

June 13, 2021 -

II Timothy 2:14-18

- "Proper Words and Speech"

Introduction:

Today's society has been contaminated by vulgar, profane and foul language like a plague upon our planet. We are exposed to it almost everywhere we go except maybe church. The Parents Television Council observed the use of profanity during the so-called "family hour" is up 58 percent from five years ago. They publicized that foul language on TV contributes to a general decline in politeness and an erosion of moral values. From every corner of our society, whether "taking the Lord's name in vain" or verbalizing other vulgarity, the words people use shape and reflect modern culture in formidable ways. British scholar William Barclay once wrote "There never has been a time in history when so much filthy language is used as it is today," He wrote that 40 years ago, imagine how much worse the epidemic has become.

A survey done by the Barna Research Group (Ventura, CA) suggests the use of profanity was deemed morally acceptable by a rather large group of 37% surveyed. The Profile showed even a small share of born again Christians endorsed profane language by (22%). A majority of young adults (53% of those less than 36 years of age) and half of those with a college degree also felt no moral misgivings about using profanity.

Proper words and speech are important regardless of what surveys and culture reveals because God will hold us accountable for our words. Words make up our dialect and so He will hold us responsible for wholesome speech. Words can be powerful? History warns us that words have been the sparks that have ignited horrible wars... Broken relationships haunt us because words cannot be taken back. God desires that his children be responsible for wholesome speech. Paul charges Timothy in this passage about wholesome use of communication He doesn't want heated and profane words that distract them from the faith or weaken their testimony. In this passage Paul gives three directives for wholesome speech.

I Be Careful of Engaging in Arguments 2:14

1. Paul begins this section: *Of these things put them in remembrance* (2:14a). After reminding Timothy of the essential points of the gospel, Paul adds that Timothy must always remind his hearers of these things. Timothy's job as a pastor was to keep his congregation always focused on the gospel. The importance of repetition cannot be overrated. The church is constantly tempted to get its focus off of the message that really matters, and is tempted to become an entertainment center, a social service agency, a mutual admiration society. --- **And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. Luke 14:23**
an-ang-kad'-zo

2. Paul continues, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words (2 Timothy 2:14b). The phrase translated strive is (logomacheo, log-og-ma-hey-oh) it refers to contentious debate or to argue about pointless and trifling matters. Arguments are mostly the result of pride. Timothy was to firmly plead with them, reminding them that as brothers and sisters they are not to engage in word battles and debates.

3. The apostle describes what was going on in the church at Ephesus. They were disputing about words; there were church squabbles breaking out, and they were dividing into factions over what the apostle literally calls, word battles. Many churches fall into that trap today. The church has often struggled with the battles that are waged over words. We are not the enemy.

Illustration:

I read about a church some years ago that got into a major quarrel over whether to have a Christmas tree in the church building. One faction contended that Christmas trees were of pagan origin; so to have one in the church would be to yield to a pagan practice. The other group thought that having one was merely a pleasant custom, which they had grown up with since childhood, and there was nothing wrong with the practice. That side got a tree decorated it and set it up in the church basement. When the other faction arrived, they grabbed the tree, lights and all, and dragged it out into the parking lot. The other faction then took the tree and dragged it back into the church. A big fight resulted, right outside the church doors, and somebody had to call the police! The police came, and locked the doors, and all this was coverage for the newspaper the next day. That is the kind of foolish, silly catastrophe that can result when Christians engage in word battles that evolve much beyond what they ever intended. Look with me at Romans 14:5-8 & 19.

4. Think about the unprofitable words that go on in the church among believers, the arguments and strife of words that do not profit the hearers over petty matters. We are not to be engaged in debates that get so intense and so hot that we forget what the Lord has sent us to do. Quarreling over words to the point of madness does no good. When saints of God are arguing it turns off unbelievers and tears down believers. It's not what we believe but how we behave that builds up believers and draws unbelievers to Christ. We must endeavor to behave as Christians so that God approves our conduct. The second suggestion the apostle makes as to how to handle the developing quarrel at Ephesus is, demonstrate a proper respect to God's Word and handling of the Scriptures.

II. Be Cautious to Respect God Word (2:15).

1. Now we come to one of the most famous verses in the book of 2 Timothy: *Study to shew thyself approved unto God...* The phrase translated study (spoo-da- zo) means be diligent or persistent in accomplishing an objective. In the context of this verse, it refers to giving the maximum effort to proper interpretation, explain, and apply God's Word. Timothy's goal was not to present himself approved to *people*, but to God. He wasn't to regard the job of being a pastor as a popularity contest but instead as a call to faithfulness to God.

2. The word "workman" in this passage pictures a man who has done his work well and can present it to his superiors and not be ashamed of its quality. To sense God's approval each of us must be responsible to rightly divide the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15b). Never take scripture out of context then you have pretext. Pretext is an excuse to teach or say something that is not accurate. Pretexts may be based on a half-truth or developed in the context of a misleading fabrication. The root word translated rightly (or-thos) is the word from which we

get our English words “orthopedic” and “orthodoxy.” It means “in a straight manner.” It is a single word that means, “to cut straight” “cut straight the word of truth. It is the idea of staying on course, as when a farmer plows a straight row.

3. Rightly dividing the word of truth: means we don't skip certain scriptures that go against the grain of culture or are politically incorrect. It means we are biblically straight in what we teach about family, sex, holiness, and the divinity of Jesus Christ. Pastors must be careful to work hard at the word. All Scripture must be understood in the light of the rest of Scripture. We really have not ever understood any single passage until we have carefully tried to fit it with all that the Scriptures say about it. This takes time and effort and is important...check Act's 6:1-4.

III. Be Conscientious of Godless Babble - (2:16-18).

1. To have God's approval, we must shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness (2:16). The word babblings “kenophōnia” means “empty discussion.” A good question to qualify this is, “Does it build us up spiritually?” If not, it is indulging in profane and vain babblings, which leads to spiritual decline -1Timothy 6:20. Arguing with people who have opposing ideas about God, creation, the deity of Jesus, salvation, or anything else is a waste of time. It is confusing at best and does spiritual harm at worst. People are not changed by hearing good arguments; they are changed by observing godly lives.

2. Paul continues: their word will eat as doth a canker (2 Timothy 2:17a). Canker (“ulcer” or “gangrene”) is the decay of body tissue when the blood supply is obstructed. When a person's limb gets gangrene, it often has to be amputated to stop the gangrene from spreading. This means opposing ideas should be amputated from our discussions in Sunday school and Bible study because they obstruct the study of God's Word. That is like obstructing the flow of blood in our bodies, causing decay to our souls. This is why we have teachers and leaders.

3. Paul writes: of whom is Hymenaeus [Hi-men-ee-us] and Philetus [Fi-lee-tus] who concerning the truth have erred (2 Timothy 2:17b-18a). Paul has already put Hymenaeus out of the church in Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:20). He misled believers by saying that the resurrection is past already (2 Timothy 2:18b). 1 Corinthians 15:13-14 declare the vital importance of the future resurrection of the dead. In First Corinthians 15, the Apostle Paul himself tells us that if we lose the resurrection we have lost everything. False teachers and critics may cause confusion and problems, but they cannot snatch His true followers away from God's hand.

Conclusion:

Vain babblings and contentious speech has hindered the work of God a thousand times over. Critical speech has closed church doors and has broken the hearts and health of many. It is the number one device Satan's uses to destroy Christ's church. It ruins the communion of the saints that is so vital to the oneness necessary to function with the power of the Holy Spirit. David, long to have the Lord's control over his words. He prayed, “Take control of what I say,” (Ps. 141:3 the Lord wants to do that. He can help us control what we say. He can guard our lips.