in two basic ways. First, it is continuing to obey even when it seems illogical or impossible. Second, it involves confessing any sin quickly and getting back into the race of the Christian life (Heb. 12:1-2). We will discuss the issue of persecutions and sufferings in the next paragraph.

We are reminded that the Greek word for "followed" speaks of following the pattern set by someone for the purpose of learning that pattern. Here the enduring of suffering persecution because of the gospel of Christ or because of righteousness is outlined. In Antioch after some success in bringing both Jews and Gentiles to Christ and discipling them, they were thrown out of the city by the efforts of Jewish unbelievers who stirred up some influential women along with the city leaders. In Iconium he presented the gospel but had to flee because of a plot to mistreat and stone him and Barnabas. In Lystra Paul was actually stoned and miraculously lived through it to continue to minister. While believers in some parts of the world experience imprisonment and death (Rev. 2:10), beatings and assaults (2 Cor. 11:23-25) and even loss of property and possessions (Heb. 10:34), our experience in western cultures tends to be based on the lesser forms of persecution mentioned in Luke 6:22: hatred (open antagonism or cold indifference), ostracism, insults or put-downs and being given a bad reputation. Notice, that Paul sets the model by showing us how to endure such persecution. In his case the Lord rescued him to bring him through it. In other cases the Lord lets us die or remain in it. Whatever God chooses for us, we can be confident that He will use the experience for our good in the end (Deut. 8:16).

*2 Timothy 3:12* - Leaders and those who are being led must face the fact that there are two ways for believers to live: godly or less than godly. To live godly means to put Him first in all things. God is the first love of a godly believer (Mt. 22:37-38; Rev. 2:4-5). There is no trying to serve two masters (Mt. 6:24). There is price for living godly and that is some form of suffering

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for Christ. To live less than godly means suffering in the form of discipline from God (1 Cor. 11:30-32; Heb. 12:5-11). 1 Peter 3:17 explains that it is better to suffer for doing what is right than for doing what is wrong. Persecution takes two basic forms as detailed in the previous paragraph. Godly living starts with a desire to put God first in everything. The benefit of this is stated in Mt. 6:33 where we are told that the other details and needs of life will be taken care of if we put Him first. The carnal believer has no such promise. God is able to turn our persecution into blessing as He did in the life of Joseph (Gen. 50:20). So godly living will definitely bring persecution, probably minor at least in western culture. Living less than godly will bring discipline because God loves us too much to leave us that way. 1 Peter 1:6-7 promises that God will use the persecution to develop us spiritually. Why forfeit the abundant life of blessing, peace, joy and power for one of the misery of being under the rod of God? God gives us a choice. Live by faith or live by sight (2 Cor. 5:7).

*2 Timothy 3:13* - It is amazing to hear Christian pastors bemoaning the state of Christianity in our nation and its waning influence. As leaders and as those being led, we should not be surprised. Jesus in the parable of the leaven (Mt. 13:33) spoke of how Christianity would gradually be infiltrated by yeast or leaven which is a symbol of false doctrine (Mt. 16:6, 12) and sinfulness (1 Cor. 5:6-11). We are plainly told here in God's word that people who are evil will proceed from bad to worse. Why would we not expect sinfulness and the toleration of it would not grow within our human societies? We are also told that counterfeit Christians, i.e. impostors would grow from bad to worse. Did not our Lord say that many (not few) among those who professed faith in Christ would call Him Lord yet be sent away into hell with the statement of our Lord Jesus Himself, "I never knew you" in Mt. 7:21-23? The situation is not going to get better. Christians standing around blaming themselves and each other for the state of affairs is not going to improve things. In the midst of the declining situation, we are told the very key and the resulting effects to build our lives and help others build their lives in 2 Tim. 3:14-4:6. 2 John 1:7 states that many (not few) deceivers regarding Christ and Christianity have gone out into the world. 1 John 4:1 states that many false prophets have gone out into the world. Paul prophesied in Acts 20:28-30 that the church would be divided and diluted by these deceivers. It is plain that these people will be deceiving people right and left and that they themselves will be deceived. Deception is presenting what is false in the way of Christian doctrine and Christian living as truth. We will see in the next section how to cope with the state of affairs knowing that these times were predicted by our Lord, the Apostles and His prophets in 2 Peter 3:2-4. We are also told that many will follow their ways according to 2 Peter 2:2 and cause the truth of God's word to be spoken of as evil.

### **PART FIVE: Recourse for Leaders (3:14-4:5)**

*2 Timothy 3:14* - Leaders and those who are being led are to counter the problem of today's culture and the worsening of it in the future by continuing in the things we have learned from those who have taught or given us the scriptures. This includes the doctrines and the commandments that we have learned. To continue requires persevering effort on our part to review what we have learned and be reminded of it continually. Continuing in what we have

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learned also requires obedient application of this truth to life. Not only are we to continue in what we have learned but also in what we have been assured of. This is what faith involves. Romans 4:20-21 states in the NAS when Abraham believed God: *yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,<sup>21</sup> and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.* To continue in what we have become assured involves God and His ability to do what He promises in His word. Finally, it involves a trustworthy source. The only scriptures that Timothy had at that time were the Old Testament scriptures and the persons of the Apostles who taught what became our New Testament scriptures. This continuing in these things is what will keep the believer from being deceived as a leader or follower. It also will help prevent them from becoming deceivers of others. By doing this, we as believers become more and more like Christ in a world that is becoming more evil and counterfeit.

3:15 - It is important for those who lead and those who are being led to understand and know the centrality of the scriptures. Children are to be brought up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). Parents have the main responsibility in seeing that this happens. Grandparents are also involved according to Psalm 78:5-7. In Timothy's case it would appear that his mother and grandmother were very involved in his spiritual upbringing (2 Tim. 1:5). The bottom line is that it is important that the scriptures be taught to children. As leaders and as those being led, it is important that the scriptures be presented to people so that they will be wise for salvation by means of faith in Christ. Notice that it does not simply say, "Knowledgeable for salvation". If the knowledge of the scriptures for salvation is not combined with faith (Heb. 4:2), then it is not helpful. Being wise involves responding obediently to what is known from God's word (Mt. 7:24-27). The obedience required for salvation is simply, childlike faith in Christ. Since it is the scriptures, God's word that has that power, it is important that they be used for sharing the saving message of Christ because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ (Rom. 10:17). Attempts to bring people to salvation - apart from the use of the scriptures - will likely result in an artificial faith rather than an actual faith. The scriptures have the power (comes from the Greek word "dunamena" from which we get our word dynamite) to bring about the wisdom for salvation by faith in Christ.

3:16 - In the struggle against sin and doctrinal error taught and lived out by deceivers, there is a need to be well-grounded in God's word. First of all, the authority of God's word must be clear in the minds of leaders and followers. The correct concept of inspiration includes inerrancy as taught by Jesus (John 17:17) and the Old Testament writers (Psalm 19:7). There are four ways that scripture is to be helpful for the believer. First of all, doctrine is helpful to tell us which path or set of choices we should choose. Secondly, reproof tells us when we are off the path of God's ways and thoughts in our choices. Thirdly, correction tells us how to get back on the path of God's ways and thoughts in what we choose to believe and do. Fourthly, instruction in righteousness tells how to stay on the path of God's ways and thoughts in our ongoing decisions or choices. To let God's word help us in these four ways keeps us from being deceived or becoming one who deceives. As we do this, we will not be carried about by every new wind current of doctrine sweeping through those who name the name of Christ (Eph.

4:14). This is why we must keep the scriptures close at hand and thought at all times so that we can determine true from false and right from wrong.

3:17 – It is crucial for us to be aware that we are created in Christ Jesus for good works which God appointed ahead of time for us to do (Ephesians 2:10). The Holy Spirit is involved in this process since goodness is one of the aspects of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) which is produced as we walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16) by trusting Christ for the power and direction to live the Christian life (Gal. 2:20; 3:1-5; Col. 2:6). By using God's word to identify the path that conforms to God's word, to confront deviations from that path in the form of sin or error, to correct those deviations, and to prevent those deviations, we are completely and fully equipped for every kind of good work. The Holy Spirit also works through the spiritual gifts of other believers to equip us for the work of service to build up, i.e. promote the likeness of Christ, in other believers (Eph. 4:11-12). When we fail to meet together to benefit from these gifts, then we are hindering the God-designed work of the Holy Spirit. We are acting as though we are self-sufficient and do not need the full ministry of the Holy Spirit which shows a lack of humility and a problem with pride (James 4:6). An intake of God's word promotes this goal of being equipped for every good work, but we must not ignore the working of the Holy Spirit in this process. The Christian life involves both dependence and disciplined effort on our part. Each of us must ask ourselves, am I maximizing God's provisions to use His word to completely and fully equip me for the good works that He has planned for me to do. Remember, the Holy Spirit works in us directly and through other believers.

4:1 - Leaders and those who are being led need to understand the importance of this verse in relation to the verses that will follow. We will look at the preaching of the word with patience and instruction to confront, convince and encourage. This verse forms the motivation for leaders in the church to do just that and for those who are being led to understand not only what they are to do but what is to motivate them. The presence of God is mentioned as one motivation for communicating His word. God is present in every place to note the good and the evil (Prov. 15:3). If the presenter's heart is right with God, then God is present to strongly support the presenter (2 Chr. 16:9). The second motivation is the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. He promised that He would be with those who trusted Him for salvation even to the end of the age (Mt. 28:20). This is the motivation to make disciples which Biblical preaching helps to do. Finally, Jesus Christ is going to judge the living and the dead. He will judge motives (1 Cor. 4:5-6) and our works as believers (2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 3:14-15). The judgment of believers occurs at the time of their resurrection (Luke 14:14). The purpose of this judgment is not to determine heaven and hell for the believer but to determine reward. However, Jesus will also judge unbelievers as well and condemn them to Hell (John 5:27-29; Rev. 20:11-15). This includes both the living (Mt. 25:41, 46) and the dead (Rev. 20:11-15). We are so used to living in a sinful world that we sometimes lose the sense of reality of God's presence and of the presence of Christ as well as the judgment to come. The preaching of the word is vital not only to help saved people grow but it is important to help unsaved people come to Christ for salvation (1 Cor. 1:18,21; Rom. 10:17). Keep in mind that forever is forever and for a soul to be

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damned is serious business. Let us see that our respective churches are tuned into the reality of judgment. Eternity is closer than any of us sense.

4:2 - Leaders have a clear command and those who are being led should seek out leaders who do just this. Notice that the command is clear. Leaders are to preach the word. This is speaking of God's word and not their own word. Too many pastors spend precious time in the pulpit with elongated stories and comments and precious little of God's word. The same goes for Sunday school teachers. Our Lord is going to have some strong words for those who had so much confidence in what they had to say that it eclipsed God's word or even ran contrary to it in some cases. This preaching of the word is to be done "in season and out of season" (*Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. NLT*).

There are seasons of sowing, watering and reaping. All seasons are needful. Just because nothing appears to be happening is not reason to abandon the preaching of the word. The final part of this verse explains how God's word is to be preached, i.e. communicated. It is to be used to convince or persuade people to make a change of mind. In the case of the unsaved, it is to change their mind about whatever is keeping them from trusting the Lord Jesus Christ so that they will trust Christ. In the case of the saved, it is to change their mind about their sin, to confess and to forsake it. The word "repent" comes from the Greek word to change one's mind. Preaching must also rebuke or confront wrong ideas about salvation and sinful behavior and beliefs of the saved. Again a change of mind is needed on the part of both groups. The third way that God's word is to be preached is to exhort, i.e. encourage or even comfort. It encourages the unsaved to trust Christ if they have not done so. It encourages or affirms believers who are obeying the particular truth being preached to continue to persevere in living out that truth. Finally, biblical preaching requires all or complete patience. God's word will work given time. High pressure tactics have no place in biblical preaching. If people do not heed the scriptures, emotional grandstanding or even some great miracle is not going to do the trick (Luke 16:27-31). Finally, this is to be done with instruction or teaching. Some translate this careful instruction. Preaching that does not instruct or teach is not biblical preaching. How many times have we attended Bible-believing churches to have the pastor read some portion of scripture to start His message never to return to the scripture? Remember God's word is the Holy Spirit's sword (Eph. 6:17). The Holy Spirit works through God's word. My wife told of a lady who went to our church and heard our first pastor. She complained that he did not preach at her as much as he taught. She and her husband went to a church where the pastor did far less teaching in his preaching and raved and ranted at the congregation. This church was 6 times as large as our church but today has ceased to exist. Many of the so-called believers from that church simply dropped out. If your pastor or Sunday school teacher is communicating God's word with careful instruction, encourage him and pray for him. If he is not, pray for him and encourage him to start doing it right. If he refuses to change, go where it is happening if he cannot be removed.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 - The reason that patient and instructive preaching that convinces, confronts and encourages is commanded is to counteract continuing trends of people to decide that they

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do not want sound doctrine or teaching. The trend for people is to raise up a large number of teachers who will reinforce their sinful and rebellious desires and tell them what they want to hear. They want their errors to be taught as truth, i.e. alternative facts. There is a window of time when any Bible-believing church must be given sound doctrine. If it does not happen or there is a lapse during that window of time, the trend toward “alternative truth” (which is nothing more than myths/fables, which are man-made formulations that falsely purport to represent the truth of God’s word) entrenches itself and people no longer endure sound doctrine. In these cases, they make fun or light of those who want sound doctrine to be taught and practiced. Examples of this abound in the contemporary church. Trying to bring people to Christ is no longer important. Seeing that people are obeying what is being taught has become sidelined. Toleration of error becomes rampant and capitulation to error follows. It is not simply a loss of orthodoxy (correct doctrine) but also a loss of orthopraxy (correct practice).

The church has been beset with errors regarding spiritual gifts and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. This has spawned a deficient and unbalanced view of God, produced a deficient view of Christ, a clouded and in other cases cancelled gospel, the air conditioning of hell, and a complete blurring of teachings regarding the meaning of death and the future that God has planned. We must choose to capitulate to the culture and times in which we live, or we can stand for Christ and the truth of God’s word. There is no middle ground. Leaders and those who follow them must always fear the frown of God more than they fear the frown of man.

4:5 - The leader and those being led are living in this present age of fleshly living and doctrinal error. In addition to the preaching of the word, there is a need to guard the thought life or the mind from outside temptations through the world or through Satan. This is exactly what the Greek word used for “sober” means. Prov. 4:23 is the best definition of this Greek word and its implications for our lives. Both Satan and his demons and the world system of other people seek to change our mindset so that we move away from the mind of Christ. For this reason, our thought life must be guarded from these influences in all things or all types of situations. Secondly, we must be willing to endure hardship. It is easy to give up when so many people who claim to be Christians are going with the flow of the culture rather than letting themselves become conformed to the likeness of Christ. Hardship comes in many forms: the sufferings of living in a fallen world such as illness, mistreatment by others, and fractured relationships and the sufferings of living for Christ when the hardship comes about because of our stand for the gospel or for our choice to do what is right. Thirdly, all of us are to do the work of an evangelist. In doing this, we reproduce the family of God through the word of God (1 Pet. 1:23) and the work of the Holy Spirit (John 3:3-7). We may not have the spiritual gift of evangelist (Eph. 4:11), but it is still our responsibility to work to try to help people trust the Lord Jesus Christ for their salvation from sin’s penalty. In doing this we fulfill or complete our ministry which is God’s plan of service for us. By doing these three things of guarding our thoughts, enduring hardship, and sharing Christ we stay focused on our ministry or service on the positive side. We must remember, Christian living is not simply to refrain from doing certain things that are sinful, but also doing these positive things as well.



**PART SIX: Review of Leaders (4:6-8)**

4:6 - Leaders and those they lead need to have a clear view of life and death. Paul viewed our lives as a drink offering to be poured out to God. In many cases it is poured as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of other believers (Phil. 2:17). To understand this concept, picture your life as a full pitcher of water at birth. It is going to be poured out on some effort or endeavor and will continue to be poured out until we die at which time the pitcher is empty. Paul and by inference all leaders and followers have lives that are already being poured out. A drink offering was given to God and was normally poured out on other sacrifices. As believers, if we are living for Christ, we are going to be pouring out our lives upon the sacrifices and services of other believers for God's service and glory. We usually do not know how much water we have left in our pitcher. We could die suddenly today or live another 50 years. Our lives are a drink offering. Each day and in each situation, we have to decide whether we are going to pour out our lives for Christ or for something else. Paul stated that the time of his departure had come. By this he was referring to the fact that his human spirit and soul were about to leave his body. Death for the believer is not Christ coming to get him. It is his soul/spirit departing his body and going to be with Christ (Phil. 1:21-23; James 2:26; 2 Cor. 5:6-8) where he will be in a conscious state (Rev. 6:9-11; Luke 16:19-31). When the believer experiences physical death, his soul/spirit is carried by the angels (Luke 16:22) to be with Christ and other believers such as Abraham while the souls/spirits of unbelievers are held in Hades in conscious torment awaiting the time of their bodily resurrection when both body and soul will be cast into hell, i.e. the lake of fire (Luke 16:19-31; Mt. 10:28; Rev. 20:11-15). Death is spoken of as a departure in reference to Christ in Luke 9:31 and by Peter in reference to himself in 2 Pet. 1:13-15. In summary, be conscious for what you are pouring out your life, and be courageous knowing that death is a departure of your conscious life in your soul/spirit to live outside of the body in the presence of Christ.

4:7 - There are three statements that summarize three perspectives that leaders and followers must keep before them so that their lives count for Christ. The first of these is be involved in spiritual warfare by using the spiritual weapons for it. According to Eph. 6:10-18 these involve dependence on Christ for power to do it, using all of God's provisions for it, a recognition that we are struggling against a well-organized enemy – Satan and his demons – with a plan for our lives, standing firm, truthfulness, practical righteousness, being prepared to share the gospel, living the Christian life by faith, holding to the expectation of the future aspect of our salvation at Christ's return, using the word of God, and Spirit-directed prayer for all believers. This makes for the good, i.e. honorable fight. The second perspective is that the Christian life is a race that calls for endurance being focused on the goal (Heb. 12:1-2) and doing so according to the rules (2 Tim. 2:5). The third perspective involves keeping the faith. The faith speaks of the trust of the New Testament. It is a synonym for the New Covenant or the law of Christ. Keeping and obeying God's word is the way to God's blessing (Luke 11:28). We must ask ourselves, what shift needs to occur in our thinking to live out these three perspectives and what behaviors need to be stopped and started and finally, what are we already doing that has implemented these three perspectives that I need to continue to do.

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4:8 - Leaders and those being led must have a clear view of the fact that God has a plan to reward them for their service to Christ. Salvation which includes us being credited with Christ's righteousness at the moment of faith is a gift (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 5:17). The crown of righteousness is a reward for faithful service for those who love the appearing of Christ. Loving Christ's appearing is far more than just enjoying the study of prophecy but relates to the previous verse in which the emphasis was on completing the race of the Christian life with endurance, staying true to God's word in doctrine and deed, and finally fighting the spiritual struggles of the Christian life in a way that honors Christ. We will appear before the judgment seat of Christ as believers (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10-12). This will occur at the resurrection of the righteous according to Luke 14:14. 1 Cor. 3:10-15 outlines how this judgment will occur. Notice that we can lose rewards (cp. Rev. 3:11; 2 John 1:8), however, we ourselves will be saved. The Lord Jesus will be the one who actually judges us. He is described as the righteous judge. He has a standard by which he measures the lasting value of what we did and it impacts how we will be rewarded. There are some Christians who believe that rewards should not motivate us but this verse and several others would show otherwise. They usually say something pious sounding like "Love should be our motive." It is not that this is untrue. It fails to come to grips with the truth that rewards are one of the motivations God has given us for faithful living and service. Love is the sum total of what God commands of us to not do and to do and also for what motivates us. Rewards are not the only motive for faithful service, but they are one of the motives. They are part of what it means to love God. To exclude rewards or any other scriptural motive as a motivation for faithful service diminishes our love for God. We must ask ourselves based on this verse and 2 Tim. 4:7, do we really love and look forward to the appearing of Christ.

### **PART SEVEN: Relationships of the Leader (4:9-22)**

4:9-10 - One of the marks of a leader and those whom he leads is the fact that he needs the help of other believers. This does not mean that Christ is not sufficient. It does mean that other believers are the means that Christ uses in many cases to meet the need of other believers including leaders. Notice that he was specific that the situation was urgent. He wanted Timothy to come to him as soon as possible. If you need assistance, other believers need to be clear on how soon that help is needed. In this case he asked Timothy to make every effort to come soon. If we are going to help other believers, we need to put forth every effort not just when we get around to it. Although Paul was already suffering in this imprisonment, he was suffering from the lack of available believers to help him. He felt grief because Demas who had been helping him had deserted him. Persecution at this time was becoming severe. Demas made the choice not to help Paul because he was living for the present and not for eternity in this situation. The word for world is the Greek word "aion" which means "age" which speaks of a time period. This reminds us that God has called us to sacrificial love for the brethren (1 John 3:16). While probably, the issue for Demas was the fear of being jailed or killed, it could have been some other temptation that brought about the desertion. We are not told that Crescens and Titus had deserted Paul and in light of the fact that he had sent Tychicus out in 2 Tim. 4:12, there is a good chance that they were either sent or otherwise guided to go

to these places for ministry. In any case, they were not available to help him. It is important when we enlist the help of other believers to explain why we need their help when presumably there are other believers to help. This shows the need and the example of good communication between believers. As believers, we need to be available to help and also be willing to try to enlist others to help when others are not available for whatever reason.

4:11 – We can learn much from this verse. Paul was letting them know who was not able to help and who simply refused to help in the previous verses. Here he explains who is available to help him. This is also an important item to address when you request help from other believers. Luke wrote the gospel bearing his name as well as the book of Acts and was a close associate of Paul. He is an excellent example of availability in helping Paul in his ministry. He accompanied Paul and Silas and Paul and Timothy. Believers who work quietly behind the scenes but stay faithful to other believers are a resource in short supply. Mark was an example of a believer who started with problems in this area but had proved himself faithful. Mark went with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey according to Acts 13:5, but early in their travels, Mark deserted them and returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13). At this point he was unstable and immature. When Paul and Barnabas were discussing a follow-up ministry journey, they were strongly divided over the issue of Mark going with them. Paul did not want to take him because of his poor track record, but Barnabas wanted to give him another opportunity. He was the son of the sister of Barnabas (Col. 4:10). As a result, Paul took Silas and Barnabas took Mark and by doing so gave him another opportunity to show that he had grown and that he was reliable. Notice how Paul's thinking changed. This shows us that we should never write off, believers who are unstable in their younger years but be willing to give them other opportunities. Mark is referred to as a fellow-laborer in Phlm. 1:24, and here he is referred to as a useful to Paul. Leaders need to see that other believers are allowed to give other opportunities to believers who have failed the leader. Those who are being led and who fail a spiritual leader in some ministry to which they were entrusted have a responsibility to show that Christ can change them by showing steadfastness in any ministry that they undertake for others. We may fail on one occasion but that failure does not need to define us or any other believer for that matter. Mark showed a willingness to let Christ change Him and Paul showed a willingness to see Mark as what Christ made him rather than to see him for what he was. This is how God wants us as believers to relate to one another.

4:12-13 - One may wonder what is helpful to leaders and those being led in these two verses. It would appear that Tychius was needed to fulfill the role that Timothy had previously had in providing apostolic oversight of the churches. Paul could have kept Tychius to minister to him but was willing to send him for the sake of the believers in the churches. Those who lead must always have concerns for the church in which they serve and be willing to sacrifice their own needs and comfort. However, it is not wrong for leaders to be concerned about their own physical comfort. The request for his cloak was obviously needful because according to 4:21, winter would soon be coming and ancient prisons were not heated and cooled and were usually dark and damp. God's word tells us in Phil. 2:3-4, *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*<sup>4</sup> Let

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*each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. (NKJV).* It is not sinful to look out for our own interests so long as we also are looking out for the interests of others. Paul also wanted his written materials which probably would be portions of scripture. This, of course, would be related to his spiritual life and not just his physical well-being. Since he was facing death, it would be comforting to have the scriptures in hand. It is definitely important that we attend to our physical needs and our spiritual needs and ask for help doing so if there is a problem. In summary, to lead officially or simply as an example, we must be willing to turn loose of people whom we want to direct so that they can serve other believers.

**4:14-15** - Leaders must teach and model for those that they lead how the principles of biblical forgiveness of other people work. This verse is very insightful on how to handle forgiveness in the face of being wronged by others. Obviously, there cannot be fellowship forgiveness without repentance on the part of the offending party (Luke 17:3-4). However, Mark 11:25-26 make it clear that if we have anything against anyone we are to forgive them. If we do not forgive them, we will not receive fellowship forgiveness from God and so will not be able to have our own sins forgiven for the purpose of fellowship. The type of forgiveness that Jesus was speaking of in Mark was obviously not fellowship forgiveness by us toward the offender. That would be what could be called general forgiveness. Romans 12:17-21 best describes how general forgiveness works. It gives up personal vengeance or retaliation and leaves vengeance to God. This might mean in the case of a criminal act that we enlist God's servant, human government, to exercise God's vengeance upon the offender (Rom. 13:3-4). If human government would fail to act, the matter would be left directly with God. In this passage in 2 Timothy, Paul exercised general forgiveness of Alexander by leaving vengeance to God. He was confident of the outworking of the principle of Rom. 12:17-21. That principle not only teaches us to leave the matter for God to avenge and to not seek to avenge ourselves but it also teaches that we should be helpful toward them if they have a genuine need. Notice, however, in our passage in 2 Timothy that extending general forgiveness and being helpful and kind toward the offender, does not mean that we can trust the offender in any way. In fact, we are well within the boundaries of scripture to not only choose to not trust the person but to warn others of any issues. We are not sure what type of harm this Alexander did to Paul, but whatever he did, it was clear how some of the principles of general forgiveness operate in the life of the believer. We will continue the discussion of general forgiveness in our next meditation.

**4:16** - We have been discussing the need for leaders and the believers that they lead to know the distinction between forgiving someone so that we have fellowship with one another (Luke 17:3-4) and general forgiveness which leaves vengeance with God and helps us to be kind and helpful toward the offender (Mark 11:25-26 cp. Rom. 12:17-21). Paul was on trial for his life. He needed fellow-believers to support him at his first defense. However, everyone of them deserted him. This was the time when the Roman emperor Nero was rounding up the Christians and putting them to death. These people who could have supported Paul were scared out of their wits and probably made themselves scarce. They did not want to be thrown into prison to await probable execution. Paul prayed to God on their behalf that God would not

## NOTES ON THE BOOK OF 2 TIMOTHY (Leadership Section 2)

count their desertion against them. They had not repented of their desertion, but Paul understanding their dilemma forgave them in a general way but going further because of the gravity of the situation. While this did not excuse their desertion, Paul certainly forgave them and wanted God to not count this against them. What this is saying to us is that there are times when believers fail us in some way. However, we can see that they were facing a difficult choice and because of the possible ramifications of their decision, it would be very hard for them to do what was right and support Paul. This, by no means, excused their desertion. It reminds us that sometimes living for Christ and loving the brethren in the way that we are commanded requires difficult choices. But difficult does not mean impossible (1 Cor. 10:13). These choices require us to look to divine power rather than resort to human panic.

4:17 - Leaders and those who follow must learn that there are times when no other believer will be around to encourage and support us for whatever reason. This does not mean that we cannot be a useful tool in the hands of the Lord. Christ has promised to never leave us (Mt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5) and will always be standing with us. When Stephen was martyred, he saw Christ standing not sitting at the right hand of God (Acts 7:55-56). Christ enters into our suffering because He is the head of His body the church (Col. 1:18), and we are part of that body so when one part suffers, all parts suffer including Christ who is the head (1 Cor. 12:26). Notice that Christ does not only stand with us during trying times in relation to unsaved people. He also strengthens us (Phil. 4:13). Both of these are part of His present work. As a result Paul was able to fully present the gospel to make it possible for all the non-Jews, i.e. Gentiles who were present to hear it. Christ's standing with us and His empowerment aid us in presenting the gospel in a complete manner. In this case Christ's empowerment and standing with Paul kept him from being immediately executed although Paul knew that it was still likely (2 Tim. 4:6). As believers, one of the principles of Christ's standing with us and His empowerment can buy us time that we need to fully accomplish His purposes especially in communicating the gospel.

4:18 - As leaders and as those being led, we must realize that we will be attacked by our own sinful nature, the world of people and Satan and his demons. The Lord Jesus provides deliverance from these attacks. First of all, we will never be tempted above that which we are able to bear (1 Cor. 10:13). Secondly, those who attack us will probably intend to harm us but God will intend it for good (Gen. 50:20). We are told not to fear those who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul (Mt. 10:28). Thirdly, God may choose to deliver us from spiritual attacks through resurrection (Heb. 5:7) as He did Jesus. In other words, Paul did not mean that he would not be executed, but in one way or another, he would be delivered. If we die, we will be brought into the part of Christ's kingdom which is located in heaven. When we trust Christ as Savior, we are moved into Christ's kingdom according to Col. 1:13 through the new birth (John 3:3-7). Those who are alive on earth are in the earthly part of the kingdom while those who have been born again and who die enter into the heavenly part of that kingdom where the angels are and where God and Christ are resident. According to Luke 16:22, we are brought safely there by the angels. For this reason, every bit of what is important and honorable belongs to God both now and in the eternal future.

4:19-22 - On the surface these closing verses appear to offer little help for the leader and those who are being led. One of the important points of this passage is the matter of greeting one another. The idea of the Greek word is to show respect and acceptance of one another in so doing. It is more than just saying, "Hi, how are you?" He spoke of the fact that Erastus had remained at Corinth. In communicating this concerning his status would help Timothy to pray for him as well as for Trophimus who was sick at Miletus when Paul left. The fact that Trophimus was left sick by Paul shows that sometimes it is not God's will to heal. Early in the church age, healing was widespread and occurred in great numbers with few or no exceptions (Acts 5:15-16; 19:11-12). However, by the time this letter was written in about 67 A.D., healing was obviously not occurring as much as it had earlier in the church age. This is an important refutation of the false teaching that it is always God's will to heal. The personal note of Paul for Timothy to come before winter was probably to bring the personal effects that Paul had requested in 4:13. Paul's closing comment was a prayer that we would do well to pray for every believer. That prayer requests that the Lord would be with them in their inner man. For Christ to be effective in our lives as believers, it is important to have his working in our inner man. Finally, the way this is worked out is through the working of His grace (=His goodness that we do not deserve) to do the work Christ has given us as His servants.