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2  **2 Timothy 2:14-15**

*Remind people of these things, solemnly urging them before the Lord not to dispute about words. This is in no way beneficial and leads to the ruin of the hearers. Make every effort to present yourself approved to God, a worker having no need to be ashamed, guiding the word of truth along a straight path.*

3  **2 Timothy 2:16-19**

*But avoid pointless chatter, for it will progress to greater ungodliness, and their message will spread like gangrene, among whom are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have deviated concerning the truth by saying the resurrection has already taken place, and they are upsetting the faith of some. However, the solid foundation of God stands firm, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and "Everyone who names the name of the Lord must abstain from unrighteousness."*

4  **Wish your memory was better?**

- Seneca (whose life was contemporary to that of our Lord, c. 55 B.C.-A.D. 37) could repeat long passages of speeches he had heard only once many years before.
  - He once asked the 200 students of his rhetoric class to each quote a line of poetry. He then repeated word for word all the lines they had quoted—in reverse order, from last to first!
- St. Augustine, admired a friend who could recite the whole text of Virgil backwards!

5  **1. Remember this faithful saying**

- 2 Timothy 2:11-13 -- *It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.*

6  **2. Remind others to stay faithful**

- Paul reminds Timothy that a big part of being a pastor is continually reminding people of the things they already know.
  - Why? Because it is so easy to ignore the obvious.
- Remind them of the faithful saying in the preceding verses.

7  **An open mouth is dangerous...**

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9  **People like to argue**

- Acts 18:15 -- *But if it is questions concerning a word and names and your own law, see to it yourselves! I do not wish to be a judge of these things.*
- 2 Timothy 2:23 -- *But avoid foolish and uninformed controversies, because you know that they produce quarrels.*
- A war of words never solves a problem. It only leaves people feeling hurt, bitter, and resentful.

10  **Loose lips sink churches**

- 1 Timothy 6:3-4 -- *If anyone teaches other doctrine and does not devote himself to the sound*

*words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that is in accordance with godliness, he is conceited, understanding nothing, but having a morbid interest concerning controversies and disputes about words, from which come envy, strife, slanders, evil suspicions...*

11  **3. Resist having word fights**

- Arguing does not edify anyone.
  - Some matters of theology will never be solved this side of glory.
  - Why argue over parts of Scripture that are unclear when so much of Scripture is plainly understood? Why not practice what is plain first?
  - You can argue yourself right into heresy (2:18)
- People have an unhealthy tendency to major on minors. Don't split hairs over words.

12  **Why do people argue with the Word?**

- To make themselves seem more intellectual
- To demonstrate intellectual prowess
- To put down others
- To vent their anger (avoid these people)
- To justify misbehavior – "A man's morality dictates his theology."
  - I want what I want and I interpret the Bible so that it won't stop me.
  - Illustration: Fireman
- Word fights are the "feast of dilettantes."

13  **4. Reject the strife-stirrers**

- *Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned (Titus 3:10, 11).*
- 2 Timothy 2:14 -- *Remind people of these things, solemnly urging them before the Lord not to dispute about words. This is in no way beneficial and leads to the ruin of the hearers.*
  - Literally, "warn them before the Lord"

14  **Proverbs 6:16-19**

- *These six things doth the LORD hate: Yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, Feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, And he that soweth discord among brethren.*
- The 7<sup>th</sup> is the worst in God's eyes.
- These verses are a good checklist for your friends.
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15  **5. Reverently serve God**

- KJV says "Study" (focus upon)
- Today, the best translation is: "Make every effort" or "be zealous"
- Be zealous to be approved of God.
  - If you seek the approval of men, you will find shame before God because you wasted your life.
  - If you seek the approval of God, you can be a workman that does not need to be ashamed because you made something of the life God gave you.

16  **2 criteria for approval**

- Words
  - Our words are important (James 3).
    - They can DIRECT
    - They can DELIGHT
    - They can DESTROY
    - Matthew 12:36 -- *But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.*
- Conduct
  - Your walk must match your talk.
  - Don't instruct others to live under God's authority if you are not doing it.

17  **6. Rightly handle the Word of Truth**

- The surest way to not be ashamed before God is to live by His principles.
- Learn to handle the Word of God
  - Allow it to transform your life by choosing God's ways over your own
    - Our natural reactions are almost always wrong

18  **Every teacher of the Word must:**

- Get it straight – Study to rightly understand the meaning of God's Word, even when it hurts.
- Give it straight – Impart the word without deviation, without compromise, and without dilution.
  - "Correctly handles" has as its basis the Greek word *orthos* ("straight"), the same word from which we build words like orthopedic and orthodoxy.

19  **Cut straight**

- *Rightly handle or rightly dividing -- a hapax legomena*
- The word is used twice in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the OT)
  - Proverbs 3:6 -- *In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will straighten your paths.*
  - Proverbs 11:5 -- *The righteousness of the blameless will keep his ways straight, but the wicked will fall by his wickedness.*
- Paul, the tentmaker, knew the importance of straight cuts!

20  **Cutting straight includes cutting away**

21  **What does it mean?**

- Focus diligently on understanding the whole counsel of God's truthful Word.
- Refuse to twist or manipulate the Word to your own purposes or ego.
- Instead, look for God's clear principles and apply them to your life so that your ways are made "straight."
- Pay attention to context!

22  **How teachers go astray**

- Read a Bible text and then ignore it
- Fail to give the whole counsel of God's Word
- Take Scripture out of context

- Interpret every Scripture through a preconceived lens (so all sermons end up the same, like every sermon being political)
- Moralizing while missing the meaning
- Doctrinalize – looking for proof texts for pet doctrine while failing to apply truth

23  **William Willimon**

- Much of today's preaching reduces "salvation to self-esteem, sin to maladjustment, church to group therapy, and Jesus to Dear Abby."

24  **7. Refuse godless chatter**

- *Shun profane empty utterances*
  - We must redeem the time
  - We don't have time to argue with those who go off on their own theological tangent
  - Leads people into ungodliness that spreads like gangrene.
- Gangrene necessitates amputation
  - Hymenaeus and Philetus had to be removed from the church because their philosophical arguing caused people to falter in their faith. They taught the resurrection was only spiritual, not physical.

25  **The surety of the resurrection**

- Paul argued that the bodily resurrection is the cornerstone of the Christian faith.
  - 1 Corinthians 15 – An entire chapter devoted to the doctrine of bodily resurrection.
  - Every Gospel message in the New Testament included the resurrection.
- Greek philosophers regarded the soul as immortal and the body as its temporal prison.
  - Hymenaeus and Philetus allowed the philosophy of the day to shape their theology.

26  **8. Remain on a firm foundation**

- The Word of God is a firm foundation
- It has been certified with two seals of approval. A seal is something that verifies the authenticity of an agreement or document.
- #1 – *The Lord knows who are His* (see Numbers 16 in the story of the rebellion of the sons of Korah)
- #2 – *Everyone who names the name of the Lord must abstain from unrighteousness.*

27  **9. Remain under God's authority**

- Numbers 16 – Sons of Korah along with about 250 people rebel against Moses and Aaron, the authorities God had placed over them.
- Moses proposes a test.
  - Each offered incense before the Lord.
  - The sons of Korah were destroyed
  - The earth swallowed up their families and possessions
  - Those who supported them died in a plague that was stopped only by the intercession of Moses.

28  **The reason for the history lesson**

- Paul is reminding all of us that we cannot ignore the authority of God's Word and expect to escape without consequences.

- God is worshiped by those who live under His authority.
  - If we reject His authority in our lives, then we are only “going through the motions” of worship.
  - Psalm 66:18 -- *If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear me.*
- Avoid the questionable. (Let peace umpire.)

29  **Conclusion**

- Do you want to be approved by men and ashamed before God?
- Or do you want God to say, “Well done, though good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of the Lord.”?
- If you gave the Holy Spirit the scissors right now to “cut straight” in your life, what would be cut away from your life? What relationships would be changed?