

“Divine Instruction”
2 Timothy 2:7
(Preached at Trinity, April 17, 2022)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Paul has been instructing Timothy on the nature of life for the Christian. It is a hard life, a difficult life.
 - A. Like a soldier the Christian is to endure every hardship and struggle for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ who called him to be a soldier. And he is not distracted by the affairs of this life.
 - B. Like an athlete he is disciplined, well trained, and dedicated to winning the prize set before him.
 - C. Like the husbandman or farmer, he labors diligently to bring in the harvest of the Lord God.
2. In **Verse 7** Paul tells Timothy, "Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything."

There are two things that we need to focus on here

- (1) The word for “Consider” is from a word that means “perceive, think, understand.” We can apply it to our responsibility to carefully consider the things we reads in the Word of God – these are not just Paul’s words – this is the Word of God. Consider them carefully.
- (2) The second thing to consider as we read this passage is the mystery of human knowledge.

- a. All knowledge comes from God –
Why aren’t we still traveling with horse and carriage.
Where did we get the knowledge for space travel?
Where did we get the knowledge for open heart surgery?
With all the rancor over the COVID vaccine few stop to consider where the knowledge of medical technology comes from.
- b. In this verse, however, Paul is speaking about a particular type of knowledge.

He is speaking of spiritual understanding.

In this verse we can see the balance between the divine initiative and the human inquiry.

On one hand we are responsible for study, careful consideration and meditation – yet ultimately, all knowledge comes from God.

3. Paul’s words were not difficult. They really didn’t require explanation. And yet, it was important for Timothy to meditate upon them; to consider them carefully; to apply them to his life.

- I. First, Paul focuses upon the human responsibility – “Consider what I say”
These are the words God gives us concerning His Word.

Isaiah 1:2 KJV – “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken”

- A. God tells us, “Consider what I say” – He has given us His divine revelation, the Bible.

1. The Bible is God’s ultimate revelation of Himself and His will.
2. Creation and Providence reveal the existence of God – sufficient to manifest His power and glory but not His will.

It is sufficient to leave all men without excuse

Romans 1:20 NAU - "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse."

3. Ultimately, the only thing we know about God is revealed in His Word
 - a. His justice, mercy, grace – omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence – the Trinity and the persons of the godhead, redemption.
 - b. Notice **Verse 8** – “remember”
 - c. The Bible is the standard by which we examine every thought, every action, every experience

- B. We have a high responsibility to hear and heed the Word of God
“Consider what I say”

Matthew 17:5 NAU - " While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"

James 1:21-22 – “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”

1. There are many things we do not need to pray about – we just need to do them.
2. We don’t need to search the Scriptures to find loopholes – we need to obey!
3. When our actions or our beliefs are in contrast or contradiction to God’s Word the command to us from God is, “Consider what I say.”

- II. We must understand however that while God’s Word is perspicuous it is not perceptible to the mind of the lost man.

- A. Divine instruction comes in two forms

1. External instruction - Divine Revelation which has been preserved for us in the form of Scripture.
2. Internal instruction - Divine Illumination whereby God gives us the ability to properly comprehend His Word.

- B. The Bible clearly presents the message of God – yet because of the depravity of our own heart we can not comprehend it.

Jesus plainly taught of Himself

John 10:24-27 NAU - "The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." ²⁵ Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. ²⁶ "But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. ²⁷ "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;"

- C. This is the nature of total depravity – we are left with an inability to comprehend God – The Divine teachings are beyond perception

1 Corinthians 2:14-15 NAU - "But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. ¹⁵ But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one."

Matthew 16:15 – "He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

1. What do you say about Jesus? Where did you get this understanding?
2. Although the lost man cannot comprehend the spiritual truths of God's Word he is still responsible for keeping them

- D. Spiritual understanding demands both revelation and illumination

1. This does not exclude the need for human teachers

Acts 8:30-31 NAU - "Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹ And he said, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him."

2. Ultimately, God must open our understanding

Acts 16:14 NAU - "A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul."

John 3:3 NAU - "Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

- III. This divine instruction is essential both for our initial salvation and for our growth as a believer.

- A. The lost man will never see the need for Christ without divine illumination

James White – *The Potter's Freedom* –

"Outside of God opening the eyes of the heart man thinks himself wonderfully pure, or at least acceptable in God's sight. That is why the unregenerate person cannot understand the urgency of the gospel message: until they see the depth of their sin and the holiness of God, they find no reason to seek remedy for their condition."¹

¹ James White, *The Potter's Freedom*, (Amityville: Calvary Press Publishing, 2000), page 77.

1. Like Paul before his conversion, the lost man has great scales over his eyes preventing him from understanding the truth of the gospel

Titus 1:15 NAU - "To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled."

Ephesians 4:17 NAU - "So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind," (emptiness)

2. Had God not arrested Paul, he would have continued his life of blind rebellion against Christ eventually to die and go to hell

B. As believers we still need God's divine instruction

1. King David prayed for this instruction

Psalm 119:33-38 NAU - "Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes, And I shall observe it to the end. ³⁴ Give me understanding, that I may observe Your law And keep it with all *my* heart. ³⁵ Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, For I delight in it. ³⁶ Incline my heart to Your testimonies And not to *dishonest* gain. ³⁷ Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity, And revive me in Your ways. ³⁸ Establish Your word to Your servant, As that which produces reverence for You."

2. This was Paul's prayer for the believers at the church of Ephesus

Ephesians 3:16 NAU - "that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,"

IV. This Divine illumination is given according to God's Sovereignty – You might call it particular revelation – Paul says here, "for the Lord will give you understanding"

A. God's teaching is revealed to His particular people

Matthew 13:10-11 NAU - "And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" ¹¹ Jesus answered them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted."

Matthew 13:16 NAU - "But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear."

After the resurrection of Christ He continued to open their minds of understanding

Luke 24:45 NAU - "Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,"

B. According to God's sovereignty and purpose there are millions of people who live and die and never hear the gospel.

1. For 2000 years before Christ the heathen nations never had access to the Word of God. There are still many in the far reaches of the world today who have never heard the gospel.

2. But what about the millions in our generation who hear and yet continue in unbelief?

What about the millions who die without Christ in spite of churches on every corner? Jesus said from these the gospel has actually been hidden because they trust in their own wisdom rather than in Christ

Matthew 11:25-27 NAU - "At that time Jesus said, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. ²⁶ "Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight. ²⁷ "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*."

3. We are not saved according to any merit of our own. It is not according to our own wisdom or understanding. Our own righteousness or good works. It isn't because we have good insight while others don't. It is God's doing. God does His good pleasure.

Paul is saying, "the Lord will give you understanding"

Conclusion: What are some of the implications of these truths?

1. We are highly responsible for considering the truths of God's Word.
We must obey God's Word perfectly – (Example of Adam and Eve – does God demand anything less of us than perfect obedience?)
You are personally responsible for your own soul.
2. We are utterly dependent upon God for divine instruction. It is one of His graces.
Do you pray for divine instruction?
Do you prepare yourself for coming to worship and for hearing the Word of truth?
3. Do you recognize the sovereignty of God as you bring the gospel to others? Do you see your dependence upon Him?
Many in their zeal to get men to receive the gospel use human reason ideas to appeal to the human understanding.