

Being a Minister for Christ

Lesson 7

2 Timothy 2:22-3:9

May 9, 2021

Character Always Trumps Competency

Introduction

Paul wrote the epistle of 2 Timothy while he was in prison shortly before his death. In this letter, Paul wrote to his young protégé Timothy, who was pastoring a church at Ephesus. Paul wrote the epistle to encourage Timothy to continue to lead the church with sound doctrine despite the challenging and tumultuous environment of Ephesus.

Paul warned Timothy of the dangers of bitter and angry words. Arguments do not glorify Jesus. It's quite the opposite. A gentle tongue brings instruction, whereas angry words cause division, discord, and squabbling in the church. Paul warned Timothy that many selfish people would try to mislead the church in this type of environment. He warns Timothy not to engage with these arguments but instead to stand steadfast in his knowledge of the gospel and guide the church with gentle but sometimes firm leadership.

Followers of Christ are likewise called to flee divisive and irrelevant quarreling. To engage in these feuds is fruitless and contrary to the gospel. Furthermore, we are called to be on our guard to watch for selfishness, gossiping, and malignant conversations attitudes so that the church can continue to honor the work of Christ and the gospel.

Memory verse: “And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.”—2 Timothy 2:24

Pray and read 2 Timothy 2:22-3:9. What questions or observations do you have about this passage?

What does the passage say?

1. What did Paul tell us to avoid and to pursue?
(2 Timothy 2:22-23)
2. How did Paul describe these arguments? (2 Timothy 2:23)
3. How should we be instead? (2 Timothy 2:24)
4. What was Paul's instruction about how to respond to those who are eager to argue? (2 Timothy 2:24-25)
5. What is the desired outcome from acting this way?
(2 Timothy 2:25-26)
6. What kind of people did Paul tell us to avoid?
(2 Timothy 3:2-5)
7. What are these people like, according to Paul?
(2 Timothy 3:6-8)
8. What will happen to them? (2 Timothy 3:9)

What does the passage mean?

1. Why was Paul so adamant about fruitless arguments? (Romans 12:18; James 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 2:23-24)

2. Paul instructed Timothy to flee from quarrels, but then, just three verses later directed Timothy to respond with “gentle instruction” to those who wanted to quarrel. How is it possible to do both (flee quarrels and gently instruct) at the same time? (Proverbs 15:1; Galatians 6:1; 2 Timothy 2:22, 25-26; James 1:19-20)

3. Paul lists 19 end-time attitudes of people that are also present in the false teachers he’s mentioned. What makes these characteristics so dangerous in the church? Why does Paul advise us to have nothing to do with them? (Proverbs 13:20, 22:24-25; 1 Corinthians 15:33; 2 Timothy 3:1-5, 8)

4. What could happen to a church if people with these attitudes were to gain influence? How can we identify these people? (Matthew 7:15-20; Galatians 5:19-21; Timothy 3:6-9)

Applying the passage

1. Paul instructed Timothy to flee the “evil desires of youth.” Write down what you think some of these might be. Now, look at the list of dangerous emotions and tendencies in 2 Timothy 3:2-4. How similar is your list? (2 Timothy 2:22, 3:2-4)

