



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V23 N43 October 24, 2021

FINISH STRONG

“Approved and Unashamed”

2 Timothy 2:14-21

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Authority of the Bible

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action .

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17



What are
Christians to
avoid at all
cost?

Paul instructed Timothy and the disciple-makers to whom Timothy would entrust the truth (2Ti 2:2) to shun false teachers and their teachings (see 1Ti 1:3-7; cf., 2Ti 2:2, 14, 16, 21). Belief invariably results in behavior; consequently, false teaching inevitably results in catastrophic conduct (cf., vv. 15, 16-18), and amounts to what Paul calls “meaning-less talk” (1Ti 1:6); “wrangling over words” (2Ti 2:14, NRSV), and “godless chatter” (v. 16). He demeans it because it reflects neither his teaching (v. 2) nor that of the word of truth (v. 15), and never rises above the level of mere personal opinion and private speculation.

Rather than teach their misleading claptrap, they should do what Paul tells Timothy to do, “Preach the word . . . correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction” (4:2) because, as he also tells Timothy, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correction and training in righteousness” (3:16). Scripture “has the right to command my belief and action” because it’s God’s word, and it’s God’s word because it’s “God-breathed” or inspired. One theologian defines inspiration this way: “God superintended the human authors of the Bible so that they composed and recorded without error His message to mankind in the words of their original writings” (Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 81).

We, too, should do what Paul tells Timothy, and to do it we need to be workers who “correctly handle the word of truth” (v. 15). “Because the Bible is God’s message, it has *eternal relevance* (Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 25). Consequently, we need to be people who understand what the Bible *meant then* (i.e., in its *historical* context) and what it *means now* (i.e., in its *contemporary* context). And so, we have a two-fold goal: the *first* is to recognize the biblical author’s intended meaning expressed in the words of his text, and the *second* is to recognize implications of that meaning for application relevant today. To accomplish that goal, we engage in “active reading,” defined as “a process of thinking, questioning, formulating, and reconsidering that leads to a dawning awareness of the sense of

the whole text that fits all the parts of it” (Elliott E. Johnson, *Expository Hermeneutics*, 81).

People who do *The Scrolls* Bible study engage in that process. It begins by carefully reading a passage thought to express a single idea. In the case of epistles, this typically involves reading a paragraph or a collection of paragraphs. In the case of narrative, it typically involves reading an entire story or a single episode within a larger story. Careful reading involves making *observations* as we read—for example, by *circling* key terms, *boxing* words that indicate relationships, *underlining* repeated expressions, and *bracketing* obscure phrases. As observations are made, *questions* posed by the text inevitably arise—for example, questions regarding historical background, literary type, and definitions of theological terms, as well as the point of comparisons, contrasts, and figures of speech, the grammar of verbs, the antecedents of pronouns, and so on. As these questions are answered—from the text itself, its immediate context, or other resources—the meaning of the whole text will become evident or come to mind. In the same way we put the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle together to reveal an image, readers put the interpretive pieces of a text together to recognize what the biblical author is talking about (the subject) and what he is saying about what he is talking about (the predicate). The message of the passage is expressed by joining these two to form a single sentence. The teacher’s job is to unpack, teach, and apply this message—a message that is *necessarily* true and *necessarily* authoritative.

Unfortunately, not all teachers and preachers do this—clearly, the false teachers in Ephesus did not. Some replace the message of the Bible with a message of their own. And while their observations on life, self-help recommendations, inferences drawn from a verse here and a passage there, quotations from experts, clever illustrations, and so on, may be true, they may very well be misleading or outright false. And even if their message is true, it doesn’t express the message of the Bible, and consequently, doesn’t carry the authority of God’s word. There’s a difference between teaching the Bible and telling the truth.



EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

2 Timothy 2:14-21

14 Keep reminding God's people of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. 15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. 16 Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. 17 Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18 who have departed from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some. 19 Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness."

20 In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use. 21 Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "these things" in v. 14.
- Bracket "quarreling about words" in v. 14.
- Circle "approved" in v. 15.
- Circle "correctly handles" in v. 15.
- Circle "godless chatter" in v. 16.
- Underline "Hymenaeus" and "Philetus" in v. 17.
- Circle "the resurrection" in v. 18.
- Box "Nevertheless" indicating *contrast* in v. 19.
- Highlight the two inscriptions joined by "and" in v. 19.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 20.
- Circle "the latter" in v. 21

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Timothy is to “keep reminding God’s people of *these things*.” What things?

2. Why does Paul add “before God” to his second command in verse 14?

3. Words matter! Why not quarrel about them?

4. Do you think Paul’s command in verse 15 applies to you? Explain.

5. Identify the *two traits* of one who receives God’s approval (v. 15).

6. Verse 16 contains a bit of *irony*. How so?

7. Give an example of “godless chatter” to be avoided today.

8. Explain the *theological* error of Hymenaeus and Philetus and its ugly consequences (v. 18).

9. Explain the *contrast* introduced by “Nevertheless” in verse 19.

10. **Discussion:** Talk about what those who want to be “made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work” need to do.

Commentary On The Text

On 2 Timothy 2:14-21, one commentator writes: “From the warm words of encouragement in 2:1-10 and the lofty saying of 2:11-13, we suddenly find ourselves back in the world of the Ephesian church with its heretical teachers. This does not mean discontinuity, for verse 14 refers back to what has just been said with the exhortation to ‘keep reminding them of these things.’ But Timothy’s act of reminding must be accompanied by an act of warning, an act so sobering that it is said to be ‘before God’” (Walter L. Liefeld, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 256-57). The first paragraph (vv. 14-19) contains various instructions to Timothy concerning false teachers and their teaching relevant to the church; the second paragraph (vv. 20-21) contains a metaphor, contrasting household articles for honorable uses and for dishonorable uses with a view to Timothy and others becoming holy vessels, “useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work” (v. 21).

The first paragraph begins with a command in the present tense, namely, lit., “remind them,” the significance of which is expressed in the translation, “Keep reminding God’s people of these things” (v. 14a). The NIV understands “them” to refer to the Ephesian church; some commentators take “them” to refer more narrowly to those to whom Timothy will entrust Paul’s teaching (v. 2). In either case, Paul’s words to Timothy have a broader audience. And while “these things” could refer to all of the letter to this point, it more likely refers to the preceding paragraphs (vv. 1-13), and perhaps, more particularly verses 8-13 (see William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles*, 261; Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, TNTC, 146).

A warning against quarreling over words follows (v. 14b). Paul gives no examples of such quarreling, so the specifics remain unclear, but in any case, this senseless wrangling is worthless at best and ruinous at worst. In *contrast* to those workers of whom God disapproves, namely, those who promote such quarrels, Timothy is to do whatever it takes to gain God’s approval. He is to do this by being a worker who does good work (cf., 1Co 3:10-15) and who correctly handles the word of truth, a reference to a worker who teaches God’s word rightly interpreted. One commentator explains: “Most important in gaining this goal was the way he would proclaim God’s truth. He must teach it consistent with God’s intended meaning and purpose. ‘Handling accurately’ (lit. ‘cutting straight’) is a figure that paints a picture of a

workman who is careful and accurate in his work. The Greek word (*orthotomounta*) elsewhere describes a tentmaker who makes straight rather than wavy cuts in his material. It pictures a builder who lays bricks in straight rows, a road-maker who constructs a straight road, and a farmer who plows a straight furrow” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on 2 Timothy,” 2021 ed., 35-36, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/2timothy.pdf). This kind of workman recognizes the author’s intended meaning expressed in the biblical text and then expresses it and its necessary implications for living to his hearers.

Not only are Timothy and the church to avoid meaningless word wars, but they are also to “avoid godless chatter,” which ironically promotes ungodliness (v. 17). Paul’s words allude to the “controversial speculations” (1Ti 1:3-7) and the “quarreling about words” (2Ti 2:14) of those who engage in it. He gives two examples of individuals whose teaching fits that description. Hymenaeus and Philetus have departed from the truth by teaching that the resurrection is spiritual, not physical, and takes place at conversion. While perhaps philosophically more attractive and hence sounding more reasonable to their Greek listeners, as far as Paul is concerned, their teaching destroys the faith of those who believe it by undermining the very foundation of their hope in Christ (1Co 15:3-8, 13-19). Nevertheless, in spite of their worst efforts, the church, “the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1Ti 3:15), stands firm (cf., Mt 16:18).

The second paragraph (vv. 20-21) opens with a metaphor involving articles found in a large home. By way of contrast, some are made of gold and silver; others are made of wood and clay. Some are reserved for special purposes; others are reserved “for common use” (v. 20). “Common use” here does not mean “everyday use.” These are likely vessels “for less honorable uses such as for garbage or excrement, vessels often discarded with their contents” (William D. Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 46, *Pastoral Epistles*, 513-14). From this metaphor, Paul challenges Timothy to be a vessel “for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work” (v. 21). Put differently, he challenges Timothy to “cleanse [himself] from the latter” (v. 21) by having nothing to do with false teachers and their teaching. The same would go for his “reliable people” (v. 2), as well as all others in the church.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 14 *God's people* Cf., "remind them" (NASB). The NIV and NET translate "God's people" and "people" respectively. Some take the referent of "them" to be the "reliable people" to whom Timothy is to entrust Paul's teaching (cf., v. 2) (William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles*, 261); others take "them" to refer to the entire church.

v. 14 *these things* "This verse is transitional. Timothy was to keep reminding his 'faithful men' of the things Paul had just brought back to his own recollection (i.e., vv. 3-13, but especially vv. 11-13)" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on 2 Timothy," 2021 ed., 35, planobible.chapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/2timothy.pdf).

v. 14 *quarreling about words* "Furthermore, he should warn them against emphasizing hairsplitting controversies ('wrangle about words') in their ministries, since these do more harm than good (cf. 1 Tim. 1:4; 4:7; 6:4-5)" (Constable, 35). "Such word-battling is 'unto the catastrophe (up-setting) of the listeners.' Paul is referring, of course, to the quarrels arising from investigations into 'endless myths and genealogies' (1 Tim. 1:3, 4), 'profane and old-womanish myths' (1 Tim. 4:7a), the kind of drivel that was exposed earlier (see on 1 Tim. 1:3-7; 4:7a; 6:3-10)" (Hendriksen, 262-63).

v. 15 *approved* I.e., one not needing to be ashamed and correctly handling the word of truth. "Timothy should be 'diligent' (lit. 'zealous') to make sure that, when he stood before God and his work was inspected, he would receive the Lord's approval and 'not (need to) be ashamed' (cf. 1 John 2:28)" (Constable, 35). "This unashamedness is achieved by rightly dividing the word of truth" (Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, TNTC, 147-48).

v. 15 *correctly handles* Cf., "rightly handling" (ESV); "accurately handling" (NASB); "teaching the message of truth accurately" (NET); "rightly explaining" (NRSV); "who correctly explains" (NLT). "Most important in gaining this goal [i.e., God's approval] was the way he would proclaim God's truth. He must teach it consistent with God's intended meaning and purpose. 'Handling accurately' (lit. 'cutting straight') is a figure that paints a picture of a workman who is careful and accurate in his work. The Greek word (*orthotomounta*) elsewhere describes a tentmaker who makes straight rather than wavy cuts in his material. It pictures a builder who lays bricks in straight rows, a road-maker who constructs a straight road, and a farmer who plows a straight furrow" (Constable, 35-36). This kind of workman recognizes the author's intended meaning expressed in the biblical text and expresses it and its implications for living in his hearers' context.

v. 16 *godless chatter* Cf., "meaningless talk" (1Ti 1:6); "godless myths and old wives' tales" (4:7). "The term 'godless' shows that the debates of the heretics had nothing to do with real godliness. The term 'chatter' pictures the discussions of the heretics as aimless and empty" (Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., 1, 2 *Timothy, Titus*, NAC, 215).

v. 18 *Hymenaeus, Philetus* "Because the name Hymenaeus is unusual, it may be assumed that he is the same person paired with Alexander and excommunicated by Paul in 1 Tim. 1:20 (William D. Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 46, *Pastoral Epistles*, 513-14).

v. 18 *resurrection* Hymenaeus and Philetus "apparently taught that spiritual rebirth (from death to life) is the only resurrection which occurs" (Homer A. Kent, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 275). "Greek philosophers typically viewed the soul as immortal and the body as its temporal prison. The idea of the physical resurrection of the body, both Christ's and the Christians', was therefore foreign and difficult for them to grasp. Hence there was a natural tendency toward heresies which rejected bodily resurrection (1 Cor. 15; Acts 17:32)" (A. Duane Litfin, "2 Timothy," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 754).

v. 19 *God's solid foundation* Cf., Mt 16:18. "Paul's description of the church as 'the pillar and foundation of the truth' (1 Tim. 3:15) makes the term in v. 19 appear to be a reference to the church as a whole, but certainly with a special reference to the Ephesian congregation" (Lea and Griffin, 217).

v. 19 *inscription* "The witness ('seal') to this [i.e., the solid foundation] was the truth contained in two passages from the Old Testament (Num. 16:5, and Isa. 52:11 or possibly Num. 16:26; cf. Joel 3:5). The first passage assures that God differentiates between His faithful servants ('those who are His') and those who are unfaithful. The second calls on those who choose to identify themselves with ('everyone who names the name of') 'the Lord' to 'abstain from wicked behavior.' Seals in New Testament times indicated ownership, security, and authenticity" (Constable, 38).

v. 21 *the latter* I.e., the latter group of utensils "used for purposes that have an overtone of 'dishonor,' 'disgrace,' or 'shame' (Walter L. Liefeld, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 260), representing the false teachers and their teaching. "Timothy was to have nothing to do with the false teachers. In this way he would be a vessel: (1) 'for noble purposes' ('unto honor,' *timên*), (2) **made holy** ('set apart'), (3) **useful** ('serviceable') **to the Master**, and (4) **prepared to do any good work** (cf., 2 Tim. 3:16)" (Litfin, 755).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Turn away from empty quarreling and destructive teaching to focus on the word of truth,
so you might become useful to the Master, prepared to do any good work.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

My dad is a powerhouse kind of a guy who never gets sick, but several years ago he had to have emergency surgery to remove his gallbladder. We discovered post-surgery that this little organ had become gangrenous, and we almost lost him. It happened ridiculously fast; one moment he felt relatively fine and the next he was fighting for his life in critical condition. Like gangrene, if we're not carefully presenting the truth of the Gospel, we are allowing poison to infiltrate and spread through our sphere of influence. I've seen and personally experienced over time where a parent's limited knowledge of the Bible will cause them to pass down incorrect information to their kids. When we are struggling to wrap our small brains around a giant concept that Biblical scholars have argued for years, our go-to is a quick answer that may or may not be fully immersed in truth. As parents, we have a responsibility to create a solid foundation of Biblical truth. When you can't answer your child's question about dinosaurs or who made God, I suggest it's better to not know and to do the research before spouting out false teaching. Here are three quick tips to get you started on becoming a Bible genius. First, pray and ask God to open your eyes that you might see wonderful things in His law (Psalm 119:18). Second, open your Bible. As you read, consider context, author, audience and any questions you have. Lastly, meditate and think about how the passage applies to your life. You'll soon recognize how the puzzle pieces begin to fit together and why the Bible is a valuable tool for your life.

What Does The Bible Say?

Read 2 Timothy 2:14-21.

1. What is Timothy to warn the people not to do?
2. How are believers to present themselves to God?
3. What should Timothy avoid and why?

What Do You Think?

What does it mean to "correctly handle the word of truth"?

What Do You Do?

What truth about God do you recognize from our passage today? What truth about God do you learn from your Bible?

CORE COMPETENCY: Authority of the Bible

I believe the Bible is God's book that tells me what to believe and do.

MEMORY VERSE: 2 Timothy 2:15

"Do you best to present yourselves to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- ☐ I completed my Bible Study
- ☐ I memorized this week's verse
- ☐ I brought my Bible to church
- ☐ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME _____

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE _____

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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BIBLE CHURCH**

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