**Community Group Discussion Guide**

**2 Timothy 2:14-26**

*Read 2 Timothy 2:14-26*

*Set the Context…*

**Context**: In the first letter that Paul wrote to Timothy he told him that one of his main goals was to stay in Ephesus and “***charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith***.” (1 Tim. 1:3-4) One of the pressing issues that Paul was trying to iron out was that false teachers had crept into the church and were emphasizing things other than true doctrine. Paul understood that this kind of teaching lead only to speculation and quarreling. He will now pick up on a similar theme in telling Timothy that as the Lord’s worker he ought to be diligent to handle God’s truth accurately and not get sidetracked with myths and speculations. The instructions are on how a Christian worker is approved by God.

**Commentary:** Timothy is encouraged to live as a worker approved by God. Paul calls Timothy to charge the congregation before God. This indicates the gravity of Timothy’s responsibility. Timothy is responsible to God first as a good soldier. When pastors are shepherding the church with God’s word, they are charging them in God’s sight and authority. The charge is that they are “***not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers***.” (2 Tim. 3:14) Arguing with others does not build the body of believers, it does not edify. People are rarely benefitted by arguing or listening to arguing. The one thing that is certain to edify, reprove, and train in righteousness is God’s word. One cannot argue their opinions against God’s word, for it is infallible and the only source of objective truth. So Paul encourages Timothy to “***do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed,*** ***rightly handling the word of truth***.” (2 Tim. 3:15) As an approved worker of God, Timothy must parse out truth and doctrine, being careful to interpret things correctly. In addition, he is to avoid irreverent babble. Paul presents an example of two people who traded God’s word for meaningless arguments, Hymenaeus and Philetus. He says they “***have swerved from the truth, saying the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some***.” (2 Tim. 2:18) This warns of the real dangers of de-emphasizing sound theology and emphasizing secondary irrelevant things. People begin to swerve and have their faith upset. However, Paul is certain that God’s solid foundation, the church made up of truly converted people, is unshakable (cf. 1 Tim 3:15) and bears a seal. A seal is a sign of approval that shows genuineness. Paul is saying that God’s people are stamped with God’s seal of authenticity.

The word picture of two vessels, either useful or un-useful, reminds us as Christian workers that we too are to be available vessels for God to use for good. He describes a great house where there are vessels for “***honorable uses***” (gold and silver) which are used for good things like serving food and honoring guests. He also describes vessels for “***dishonorable uses”*** (wood and clay) which are used for less honorable purposes like waste and fire. Paul urges Timothy and believers to be set apart as holy and useful to the master of God’s house, who is Jesus. By doing this, we become ready for every good work. This setting apart as holy includes direct action to “***flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart***.” (2 Tim. 2:22) Pursuing holiness is collective. It is impossible to pursue holiness alone, and so striving for these things is best done with others who call on the Lord. Finally, as a servant of the Lord who is guarding truth and charging the church to avoid quarreling, Timothy is also to ensure that he is not a quarrelsome person. It can be really easy when defending the truth to do so in an unloving un-Christlike way. Paul tells Timothy and us that we should always embody the kindness that backs up our communication of the truth of God’s words. “***The Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness***. ***God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth***.” (2 Tim. 2:24-25) In other words, it may be our kindness that opens the door for someone to listen to the truth we are presenting and the truth of God’s grace will sink in and bear the fruit of repentance and faith.

*Share main truths of the passage along with verses that teach them* and discuss how to apply to our daily lives …

**Key Points**:

* Approved workers emphasize true doctrine, not quarrelling and irreverent talk (v. 2:14-19)
* Approved workers are called to pursue holiness for every good work (v. 2:20-23)
* Approved workers are kind and not quarrelsome (v. 2:24-26)

**Discussion and Application Questions:**

2 Timothy 2:14-19

1. What is the source of any argument? What is the purpose of argument?
2. When there is an argument, what is your first reaction/response? And why?
3. According to verse 15, Christians are not to be ashamed. What is the confidence you have in the Gospel?
4. In what ways are you being diligent to handle God’s truth rightly?
5. What are some things that people argue and dispute? What does that argument teach about the human heart?
6. Why is it important to study God’s word? How could you develop new habits for reading and studying God’s word?
7. Why does false teaching spread so fast compared to the Gospel? How could you affect the spreading of the true gospel?

2 Timothy 2:20-23

1. While pastors work for the Kingdom through preaching, in what ways do believers work for the Kingdom of God?
2. As we pursue holiness in our lives, what is one hindrance that you face daily?
3. As we have seen in verse 22, why is it so important to have someone to pursue holiness with?
4. What is some evidence of genuine Christians?

2 Timothy 2:24-26

1. How do we hold the tension of speaking truth, yet being full of grace and kindness?
2. Can you think of a time you shared truth, but did it in a way that was unkind and therefore lost the “battle”?
3. Can you think of a time when someone confronted you with truth, but their kindness impacted how you received it?
4. How does reflecting on the gospel soften your heart in how you engage people who oppose you?

*Share a key take away or challenge for the week…*

*Pray together in light of 2 Timothy 2:14-26…*

**Prayer Guide:**

Pray for our church that our pastors and our members would be diligent to study God’s word and uphold the integrity of handling the truth rightly. Pray that our members would avoid quarreling, instead resolving to pray and engage others with kindness and truth.

Pray for our city that true gospel doctrine would be preached and guarded in all pulpits. Pray that the collective Christian witness of all churches would not be marked by arguing but by love and truth. Pray that many who are not saved would, by God’s grace, be brought to a knowledge of the truth and repent.

Pray for our world that diligent Christian workers would be planted all around the world. Pray that a scholarship and training of those who teach doctrine in other languages would continue to grow and expand and have the resources necessary to make global impact.