

## 2 Timothy

### I. Introduction

- A. Today, we are returning to 2 Timothy 2. And though these verses are written to Timothy, in particular, and church leaders in general, we will do our best to apply what we can to all of us.
- B. **2 Timothy 2:23-3:1** . . . But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels. [24] 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. [1] But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.
- C. Prayer

### II. The quality of our approach improves the possibility of a good response

- A. [23] But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels.
  - 1. **But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations:**
    - a. In this context, the foolish and ignorant speculations are in relation to unclear or hard to understand portions of scripture, especially in relation to the return of Christ.
    - b. Peter spoke about this kind of speculation in reference to Paul's teaching. **2 Peter 3:14-17**, "Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things (*new heavens and new earth following the return of Christ*), be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, [15] and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, [16] as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. [17] You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, **be on your guard** so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness."
    - c. **To speculate** on religious matters is to theorize or make assumptions about something for the purpose of drawing

possible – but not supportable – conclusions. It is these kinds of conversations that we are being exhorted to avoid. **Why?** Not only are they foolish and ignorant, they produce quarrels.

2. **Knowing that they produce quarrels** (*conflicts*)
  - a. The words, **knowing that**, clearly state that we have the ability to observe a repeated activity or pattern of behavior, and discern its logical outcome.
  - b. In other words, experience tells us that conversations centered around foolish and ignorant speculations commonly result in quarrels – that is, antagonistic, and even angry disputes.
  - c. And though the context here is dealing with religious issues, this is also true for numerous other topics and issues on which we have an opinion yet lack the facts, or confirmed information, or knowledge to support them.
  - d. Therefore, such speculative quarrels are both ungodly and divisive among Christians who are supposed to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (**Ephesians 4:1-3**).
3. It is for these reasons that church leaders and church members are to refuse to be involved in foolish and ignorant speculations.

B. [24] **The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome,**

1. **Vs 24** begins with “**The Lord's bond-servant** (*or slave*).”
  - a. One of the unavoidable truths of scripture is that, as Christians, Jesus Christ is our Lord and Master, and we are His servants. True, we serve of our own free will, yet nevertheless, we are servants or slaves of our Lord Jesus Christ.
  - b. In the NT, when the Greek word ***doulos*** (*slave*) is used in reference to Christian service, the NASB translates it as **bond-servant** (*23 times*), or **bond-slave** (*11 times*). Otherwise, the NASB translates it as **slave** (*98 times*) or **servant** (*1 time*). It seems their reason is that the term “bond-servant” infers service by choice as opposed to people being forced into slavery against their will and considered the property of their master.
  - c. And yet, though we have not been forced against our will to serve our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, we are no less His slave, for we too, have been bought – bought with the precious blood of Jesus (**1 Corinthians 6:19-20**). Therefore, we have been purchased, and as such, we are the possession of the One who purchased us (**Titus 2:14**) – which is one supporting reason we speak of Jesus Christ as both our Savior and Lord.

- d. And yet, though purchased and owned, we are free to do as we please, which is why **2 Corinthians 5:14-15** holds up love – that is, the love of Christ, as the motivating reason to serve Him: “For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; [15] and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.”
  - e. This is not only true of everyone in a position of leadership within the Body of Christ, it is true for the rest of us. Therefore, we rise each day as servants or slaves of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ – regardless of where we go or what we do. And we serve Him, not because we have to, but hopefully because we love Him, **and** because He loves us.
  - f. Do you think of yourself as a slave of Jesus Christ? Do you do His will just as a slave does the will of his master?
    - (1) If not, then who do you serve – self, or money, or approval and acceptance, or power and control, or fame, or the kind of security the world offers, or pleasure and entertainment, or any combination of these?
    - (2) In other words, whose will is first or most important in your life? God’s or yours? The answer to this question is not found in your words (*who you claim to serve*), but in your daily choices and behavior (*what you do*).
  - g. However, being a slave of Christ is not our only designation as believers. For example, we are also a Chosen Race, a Royal Priesthood, a Holy Nation, and a people for God’s own possession (**1 Peter 2:9**). Therefore, it is important to keep a balanced perspective on our service to and relationship with Jesus Christ.
2. **We must not be quarrelsome**
- a. The quarrelsome person is an opinionated person who is convinced his opinions are right – even if they are speculative. And he wants others to be convinced, too – even if trying to convince them damages their relationship.
  - b. The quarrelsome person is quick to promote his opinions, easily irritated by contrary opinions, contentious, argumentative, and often derogatory or demeaning with his words. Sometimes he uses anger to promote or defend his opinions.
  - c. This is not God’s way. Nor is it to be the Christian’s way. God’s way is to call us, teach us, and lead us to the truth – so that we come to it, believe it, and live accordingly, of our own free will.

- d. Though God's position as Supreme Being, and the scriptures, call us to submit to Him, He wants compliant submission, not forced submission. Why? Because nothing is gained by forcing anyone into godly beliefs, values, behavior, or theology. The teen mind and heart, and the adult mind and heart, are only won when they are free to make the truth their own.

C. We are to **be kind to all**

1. To be kind in this way is to be tender, friendly, flexible, and conciliatory as opposed to having to be right, quarrelsome, stern, or harsh.
2. Where the quarrelsome person is proud and quick to argue, the kind or gentle person is humble and quick to hear – not just the what, but also the why behind the what of those who are opposing the truth. It may be that they are opposing the truth because past bad or hurtful experiences that are feeding ill-conceived ideas about God, God's will, God's word, and the Christian way of life.

D. We are to be **able (*apt*) to teach**

1. If we apply this to all adult Christians – and I am, then we must accept that some will be better than others, some will be suited or qualified to teach – while others won't; some will try their best yet still fall short of being good at teaching; some won't be good at teaching yet still be able to put God's truths into words that will help young or new believers grow in their understanding and the Christian way of living; and there will be a few who ought not to teach because they simply cannot teach.
2. To be a reasonably good teacher of God's truths requires humility, a willingness to be taught, an intentional effort to grow in the knowledge of God and God's word, pondering the meaning and practical application of specific portions of God's word, praying for wisdom, insight, and the Holy Spirit's help, and some level of understanding of who you are teaching so you know what it is they need to learn.

E. We are to be **patient when wronged,**

1. In other words, we are to be patient with those who misunderstand us, disrespect us, call us names, slander us before others, verbally attack us as if we are misrepresenting God, God's word, and a particular theology, or claim we are teaching falsehoods.

2. Patience in the face of such attacks requires humility, self-control, confidence that God is our protector and that He will work the situation out for good, and a genuine commitment to living according to God's word – so that there will be no justification for being labeled a hypocrite (**Rom 12:9-18**).
3. When wronged in this way, remember that neither Christian ministry nor the Christian life is a popularity contest – for we are not serving people or ourselves, we are serving God.

F. **[25a] We are to be gentle when correcting those who are in opposition**

1. You cannot correct without taking the superior position. You cannot correct teen and adult believers in a godly manner without being humble, non-combative, respectful, and forbearing.
2. To better discern how to deal with the person who is opposing the truth, it is exceedingly helpful to ask questions and listen longer to discern why they are in opposition.
3. It is important to contend for the faith and the truths of God's word in a straightforward, clear manner. Yet we are committing a grave wrong if we do it in a disrespectful, arrogant, harsh, forceful manner – as if we have the right to control other adults.
4. **Ephesians 4:15** puts it this way: "Speaking the truth in love...." Why? Because winning the person's mind and heart is essential if they are going to come to their senses and allow you to correct their mind, mouth, and behavior.

G. **[25b] 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.

1. **if perhaps God may grant them repentance** – that is, give them the time and space to repent. In other words, allow them to repent. Repentance, or a change of mind and heart regarding their opposition to the truth, is the first vital step toward accepting the truth and living accordingly. And speaking the truth in love helps encourage such a response.
2. **leading to the knowledge of the truth** – repenting of their opposition to the truth opens them up to receiving the truth, which enables them to gain the knowledge of the truth, with the result that they are able to live according to the truth.

3. **[26] and they may come to their senses** – that is, as a result of repenting and coming to the knowledge of the truth, they are able to think reasonably and rationally (*come to their senses*), which enables them to see reality as it really is – rather than being self-deceived or led astray by the deceptions and lies of false teachers or ungodly church leaders.
4. **and escape from the snare of the devil**, having been held captive by him to do his will.
  - a. Without question, we are very capable of ensnaring ourselves through pride, self-deception, and choosing to believe unprovable speculation or false teaching – simply because it promises us some desired reward. And the same is true for those we are trying to correct.
  - b. And yet, in spite of how much those who oppose the truth have done this to themselves, the devil is behind it all. He has set his traps in order to hold captive everyone he snares.

H. Therefore, according to this context, our efforts – whether we are a leader in the church or a member attending the church – our efforts at serving God are not only for the purpose of gaining the mind and heart of the wayward believer, but also for the purpose of freeing them from being held captive by the lies and empty promises of the devil.

### III. Conclusion

- A. To summarize, we are to refuse foolish and ignorant speculations. We must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all. We must teach whom we can, be patient when maligned, and gently correct those who are in opposition with the hope they will repent, listen to the truth, come to their senses, and escape from the snare of the devil.
- B. Do not ignore this truth, the quality of our approach improves the possibility of a good response.
- C. **[3:1]** But realize this: in spite of all our best efforts, in the last days difficult times will come.