

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES: GOD'S DIRECTIVES FOR HIS UNDERSHEPHERDS

III. II Timothy: Church Ministry Amid Hardship

G. Doctrinal Holiness In Ministry And Associations

(2 Timothy 2:14-23)

I. Introduction

- A. Since the local church is the pillar and foundation of God's truth in the world (1 Timothy 3:15b NIV), and the messenger of God's Word plays a key role in upholding that truth, he must practice strict doctrinal holiness.
- B. 2 Timothy 2:14-23 explains this fact with important applications for us today (as follows):

II. Doctrinal Holiness In Ministry And Associations, 2 Timothy 2:14-23.

- A. Paul directed Timothy to remind his listeners of the truths he had just taught and to charge them before God "not to wage thoroughly useless word-battles which upset the listeners," 2 Timothy 2:14; William Hendriksen, Exposition Of The Pastoral Epistles (NTC), 1974, p. 261. Paul referred to "investigations into 'endless myths and genealogies' (1 Tim. 1:3, 4)" and "'profane and old-womanish myths' (1 Tim. 4:7a)," Ibid., p. 261-262.
- B. However, Timothy was **also** to heed doctrinal holiness in his *own* ministry and associations, 2 Tim. 2:15-23:
 - 1. Timothy was to watch that he retain his doctrinal holiness in handling Scripture, 2 Timothy 2:15:
 - a. He was to "take pains, make every effort" (*spoudazo*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 771) to present himself to God as approved, a workman in handling Scripture with nothing of which to be ashamed as he rightly handled the word of truth, 2 Timothy 2:15; Ibid., Hendriksen, p. 262.
 - b. The expression "rightly handling" (*orthotomeo*, "cut a path in a straight direction," Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 584) refers to a workman's cutting a straight and thus a correct line. Timothy was to exegete and expound Scripture correctly to his hearers so as to reflect its upright truth as opposed to indulging in errant, useless word-battles like the false teachers did! (Ibid., Hendriksen, p. 262-263)
 - 2. Timothy was to watch that he retain doctrinal holiness in his associations, 2 Timothy 2:16-22:
 - a. Timothy was to retain his doctrinal holiness in avoiding errant teachings by others, 2 Timothy 2:16-18:
 - i. The "profane empty-chatter" of useless word-battles were to be avoided, for indulging in them only advanced ungodliness and devoured like gangrene, 2 Timothy 2:16-17; Ibid., p. 263.
 - ii. Paul then named two teachers involved in such error -- Hymenaeus and Philetus -- who claimed that the resurrection was already past and thus upset the faith of some believers, 2 Timothy 2:18.
 - b. Timothy was to retain his doctrinal holiness in not associating with errant teachers themselves, 2:19-21:
 - i. When Paul wrote that God knew those people who were His versus other people, he alluded to Numbers 16:5, and when he urged that everyone who named the name of Christ was to depart from iniquity, he alluded to Numbers 16:26; 2 Timothy 2:19. (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 734, ftns.)
 - ii. To explain, in Numbers 16:5, Moses claimed God would show who was His servants versus those who followed rebellious Korah in opposing Moses and Aaron's ministries, and in Number 16:26, Moses urged Israel's people to depart from the tents of the rebel leaders to avoid their punishment!
 - iii. Thus, Paul taught that God knew who were His upright people versus who were errant leaders, and that His upright people were to withdraw from the errant leaders so as not to be punished by God!
 - iv. Paul then illustrated this truth by referring to honorable and dishonorable vessels, relating these to pure and impure teachers respectively, implying that if Timothy were to separate from the impure teachers, he would be a useful teacher, holy and fit for every good work, 2 Timothy 2:20-21.
 - v. [By implication, then, were Timothy **not** to separate from the false teachers, he would lose God's blessing in his ministry and suffer God's discipline as did Korah's men back in Numbers!]
 - c. Timothy was to retain his doctrinal holiness in fleeing youthful lusts that detracted from the truth, v. 22a.
 - d. Timothy was to retain his doctrinal holiness by associating with, being "in company with" (*meta*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 509-511) the righteous people of God, 2 Timothy 2:22b.
 - 3. Paul finally urged Timothy himself to do what he was to admonish his listeners to do -- to reject "foolish and ignorant inquiries . . . knowing that they breed quarrels," 2 Timothy 2:23; Ibid., p. 274.

Lesson: Timothy was not only to admonish his listeners to be doctrinally pure, but he was to be pure himself in rightly handling Scripture, in avoiding errant teachings and associations with false teachers and in fellowshiping with the godly that he might avoid God's discipline and remain useful and blessed of God in teaching His Word.

Application: May we practice doctrinal holiness, that is, separation or purity, in our ministries and associations.