

## Retain and Guard the Treasure

We have placed a great emphasis in our studies and discussions on the authority and relevance of the Word of God, our Bible comprised of the 66 books of the old and new testaments, to all matters of faith and life, including business. In our Forum groups, we have even made a commitment to one another not to give counsel that contradicts the Word of God, nor counsel that is not rooted in the Word of God, because we know that God's way is always best in every circumstance.

Thus, the first step is to look into the Bible for the commands and principles that relate to the root of our issue. Then, we ask God for the wisdom to apply His truth to the issue, drawing upon our business experience and knowledge for practical application. The sequence is critical. We're not to start with our human wisdom; we're to start with God's truth. The definition of wisdom in the Bible is the practical application of God's absolute truth. We are to hold fast to the Word of God.

What is our responsibility to defend God's truth? When enemies of the Lord introduce their false teaching, what are we to do? When unbelievers engage in their speculations about what they think is true, what are we to do? When fellow believers embrace the world's thinking, what are we to do?

These challenges to God's Truth are not new, and we are going to study portions of 2 Timothy to discover God's answers to these questions.

We will have to move briskly to cover this lesson in the allotted time, so tighten your seat belts and hang on as we explore what God has to say in these sections of His Word! Remember the objective of inductive study is to discover, not debate, what the Word of God says.

### 2 Timothy 1:13-14

13 Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

14 Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.

### 2 Timothy 2:1--26

1 You, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2 And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

3 Suffer hardship with [me,] as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

4 No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

5 And also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.

6 The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops.

## OBSERVE

2 Timothy 1:13-14 are the key verses of the entire book of 2 Timothy. These verses convey the theme of the letter, the main message that Paul wishes to convey to Timothy. All interpretation of verses in this letter must keep this theme in mind.

### CONTEXT

Paul is in prison, believing he will die soon, and he wants to "pass the baton" of his ministry to his disciple and spiritual son, Timothy. After a personal greeting and an exhortation not to be timid, and not to be ashamed of the gospel or Paul's imprisonment for the sake of the gospel, he gets right to the point and gives these two commands regarding the Word of God, referred to as "sound words" and "the treasure." God's Word is under attack, perhaps most dangerously, from within the church itself.

*Leader: Read 2 Timothy 1:13-14 and have the group say aloud and mark "sound words" and "treasure", marking them both the same way, using same color, symbol, etc.*

## DISCUSS

- Compare and contrast the two commands.

## OBSERVE

Chapter 2 of 2 Timothy goes into more detail about these commands, explaining why they are necessary and how to keep them.

7 Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

8 Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel,

9 for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned.

10 For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus [and] with [it] eternal glory.

11 It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him;

12 If we endure, we shall also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us;

13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.

14 Remind [them] of these things, and solemnly charge [them] in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless, [and leads] to the ruin of the hearers.

15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.

*Leader: Read aloud 2 Timothy 2:1-26 and have the group say aloud and mark all of the words and phrases that refer to God's Word. Look for "word of God" with its synonyms "word of truth," "truth," "trustworthy statement," "gospel," and "the things which you have heard from me." Mark them the same way you marked "sound words" and "treasure."*

## DISCUSS

Now that we've noted all the references to the Word of God, observe what is written about the "words of men." Note the pattern of a reproof (correction) regarding the "words of men", the reason for the reproof, and what the response should be instead. The words in the brackets are word study insights from the original Greek.

*Leader: Work through the first one as an illustration of how to note your observations.*

- Read verse 2:14
  - Reproof: *Not to wrangle [argue] about words [multitude of opinions].*
  - Reason: *Useless [of no value whatsoever] and leads to the ruin of hearers*
  - Response: *Remind them of trustworthy statements.*
- Read verse 2:15-18
  - Reproof: *Avoid worldly and empty chatter [fruitless discussions]*
  - Reason(s):
  - Response:

16 But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness,

17 and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus,

18 [men] who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and thus they upset the faith of some.

19 Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness."

20 Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor.

21 Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these [things], he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.

22 Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love [and] peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

23 But refuse foolish and ignorant

- Read verses 23-26
  - Reproof:
  - Reason:
  - Response:

Summarize in one statement, in your own words, what you've learned from these instructions to Timothy about the "words of men."

How will you apply this the next time a Jehovah's Witness comes to your door and tries to confuse you with their arguments against the deity of Jesus Christ?

How will you apply this the next time an unbeliever argues with you about evolution versus creation?

How will you apply this the next time a fellow believer defends homosexuality as a legitimate lifestyle?

### OBSERVE

Let's take a closer look at 2 Timothy 2:15 which is the teaching (what is right to do) sandwiched between two reproofs (what is wrong to do). This verse is the key verse of chapter 2.

### INSIGHT

A workman approved is a workman who has been put to the test, and meeting the specifications, has won the approval of the one who has subjected him to the test.

This command is in the aorist tense, which means it is to begin immediately with results that will continue into the future.

speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels.

24 And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,

25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,

26 and they may come to their senses [and escape] from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

#### 2 Timothy 4:1-5

1 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:

2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own

*Leader: Read aloud 2 Timothy 2:15 and lead the interrogation of this verse using the 5 "Ws" and an "How" – who, what, where, when, why and how.*

#### DISCUSS

- Who
- What
- Where
- When
- Why
- How

#### OBSERVE

In addition to diligence and ability to handle the Word of Truth accurately, this chapter reveals other requirements for faithful men who desire to present themselves approved to God as defenders of the Truth.

*Leader: Read 2 Timothy 2:2-6 aloud.*

#### DISCUSS

- Based on these comparisons, what are the characteristics of a workman approved to God?

desires;

4 and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.

5 But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

*Leader: Read 2 Timothy 2:19-22 aloud.*

### **DISCUSS**

- Based on these verses, what are the characteristics of a workman approved to God?

*Leader: Read 2 Timothy 2:24-25 aloud.*

### **DISCUSS**

- Based on these verses, what are the characteristics of a workman approved to God?

## WRAP IT UP

This is a list of the truths that we discovered inductively from God's Word:

- The authority and true meaning of God's Word must be retained, guarded and entrusted to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
- Respond to attacks or questions about God's Word by teaching what is true versus arguing about what is false.
- A workman approved to God not only knows how to accurately handle the Word of Truth, but he must also be fully committed to serving the Lord Jesus Christ, he must desire to be morally pure, and he must be patient and kind and able to teach those in opposition.

The Word of God should be life-changing. Here are some application questions to discuss, time-permitting, and certainly to reflect upon privately.

- This letter was written to Timothy, a pastor, preacher and evangelist ordained to retain and defend the treasure of God's Word. Does this apply to just men like Timothy, or does everyone man have a responsibility to be a "workman approved to God ... accurately handling the Word of Truth ... and able to teach others?" What does the Bible say about husbands (1 Corinthians 11:2; 14:34-35), fathers (Ephesians 6:4; Deuteronomy 6:4-9), elders (1 Timothy 3:1-2), faithful men (2 Timothy 2:2), and the spiritually mature (Hebrews 5:12)? Do you fit into any of these categories?
- As a workman responsible for handling the Word of God, do you think your work is approved, or do you have cause to be ashamed? If it is the latter, what are you going to do about it? Remember the aorist tense of this command? If it is the former, what are you going to do?