

Letters to Lead By

2 TIMOTHY 2:14–26

FIRST DAY: Introduction

As believers, God's grace distinguishes us from others. It strengthens us to endure hardship, obey God's Word, and to patiently labor until the harvest. Divine grace is essential to any and every ministry endeavor. When we choose to minister for Jesus, we will always encounter distractions, opposition, and temptations. It is only the strength found in *the grace that is in Christ Jesus* that navigates us through these provocations. This grace enables us to present ourselves to the Lord as workmen who have no cause for shame and who rightly apply the Word of truth.

Having instructed Timothy on the application of Christ's grace in hardship, obedience, and patience, Paul then addressed the more personal nature of Timothy's ministry. Timothy would need to draw on the divine strength of grace in order to:

- Remind the congregants not to strive over words
- Be diligent to present himself to God
- Shun profane and vain babblings
- Flee youthful lusts
- Pursue the fruit of righteousness
- Resist quarreling
- Gently and patiently correct those who are ensnared by the devil

Such a tall order would require constant grace. This grace would distinguish Timothy in attitude, activity, and pursuit from those in opposition.

Today there are still many provocations that can drive us off course from the ministry God has ordained for each of us. Therefore, divine grace will always be essential for anyone desiring to be a vessel used by God.

Thank God for His abundant supply of divine grace enabling you to be a vessel of honor useful to Him.

SECOND DAY: Read 2 Timothy 2:14–15

1. Paul began this chapter by instructing Timothy *to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*. Paul then moved to the practical issues of ministry that would require the strength of grace. Paul charged Timothy to *remind* the believers of the truths of the gospel message. Review 2 Timothy 2:8, 11–13 to remind yourself of *these things*. 2 Timothy 2:14a

2. Timothy was to solemnly charge the believers *before the Lord*. Use 2 Timothy 2:14b to note and comment on:
 - a. What the believers were **not** to do
 - (1) The Greek word for *strive* signifies *wrangling about empty and trifling matters*. Why is it imperative for believers to avoid this?

 - b. What such *words* amounted to
 - (1) How does this underscore the seriousness of Paul's charge?

3. Rather than engage in such unprofitable activity, what was Timothy to do? 2 Timothy 2:15a

- a. The Greek word for *diligent* means *to exert oneself or labor zealously*. What does this imply?
4. Use 2 Timothy 2:15 to fill in the blanks with how we are to *present* ourselves:

a. _____ to _____

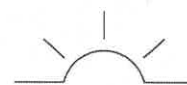
- (1) The Greek word for *approved* was used for testing metals and approving of their quality. Pastor Warren Wiersbe pointed out, *We cannot be approved unless we are tested.*¹ How does this speak to you concerning the trials in your life? See also 1 Peter 1:6–7.

b. A _____ who does not need to be _____

- (1) Why is this important?

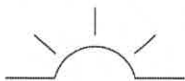
c. *Rightly* _____ *the* _____ *of* _____

- (1) To *rightly divide* carries the idea of plowing a straight furrow or cutting in a straight line. What does this suggest to you concerning the handling of God's Word?



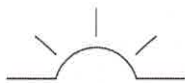
FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The word for *rightly dividing* (*orthotomeo*) is found only here in the Bible. It connotes the need for pieces, such as stones, to be cut straight so that they fit properly together. Improper cuts will lead to instability, faults, and flaws.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The word *cancer* (2 Timothy 2:17) can be translated *gangrene* and is a Greek idiom expressing the repulsiveness and rapid spread of false teaching.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

This is the second time Hymenaeus is mentioned as a danger to the church. It would seem, from this passage, that he had a new accomplice.

5. In light of your study, share a way you desire to *present yourself* to the Lord. See also Romans 12:1–2.

THIRD DAY: Read 2 Timothy 2:16–19

1. Paul had given Timothy instruction on how to present himself to God. As part of doing this, what was Timothy to *shun*? 2 Timothy 2:16a

- a. What was the danger of such things? 2 Timothy 2:16b–17a

(1) What does this convey to you about these *babblings* and their effects?

(2) How does this accentuate to you the importance of shunning such things?

2. In 2 Timothy 2:17, Paul indicated two people, Hymenaeus and Philetus, who *spread* a dangerous *message* with these *babblings*. Use 2 Timothy 2:18 to remark on the effect this *message* had on:

- a. Hymenaeus and Philetus

b. *Some* other believers

(1) What do you find most tragic about this situation?

3. Ungodly *babblings* lead to destruction and overthrow. *Nevertheless*, what *stands*? 2 Timothy 2:19a

a. How does this minister to you?

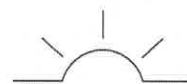
b. Link this with Matthew 7:24–27. What do you see?

4. In Paul's time, a *seal* marked ownership. It carried with it the authority of the builder. With this in mind, use 2 Timothy 2:19b to record and remark on the twofold *seal* of the Lord:

a. *The Lord* _____ *those who* _____

(1) What security does this *seal* give you?

b. *Let* _____ *who names the* _____
 _____ *depart from* _____



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The idea that the resurrection had already happened was a false doctrine Paul dealt with in 1 Corinthians 15:12–20. Not much is known about this ancient heresy.

(1) Read 1 John 3:6 (NLT): *Anyone who continues to live in Him will not sin. But anyone who keeps on sinning does not know Him or understand who He is.*
Therefore, what is ongoing *iniquity* a sign of?

5. From your study today, why do you desire to have the *seal* of the Lord on your life?

FOURTH DAY: Read 2 Timothy 2:20–22

1. Paul had previously presented several analogies pertaining to the Christian life. Similarly, in 2 Timothy 2:20, he employed a new analogy of *vessels* in a *great house*. List the various types of *vessels* Paul mentioned.

2. According to this analogy, what is necessary *for honor*?
2 Timothy 2:21a

a. Link this with Psalm 119:9 and 1 John 1:7, 9 to identify how someone can prepare to be a *vessel for honor*.

3. Paul then described a *vessel for honor*. Use 2 Timothy 2:21 to comment on what it means to be:

a. *Sanctified*

b. *Useful for the Master*

c. *Prepared for every good work*

(1) Link this with Ephesians 2:10. What do you see?

(2) Why do you desire to be a *vessel for honor*?

4. In 2 Timothy 2:22a, the word translated *lusts* speaks of *the passions of youth including sexual desires, ambition, quarreling, and impulsiveness*. Why do you suppose it is important for a *vessel for honor* to *flee* from these?

a. Of the word *flee*, Bible scholar John Stott notes, *It is used literally of flight from physical danger and figuratively of flight from spiritual danger.*² In regard to this, how would you suggest someone *flee* from *youthful lusts*?

5. By contrast, the word *pursue* means *to run eagerly after, earnestly endeavor to acquire*. In 2 Timothy 2:22, Paul listed the things believers should ardently *pursue*. Share how Paul's exhortation speaks to you about pursuing:

a. *Righteousness*

b. *Faith*

c. *Love*

d. *Peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart*

(1) The NLT renders this, *Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts*. How does this speak to you concerning your relationships?

6. Paul intentionally used the powerful verbs *flee* and *pursue*. How do these verbs speak to you about your life as a believer?

FIFTH DAY: Read 2 Timothy 2:23–26

1. In his instruction to Timothy, Paul often repeated a directive that was of particular importance. In 2 Timothy 2:23 Paul reiterated his warnings from 1 Timothy 1:4 and 2 Timothy 2:14, 16. Compare these warnings and record your observations concerning:

- a. *Foolish disputes*

- b. *Ignorant disputes*

(1) Why do you think this needed to be reiterated?

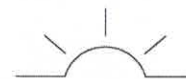
2. Continuing this thought, Paul made clear to Timothy that *a servant of the Lord must not _____* (2 Timothy 2:24a).

3. Paul indicated several attitudes and actions that a *servant of the Lord* should exhibit. From 2 Timothy 2:24b–25a, share your thoughts concerning each of the following:

- a. *Gentle to all*

- b. *Able to teach*

- c. *Patient*

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Proverbs 17:14 says,
*The beginning of
strife is like releasing
water; therefore stop
contention before a
quarrel starts.*

d. *In humility correcting those who are in opposition*

- (1) Link this with Galatians 6:1. What do you see?

- (2) Although we are all servants *of the Lord*, Paul was addressing Timothy as a pastor. Why do you think these attitudes are essential for those in pastoral ministry?

- (3) When we as servants *of the Lord* exhibit these attitudes, what kind of fruit do you think it bears:
 - (a) In our lives

 - (b) In the lives of others

4. Paul referred to those spreading false doctrine as *those who are in opposition*. Use 2 Timothy 2:25b–26 to describe Paul’s ultimate hope for these opponents.

SIXTH DAY: Review

1. In 2 Timothy 2, Paul employed six different analogies to describe Christian service. From your study this week in 2 Timothy 2:14–26, share anything you gleaned from the following analogies:
 - a. The *worker* (verses 14–16)

 - b. The *vessel* (verses 20–21)

 - c. The *servant* (verses 24–25)

2. Reflecting on what you have studied this week, pray for your church and church leadership.