

STUDIES IN THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

"THE TWELVE STEPS TO A FANTASTIC FINISH"

STUDY #7: 2 Timothy 2:20-26

"Satanic Seduction: I Am Keeping My Eyes On Jesus"

Key verse 2:15 — *"Make every effort to present yourself to God, approved, as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, guiding the word of truth along a straight path."*

TEXT:

Key verse 2:22

v. 20 Now in a large house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some indeed for honorable use and some for dishonorable use.

v. 21 If therefore, a person cleanse himself from these, he shall be a vessel for honorable use, having been set apart, useful to the master, having been prepared for every good work.

v. 22 *Now be fleeing from the passions of youth, but pursuing after righteousness, faith, love, peace in company with those who are calling upon the Lord out of a pure heart.*

v. 23 But be avoiding foolish and stupid speculations knowing that they are giving birth to quarrels.

v. 24 Now the servant of the Lord must not be quarrelsome but to be kind toward all, skillful in teaching, bearing evil without resentment.

v. 25 In gentleness correcting those who are opposing; If perhaps God may grant them repentance resulting in a knowledge of the truth.

v. 26 And they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him, under the spell of his will.

INTRODUCTION:

I loved reading B. C. the other day by John Hart:



Frame #1: B.C. is looking in Wiley's Dictionary and finds the word **LITIGATOR**.

Frame #2: The dictionary reads: "What you get if you cross an alligator with a lawyer."

BLONDE JOKE

A plane is on its way to New York when a blonde in economy gets up and moves to the first class section and sits down. The stewardess watches her do this and asks to see her ticket. She then tells the blonde that she paid for economy and that she has to sit in the back.

The blonde replies “I’m blonde, I’m beautiful, I’m going to New York, and I’m staying right here!”

The stewardess goes into the cockpit and tells the pilot that there is some blonde bimbo sitting in first class that belongs in economy and won’t move back to her seat. The co-pilot goes back to the blonde and tries to explain that because she only paid for economy, she must return to her seat in economy.

The blonde replies, “I’m blonde, I’m beautiful, I’m going to New York, and I’m staying right here!”

The co-pilot tells the pilot that he probably should have the police waiting when they land, to arrest this blonde woman that won’t listen to reason. The pilot replied, “Let me try, I am married to a blonde, and I have learned to speak blonde!”

He goes back to the blonde, whispers in her ear and she gets up and moves back to her seat in the economy section. The stewardess and the co-pilot are both amazed and asked him what he said to make her move without any fuss.

“I told her first class wasn’t going to New York.”

(Received via e-mail from Mark Skorheim, May 3, 2001)

An **ELDERLY GENTLEMAN** sitting on a park bench talking to one of his friends says:

“I’ve been there! Can’t remember if I’ve done that!”

ORIENTATION IN HEAVEN

After dying in a car crash, three friends go to Heaven for orientation. They are all asked the same question: “When you are in your casket, and friends and family are mourning over you, what would you like to hear them say about you?”

The first guy immediately responds, “I would like to hear them say that I was one of the great doctors of my time, and a great family man.”

The second guy says, “I would like to hear that I was a wonderful husband and school teacher who made a huge difference in the children of tomorrow.”

The last guy thinks a minute and replies, “I guess I’d like to hear them say . . . ‘look, he’s moving!’”

(Received via e-mail from Mark Skorheim, May 7, 2001)

I saw a **New-Ager** sporting a new T-shirt the other day with the words:

“MY KARMA RAN OVER MY DOGMA.”

WHAT FELL OUT OF THE BIBLE?

A little boy opened the big family Bible. He was fascinated as he fingered through the old pages. Suddenly something fell out of the Bible. He picked up the object and looked at it closely. What he saw was an old leaf that had been pressed in between the pages. “Momma, look what I found,” the boy called out. “What have you got there, dear?” his mother asked. With astonishment in the boy’s voice, he answered: “I think it’s Adam’s underwear!”

(Received via e-mail from Treeta D. Mayfield, May 29, 2001)

I found the little book at the Doctor's book fair the other day titled "The 776 Stupidest Things Ever Said." I really enjoyed it. Here are a few to entice you:

(The 776 Stupidest Things Ever Said by Ross & Kathryn Petras) New York, NY: Doubleday. Copyright – Ross & Kathryn Petras, 1993. 220 pp.

Things are more like they are now than they have ever been.

President Gerald Ford

p. 1

On Applause:

They gave me a standing observation.

ex-Houston Oiler and Florida State coach Bill Peterson

p. 7

On Appreciation:

You're a parasite for sore eyes.

attributed to actor/director Gregory Ratoff

p. 7

On Birth:

I called the doctor, and he told me that the contraptions were an hour apart.

*Mackey Sasser, New York Mets catcher,
on his wife's labor*

p. 13

TEXAS LAW

One law in Texas:

A big city California lawyer went duck hunting in rural Texas. He shot and dropped a bird, but it fell into a farmer's field on the other side of the fence. As the lawyer climbed over the fence, an elderly farmer drove up on his tractor and asked him what he was doing.

The litigator responded, "I shot a duck and it fell in this field, and now I'm going to retrieve it."

The old farmer replied, "This is my property, and you are not coming over here."

The indignant lawyer said, "I am one of the best trial attorneys in the U.S., and if you don't let me get that duck, I'll sue you and take everything you own."

The old farmer smiled and said, "Apparently, you don't know how we do things in Texas. We settle small disagreements like this with the Texas Three-Kick Rule."

The lawyer asked, "What is the Texas Three-Kick Rule?"

The farmer replied, "Well, first I kick you three times, then you kick me three times, and so on, back and forth, until someone gives up."

The attorney quickly thought about the proposed contest and decided that he could easily take the old codger. He agreed to abide by the local custom.

The old farmer slowly climbed down from the tractor and walked up to the city feller. His first kick planted the toe of his heavy work boot into the lawyer's groin and dropped him to his knees. His second kick nearly ripped the man's nose off his face. The barrister was flat on his belly when the farmer's third kick to a kidney nearly caused him to give up.

The lawyer summoned every bit of his will and managed to get to his feet and said, "Okay, you old coot, now it's my turn."

The old farmer smiled and said, "Naw, I give up. You can have the duck."

(Received via e-mail from Gary Coffey, April 17, 2001)

(Christ and the Cowboy by Kenneth Wyatt) Tulia, TX: Y-8 Publishing Co.
Copyright – Y-8 Publishing Co., 1998.

The Circuit Rider
by Kenneth Wyatt

A man he was, don't doubt you none,
Plumb clean thru, foot to head.
And not just size nor deeds he'd done,
Most was the things he'd said.

Ah, big he was with a lop-side smile,
And gentle, too, you bet.
Ask him—he'd go that extra mile;
A stranger never met.

"He's from south Texas," Papa believed.
"Comes 'bout twice a year.
Joy comes with him, and when he leaves,
The women shed a tear."

A claw-hammer coat, a black felt hat,
Boots run down at the heel,
Proud on a tall bay horse he sat.
The Leather Book was real.

The Reverend, that was Mama's choice,
Preacher to all us rest.
But names didn't matter—just the voice
When certain you'd be blest.

Then, singin' he was at a fearsome pace;
The power of God was near.
That circuit rider led us to grace,
An' love shoved out the fear.

Sudden, he'd open the Book leather bound.
Holy was the word come true!
The birth, the death, then life all around,
Jesus' life plumb thru!

Glory came down and flooded the place;
 Religion was right as rain.
 You could see God's peace on every face;
 Pardon washed every stain.

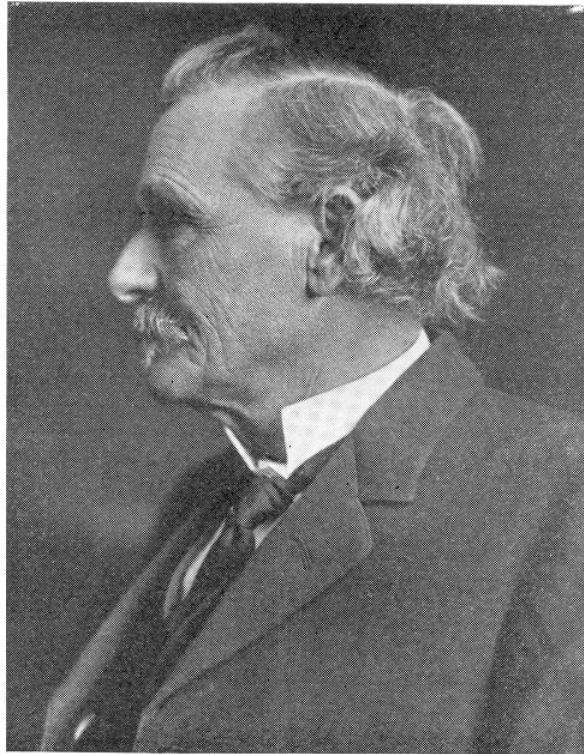
That man of the cloth could do it all—
 Touched every child and man.
 Listen close . . . you'd hear the angels call
 From thrones in the promised land.

Then, baptizing done and scripture all taught,
 Plus, I guess, marryin' a few,
 The rider rode on—leavin' one thought . . .
 That "God loves 'specially you!"

pp. 12-13

(Cattle Clatter by Joe Cross) Kansas City, MO: Walker Publications, Inc.
 Copyright – Cross, Joe & Walker Publications, Inc., 1938.

Did you ever think of what it meant to be a preacher in Texas 100 years ago? It meant courage as well as sacrifice. Look at this equipment of a young preacher going out to meet his appointment: One Spanish pony, one bridle, one saddle, one pair of saddlebags, one sixshooter,



The Rev. L. R. Millican, Early-Day Texas Circuit Rider

one hymn book and a Bible. It took grit as well as grace to answer the call, "Follow Me." To sum it all up, the advancement of the Christian religion in our state during the past 100 years is one of the greatest achievements in all Texas history.

p. 156

(25 Old Western Poems by Charlie Bennett) Alberta, Canada:

THE SUNSETTING TIME ON THE PRAIRIE

by Eddie Arnold

When it's sunseting time on the prairie,
And the birds in the trees hush their song,
The cattle bed down in the valley,
The night herders slowly ride on.

You hear the lone howl of the coyote,
As he swings through the valley or dale,
Painted pictures of gold, the range land unfolds,
When the sun says goodnight to the prairie.

When the sun says goodnight to the prairie,
And its rays kiss the range land goodnight,
The shadows start creepin' around you,
The night owl starts out on its plight.

The whole world seems wrapped deep in slumber,
As the flickerin' ranch lights burn low.
It sure is well to go where the shadows hang low,
When the night says good night to the prairie.

When the sun says goodnight to the prairie,
I'll be heading for that great divide.
There's a little blue-eyed prairie sweetheart,
I'm longin' to have by my side.

She promised to meet me at twilight,
At the gates of the old home corral.
There's romance in the air, I'll be on my way there,
When the sun says goodnight to the prairie.

(That Cat Won't Flush: An Entertaining Country Dictionary by Wallace O. Chariton) Plano, TX: Wordware Publishing, Inc. Copyright - Wordware Publishing, Inc., 1991.

HOSPITALITY . . . If your hospitality gets to runnin' mighty thin you can always use the old country hint, "I guess we'll get on to bed so you folks won't feel like you have to stay any longer."
p. 114

HUMILITY When you say grace before eatin' crow
p. 114

[On weight:]

Some of the descriptions I enjoy, dealing with your subject of how cowboys explain the rather large or the very thin woman-folk are:

"She's so big, when you tell her to skedaddle, she has to make two trips." And then there was always,

"She's so skinny, she has to jump around in the shower to get wet."

"You'll never get run over by a train, unless you get in front of one."

On ignorance:

"He's so dumb, he don't know come here, from sic 'em."

"If you double his IQ, it still wouldn't reach room temperature."

"He don't know first base, from the dug-out."

"The difference between ignorance and intelligence: there is a limit to intelligence."

On death:

"He went to room temperature."

"He activated his estate."

On wealth:

"I don't have two dimes to rub together."

"I'm so broke, I can't pay attention."

(Received in letter from Frank Harris, Jr., May 28, 2001)

In our series of studies in 2 Timothy, we have titled this series of studies:

“THE TWELVE STEPS TO A FANTASTIC FINISH.”

Thus far we have considered the following **SIX STEPS** in our study:

Step #1: **INTEGRITY:** Getting It All Together (2 Tim. 1:1-7)

Step #2: **CONVICTION:** Here I Stand, God Help Me (2 Tim. 1:8-12)

Step #3: **COURAGE:** I Am Willing To Pay The Price (2 Tim. 1:13-18)

Step #4: **LEGACY:** What Am I Passing On? (2 Tim. 2:1-7)

Step #5: **PERSEVERANCE:** In Single-Minded Steadfastness, I Will Stay The Course (2 Tim. 2:8-13)

Step #6: **FOCUSED:** This One Thing I Do (2 Tim. 2:14-19)

This now brings us to the next step in our series of studies:

Step #7: **SATANIC SEDUCTION:** I Am Keeping My Eyes on Jesus (2 Tim. 2:20-26)

The verses that we are going to consider together on this subject are the **FINAL SEVEN VERSES** in chapter 2:

2 Timothy 2:20-26.

Our **KEY VERSE** for this study will be:

verse 22.

**(Faith Under Fire: Standing Strong When Satan Attacks by Steven J. Lawson)
Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books. Copyright - Steven J. Lawson, 1995.**

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A WAR. Not a playground for children, but a battleground for soldiers.

Deep within the hidden recesses of the human heart, a bloodless battle is being fought—a life-and-death struggle for the soul. This intense spiritual warfare is raging between God and Satan upon the invisible battlefields of our hearts. As long as we are upon this earth, every square inch of space and every split second of time in our lives is an arena of war.

This battle is relentless and ruthless. It stalks us like prey. It tracks us down like a wild animal. It finds us no matter where we go. There is no escaping this war.

We *can't* run from it.

We *can't* hide from it.

There is no neutral ground in this conflict. No truce can be called. No cease-fire negotiated. No peace treaty signed. No white flag waved. No demilitarized zone entered.

There are no conscientious objectors in this war. No spiritual pacifists can sit this one out. No draft dodgers can protest and escape active duty. No medical deferments are given. Every believer is enlisted into active duty and placed on the front lines.

Every area of the Christian's life is an unseen battlefield for the deadliest firefight of all—the spiritual warfare waged by Satan for the control of the soul.

p. xi

SATAN'S CONVENTION

Satan called a worldwide convention. In his opening address to his evil angels, he said, "We can't keep the Christians from going to church. We can't keep them from reading their Bibles and knowing the truth. We can't even keep them from forming an intimate, abiding relationship experience in Christ. Once they gain that connection with Jesus, our power over them is broken.

"So let them go to their churches. Let them have their conservative lifestyles, but steal their time, so they can't gain that relationship with Jesus Christ. This is what I want you to do, angels. Distract them from gaining hold of their Savior and maintaining that vital connection throughout their day!"

"How shall we do this?" shouted his angels.

"Keep them busy in the nonessentials of life and invent innumerable schemes to occupy their minds," he answered. "Tempt them to spend, spend, spend, and borrow, borrow, borrow. Persuade the wives to go to work for long hours and the husbands to work 6-7 days each week, 10-12 hours a day, so they can afford their empty lifestyles. Keep them from spending time with their children. As their family fragments, soon their home will offer no escape from the pressures of work!"

"Over-stimulate their minds so that they cannot hear that still, small voice. Entice them to play the radio or cassette player whenever they drive, to keep the TV, VCR, CDs and their PCs going constantly in their home and see to it that every store and restaurant in the world plays non-biblical music constantly. This will jam their minds and break that union with Christ."

"Fill the coffee tables with magazines and newspapers. Pound their minds with the news 24 hours a day. Invade their driving moments with billboards. Flood their mailboxes with junk mail, mail order catalogs, sweepstakes, and every kind of newsletter and promotional offering free products, services and false hopes."

"Keep skinny, beautiful models on the magazines so their husbands will believe that external beauty is what's important, and they'll become dissatisfied with their wives. That will fragment those families quickly!"

"Even in their recreation, let them be excessive. Have them return from their recreation exhausted, disquieted and unprepared for the coming week. Don't let them go out in nature to reflect on God's wonders. Send them to amusement parks, sporting events, concerts and movies instead."

“Keep them busy, busy, busy! And when they meet for spiritual fellowship, involve them in gossip and small talk so that they leave with troubled consciences and unsettled emotions. Go ahead, let them be involved in soul winning, but crowd their lives with so many good causes they have no time to seek power from Jesus.”

“Soon they will be working in their own strength, sacrificing their health and family for the good of the cause. It will work! It will work!”

It was quite a convention. The evil angels went eagerly to their assignments causing Christians everywhere to get more busy and more rushed, going here and there.

I guess the question is:

Has the devil been successful in his scheme?

You’ll have to be the judge! Does “BUSY” mean:

**B-eing
U-nder
S-atan’s
Y-oke?**

(Received via e-mail from Debbie Smith, March 23, 2001

(In Light of Eternity: Perspectives on Heaven by Randy Alcorn) Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press. Copyright – Eternal Perspective Ministries, 1999.

Our enemy slanders three things: God’s person, God’s people, and God’s place—heaven.

After being forcibly evicted from heaven (Isaiah 14:12-15), the devil is bitter not only toward God, but toward us and the place that’s no longer his. (It must be maddening for Satan to realize we’re now entitled to the home he was kicked out of.)

pp. 2-3

(In the Face of God: The Dangers & Delights of Spiritual Intimacy by Michael Horton) Dallas, TX: Word. Copyright - Word Publishing, Inc., 1996.

When she had borne her first child, Eve thought that perhaps she had given birth to the promised Messiah. In fact, she named him Cain, which means, “Here He Is!” But Eve soon discovered that instead of Christ, she had given birth to history’s first Antichrist, as Abel’s murder was clearly motivated by religious persecution. The enmity God had placed between the seed of the woman and the serpent now began to play itself out in the drama of human history.

p. 7

Charles Schultz in his “PEANUTS” comic strip has Peppermint Patty and Charlie Brown having a conversation:

Peppermint Patty:

Chuck, what do you think security is?

Charlie Brown:

Security? Security is sleeping in the backseat of the car when you’re a little kid, and you’ve been somewhere with your mom and dad . . . and it’s night-time. You’re riding in the car and you can sleep in the backseat and you don’t have to worry about anything. Your mom and dad are in the front seat and they’re doing all the worrying. They take care of everything.

Peppermint Patty:

That’s real neat!

Charlie Brown:

But it doesn’t last. It doesn’t last. Suddenly, you’re grown up and it can never be that way again. Suddenly, it’s over—and you don’t get to sleep in the backseat of the car anymore. Never!

Peppermint Patty:

Never?

Charlie Brown:

Never.

Peppermint Patty:

Hold my hand, Chuck! Hold my hand!

(Source unknown)

I am sure Peppermint Patty expresses the feelings which every believer has when he or she begins to talk about **SATANIC SEDUCTION**.

It is good for us to be reminded of:

1 John 4:4

You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

2 Timothy 1:7

For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

HE TAKES OUR PLACE

A valuable painting had been purchased by F. W. Boreham called "The Chess Player." It portrayed Satan playing the game with a young opponent, and the man's soul was at stake. The game had progressed to the point where it was the novice's turn, and there seemed to be no move he could make that would not mean defeat for him. Awful despair was on his face as he realized his soul was lost, and Satan was grinning as he anticipated victory. A champion player who had come to view the canvas studied the picture for a time and then called for a chessboard. Placing the pieces in exactly the same position as in the painting, he said, "I'll take the young man's place." He then made a move that showed how the devil's captive could have won and been set free.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Survey

Nearly two out of three adults—62%—agreed that Satan “is not a living being but is a symbol of evil.” This response has remained relatively consistent throughout the Nineties. Among the more surprising findings, however, are that a majority of born again Christians deny Satan’s existence (52%); nearly three-quarters of Catholics say the devil is non-existent (72%); and women are more likely than men to reject Satan’s existence (64% vs. 59%).

Barna Research Group, Ltd., Oxnard, CA

(Logos Library System)

MacArthur begins his exposition of these verses under the title of “An Honorable Vessel.” Then he quotes these lyrics:

A chorus by Audrey Mieir beautifully expresses the spirit of dedication of which Paul speaks in this passage.

To be used of God
To sing, to speak, to pray.
To be used of God
To show someone the way.
I long so much to feel
The touch of His consuming fire,
To be used of God is my desire.

Every believer should have that compelling desire to be used of God in whatever way He chooses. The flow of 2 Timothy 2 moves from the call to “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2:1) to being “a workman who does not need to be ashamed” (v. 15) in order to be “useful to the Master, prepared for every good work” (v. 21).
pp. 85-86

Fee points out:

The main point of verses 14-19 was to reassert the need for Timothy—and God’s people—to “avoid [the] godless chatter” of the false teachers (v. 16), which is “of no value [but] only ruins those who listen” (vv. 14, 18). That train of thought was broken by verse 19, which, with the metaphor of an inscription (seal of ownership) on a foundation, reaffirms the certainty of God’s work, despite the “ruin” caused by the false teachers.

Paul now moves to the related but significantly different metaphor of a house with two kinds of vessels, in order to further elaborate the second part of the inscription: “Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.” At the same time this new analogy functions as the lead-in for the next imperatives to Timothy about his own personal responsibilities toward both the false teachings and teachers (vv. 22-26).
p. 260

Knight has this title for verses 20 & 21:

THE VESSEL FOR HONOR, USEFUL FOR THE MASTER: 2:20-21

The purpose of this analogy about different vessels in a house is to elaborate on the second part of the inscription in v. 19, i.e., on the necessity of turning away from wickedness. The components of the analogy are presented in v. 20, and the analogy is applied in v. 21.
p. 417

Hughes observes:

As *Chicago Sun Times* columnist **Sydney J. Harris** put it: “Since most of us would rather be admired for what we *do*, rather than for what we *are*, we are normally willing to sacrifice character for conduct, and integrity for achievement.”
p. 216

Hughes then says further:

Paul here instructs Timothy on how to become an instrument for noble purposes, a vessel for honor.
p. 216

In my book Drawing Closer, Growing Stronger, chapter 3 is titled:

Recognizing the Enemy's Strategies

“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

1 PETER 5:8

A Sunday morning sunrise on the Hawaiian Islands had never seemed more beautiful. Honeymooners were still cuddling as enthusiastic tourists consulted their maps and guides. Birds chirped as beachcombers, snorkelers, and surfers headed for the beach. Fragrant, fresh pineapples and mangoes decorated restaurant breakfast plates. Poinsettias bloomed in all their glory as islanders prepared for the Christmas holidays.

Then it happened. Scores of Japanese planes dotted the blue skies and began pelting the peaceful paradise with bombs, hitting Ford Island first at 7:55 A.M. A second raid at 8:55 A.M. added to the massive destruction. Terror-stricken people scattered to seek shelter as black smoke billowed upward. Our American fleet stationed at Pearl Harbor was all but destroyed. The casualty count quickly mounted to 2,409 with 1,178 wounded.

I was only eight years old at the time, but I can still remember the alarmed expressions on my parents' faces as we heard the radio news. Although we lived on the mainland, far from the destruction, we could feel the winds of war.

Early in the afternoon of Monday, December 8, 1941, President Roosevelt addressed a joint session of Congress and we listened with horror to the broadcast. He told how Japan had attacked Malay, Hong Kong, Guam, the Philippine Islands, Wake Island, and Midway Island as well as the Hawaiian Islands. Many Americans had been killed.

The President closed by saying, “Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory, and our interests are in grave danger. With confidence in our armed forces—with the unbounded determination of our people—we will gain the inevitable triumph—so help us God.”

To use President Roosevelt's words in a spiritual context—we as believers are also in danger. Our enemy is unseen. Just as the multiple Japanese attacks in World War II made it necessary to fight on several fronts, the believer finds he, too, must fight on three fronts: the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Just as Roosevelt reassured the American people over fifty years ago, we believers can also be confident in our armed forces. We, too, will gain the inevitable triumph—so help us God. With confidence in our victorious Savior we will win the war against Satan and the wickedness of this world. Christ's kingdom will prevail.

pp. 43-44

v. 20 Now in a large house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some indeed for honorable use and some for dishonorable use.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary titles these two verses:

A clean instrument

Paul furthered his point about noncontamination by introducing a new but similar metaphor. The image changes from a building to a household . . . In a **large** and varied household are all sorts of containers. Some are made **of gold and silver** and others **of wood and clay**. More importantly, **some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble**. Clearly the reference so far is to the faithful and the unfaithful within the church. But Paul then shifted the metaphor slightly to show how one can **be an instrument for noble purposes**, by cleansing **himself from the** ignoble vessels. The metaphor is somewhat mixed (one would usually think of cleansing from corruption, not cleansing from the corrupted vessels), but the apostle's point is clear: Timothy was to have nothing to do with the false teachers. In this way he would be a vessel: (1) "for noble purposes" ("unto honor," . . .), (2) **made holy** ("set apart"), (3) **useful** ("serviceable") **to the Master**, and (4) **prepared to do any good work** (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16).
p. 755

In verse 20 we have a:

NEGATIVE and

POSITIVE.

NEGATIVELY—

"NOT ONLY VESSELS OF GOLD AND SILVER, BUT"

POSITIVELY—

"ALSO VESSELS OF WOOD AND OF EARTHENWARE AND SOME INDEED FOR HONORABLE USE AND SOME FOR DISHONORABLE USE."

Romans 12:3-6

For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;

1 Corinthians 12:17, 18

If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.

Hughes says:

“A large house” is Paul’s metaphor for the church, the Christian community that Paul had earlier called “Gods’ household” (1 Timothy 3:15). We are to understand that the Christian community contains both “noble” and “ignoble” vessels—that is, both believers and false teachers—just as Israel had at the time of the rebellion of Korah (cf. v. 19).
p. 216

He says further:

The Christian community is, and has always been, a mixed bag. In fact, that is the answer to those who avoid church because it contains hypocrites. Of course it does! Church is for hypocrites because it is there that they may become vessels of honor. St. Chrysostom had it right early on: “Let it not disturb thee that there are corrupt and wicked men. For in a great house there are such vessels.”
p. 216

MacArthur says:

The honorable **vessels** represent believers who are faithful and useful to the Lord. They are the good soldiers, the competitive athletes, the hard-working farmers mentioned in verses 3-6. By contrast, the dishonorable **vessels** are the cowardly soldiers, the lazy athletes, and the slothful farmers, defiled people fit only for the most menial, undistinguished purposes. **Honor** and **dishonor** therefore refer to the ways in which genuine believers are found useful to the Lord in fulfilling the work to which He has called them. In this sense, all believers *should be*, but are not always, **vessels of honor**. pp. 87-88

Guy King in his little commentary says:

In our present passage, however, he thinks of us as vessels of the Household. He was, we remember, a vessel himself; for, in sending Ananias to him, in Acts [9] ix. 15, the living LORD had said, “He is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My Name. . . .” As you might take down a jug from the dresser, and fill it with water to bear to some thirsty person, so the LORD had taken up Paul, and filled him, that he might bear His Name, which is Water of Life, to parched and weary souls. We, too, are such vessels—each in our way, and our sphere, and our degree; and it is about these vessels of the House that this writer speaks to Timothy. p. 71

King, commenting on the word “LARGE,” which he translates “GREAT,” says:

“Great”—in its history, having a glorious past, and destined for a glorious future. “Great”—in its fellowship, enjoying within its embrace so many who have had such rich experience of GOD, which they are so ready, and so happy, to pass on to their fellow inhabitants. “Great”—in its LORD, above all: the Master of the House being our “Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace”, Whom Isaiah [9] ix. 6 speaks of. Well is it for the House that “the government shall be upon His shoulder”. To be the humblest Vessel in such a House is the highest privilege that life affords. p. 73

Guthrie says:

Timothy's aim must be to attain the most honourable usefulness, of which there are varying degrees. The focus is upon the cleanliness of each vessel, and this seems preferable to Bernard's contention that the illustration indicates the presence of evil members within the Church.
p. 152

Barclay says:

Paul's reply is that in any great house there are all kinds of vessels and utensils; there are things of precious metal and things of base metal; there are things which have a dishonourable use and things which have an honourable use. There are things of every kind. It must be so in the Church. So long as the Church is an earthly institution the Church must be a mixture. So long as the Church consists of men and women the Church must remain a cross-section of humanity. Just as it takes all kinds of people to make a world, so it takes all kinds of people to make a Church.
p. 205

A.T. Robertson speaks of the "VESSELS OF EARTHENWARE" when he says:

Of earth (ostrakina). Late adjective, from *ostrakon*, baked clay, in [the] LXX, in [the] N.T. only here and II Cor. 4:7.
p. 621

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown say:

in a great house—i.e., the visible professing Christian Church (I Tim. 3:15). Paul is speaking, not of those without, but of the [visible] family of God [CALVIN].
p. 1378

Lock says:

The illustration is perhaps suggested by Is 52:11 . . .
p. 101

Isaiah 52:11 (KJV)

. . . be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.

Lock says further:

The object is twofold, to teach Timothy patience with varieties of character within the Church, cf. 1 Co 12:20-26, but mainly to warn him against contact with all impurity and false teaching.
p. 101

Lea & Griffin title these first two verses of our passage:

An Appeal for Separation (2:20-21)

p. 218

Milne says:

Paul holds onto the picture of a building, only now he goes inside the house to look at its contents. Some objects in the house are expensive, some are inexpensive; some are intended for useful purposes, some are for menial. The same range of value and usefulness is to be found in God's temple-house, the visible church. There are those who live ungodly lives and teach falsehoods, there are those who live godly lives and teach the truth. Not everyone who claims membership and holds office in the nominal church is truly valuable to the Master of the house, nor does everyone fulfil a useful purpose (Matt. 25:14-30). Individuals like Hymenaeus and Philetus appear along with Timothy and Onesiphorus.
p. 155

Barnes says:

Still keeping up the comparison of the church with a building. The idea is, that the church is a *large* edifice, and that in such a building we are not to expect entire uniformity in all the articles which it contains.

p. 227

Towner says:

From the household analogy comes the raw truth: the church as a household by definition has implements that can be distinguished on the basis of value and usefulness. The valuable implements are those made of *gold and silver*, while ordinary ones are made of *wood and clay*. The former are reserved for important occasions, the latter for mundane, day-to-day tasks. Guests of honor get the fine china, crystal and silverware, not the everyday dishes. And no one would use the silver punchbowl for scrubbing the floor. But what distinction within the church is Paul making? As with Jesus' teaching, the present context shows (in v. 21 the *instrument* is the one who claims to be a Christian) that the presence of false believers within the church is the issue. God knows who they are, but the point is, they are there, and this fact should not take Christians by surprise.

p. 186

Calvin says:

The context suggests that we should take it to mean the church, for Paul is talking about God's family and not about strangers.

p. 142

Larson points out:

Jesus foretold the same truth. The church is a mixed group, some true to their Lord, others impostors (Matt. 13:24-30). Though God knows who belongs to him and though true disciples demonstrate a life reflective of his holiness, scattered among them are unbelievers who deny the truth by their doctrine and their lives. These are the wood and clay within God's earthly house. Their presence should not disturb or discourage those who are faithful.

p. 288

Hawthorne & Martin say:

This theme recurs in 2 Timothy 2:20-21, where the church is compared in 2 Timothy 2:20-21, where the church is compared with “a great house” . . . in which can be found both valuable and common vessels. As the imagery is applied to the church, the master . . . for whom the “vessel” should be cleansed in preparation for use, is God.
p. 418

Wiersbe says:

It is worth noting that the name *Timothy* comes from two Greek words which together mean “God-honoring.” Paul was encouraging Timothy to live up to his name!
p. 137

King, speaking of the “DISHONORABLE” vessel, says:

That is not the kind of vessel that we are meant to be; rather are we to be the earnest offerers of **Frances Ridley Havergal’s** familiar prayer—

“Oh, use me, Lord, use even me,
Just as Thou wilt, and when, and where”.

p. 73

He says further:

There are some of us Christians whom GOD cannot employ in higher service—our poor character, our humdrum quality, preclude us from better engagement, unless some means be found of changing us completely.
p. 73

King then raises the question:

. . . Which of these is my true character? Am I satisfied to remain on that lower level? Shall I be prepared, at any cost, to hand myself over to Him, for His transforming touch and process? To His very earliest disciples He said (Matthew [4] iv. 19), “Follow Me, and I will make you . . .”—they could not do it themselves. What was the secret of Moses’ magnificent life? You will find it in I Samuel [12] xii. 6, (margin): “The LORD . . . made Moses”. First He made him safe; then He made him humble; next He made him willing; and so He made him successful. Well might we make the prodigal’s prayer our own, “Make me . . .” (Luke [15] xv. 19)—yes, one of His hired servants, a fisher of men, a veritable Moses, a vessel of gold.

p. 74

He then says finally:

It is generally supposed that the honour mentioned is that of the vessel; but I am proposing to you that it is, more truly, the honour of the Master. Certainly, the former is not altogether absent, for “them that honour Me, I will honour”, as I Samuel [2] ii. 30 tells us; but the main thing is, not ours, but His glory. (i) Some of the vessels are thus “to honour”—they are so clean, so bright, so beautiful, so useful, so valuable that they reflect glory upon Him to Whom they are so proud to belong. It was so with this very man who writes the words, for, after describing the revolutionary change that had been wrought by the Living CHRIST in his whole character and conduct, he adds, “And they glorified GOD in me”, Galatians [1] i. 24. It was the Master, not the vessel, that had the honour.

p. 74

Spurgeon says:

It is a great house because *it has been erected at great cost, and with great labour*. The cost of this mansion who can tell? It is a price beyond price, for God has given His only-begotten Son—He had but one, and heaven could not match Him—that He might redeem unto Himself a people who should be His dwelling-place for ever.

p. 870

Spurgeon says further:

What a swarm there is of the Lord's children, and yet not one of the family remains unfed. The church is a great house wherein thousands dwell, yea, a number that no man can number.

p. 871

He says finally:

"All King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold." Would you have the King of kings set an earthen pot upon His royal table? Shall the guests at His table eat from wooden bowls? So false professors are only useful to the servants, not to the Master; they serve base purposes, and are not to be seen on those great days when He manifests His glory.

p. 872

I found myself chasing through the Scriptures noting some of the **DISHONORABLE VESSELS** that are recorded there. You have:

1. **KORAH, DATHAN & ABIRAM,**
2. **NADAB & ABIHU,**
3. **HOPHNI & PHINEAS,**
4. **CAIN** in the first family,
5. **HAM** who rode out judgment in the ark,
6. **ISHMAEL,**
7. **ESAU,**
8. **JUDAS ISCARIOT,**
9. **ANANIAS & SAPPHIRA,**
10. **DIOTROPHES,**
11. **DEMAS,** and
12. **ALEXANDER** the coppersmith.

Among the **ANGELS** you have one who said:

Isaiah 14:13-15

You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.

ISAIAH is speaking here of:

SATAN and his rebellion against the God of the universe.

Isaiah 14:12

How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn!
You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!

Revelation 12:7-9

And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

CHURCH

Wherever God erects a house of prayer,
The Devil always builds a chapel there;
And 'twill be found, upon examination,
The latter has the largest congregation.

Daniel Defoe (1660-1731), English novelist and journalist.
The True-Born Englishman (1701).

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It is the longing desire of the apostle that Timothy be a **“VESSEL OF GOLD AND SILVER.”**

A vessel for **“HONORABLE USE”** rather than **“DISHONORABLE USE.”**

I am reminded of:

Jeremiah 18:1-6

This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: “Go down to the potter’s house, and there I will give you my message.” So I went down to the potter’s house, and I saw him working at the wheel. But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him. Then the word of the Lord came to me: “O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?” declares the Lord. “Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.

Dr. Barnhouse tells of an experience with a potter:

Years ago in France as I watched a potter at work, he asked me if I would like to try my hand at making something, so I took a lump of clay, wet my hands, shaped the clay and threw it against the wheel.

As it began to turn, I pressed my hand against the clay and it made an opening. I had formed a lovely vase with a flange at the bottom, then it bellied out and narrowed to the neck. Thinking that it should be just a little narrower above the flange, I put my fingers there. Suddenly, the vase broke. Looking at it, I asked what can be done with that? Smiling, the potter took the same bit of clay and made a beautiful vase, then he put it in his kiln to bake. When it came out, it was beautiful.

God works like that in our lives. We mar them, but He makes them beautiful. When God takes a life deformed by sin and molds it into the image of Jesus Christ, all heaven rejoices. We are to the glory of His grace.

(source unknown)

Ephesians 2:10

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Romans 12:2

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Since we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, we can be confident that as we yield ourselves to Him, the desire of His perfect will is that we might be “VESSELS OF GOLD . . . FOR HONORABLE USE.”

Lie still and let him mold thee.
Oh Lord I would obey.
Thou art the mighty Potter
And I the yielding clay.
Bend me, oh bend me to Thy will,
While in Thy hand I am lying still.

(More Precious Than Silver by Joni Eareckson Tada) Grand Rapids, MI:
Zondervan. Copyright – Joni Eareckson Tada, 1998.

The Noble Spork

In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.
—2 Timothy 2:20-21

I was having lunch at a friend's home recently, a wise Christian woman with discerning eyes. Before we ate, I had to borrow one of her spoons and have her bend and twist it in a contorted angle. She then inserted the spoon in my hand splint, and I was able to feed myself.

As we ate and casually talked, I noticed she kept glancing at the bent spoon. When lunch was over, I offered to have my husband straighten it out—to return it to its original shape. She protested. “I want to keep this spoon just the way it is. You can only use a spoon that's been bent. A straight one won't do. A twisted tool in your hand can better accomplish a task. What a great illustration of the kinds of people God enjoys using!”

She's right. God can better accomplish his unique plan when he bends us to suit his will. This makes us different from most people (just like my spoon doesn't look like the rest of the utensils in the kitchen drawer). But in the hand of God we serve an express purpose. The metal of our souls may be hard to bend, but when we allow God the privilege of shaping our lives, we discover new purpose. Isn't it great to realize you are a chosen vessel for God—perfectly suited for his use?

The dictionary says that *noble* means “grand, splendid, magnificent; having greatness of character and excellent qualities.” Wouldn't you like to be one of God's chosen vessels for noble use? You can be, you know. Read again 2 Timothy 2:21, paying special attention to the last part of the verse. What kind of work could be considered noble? How can you prepare yourself to be used for noble purposes?

*I may be different from others, but I look perfect in your hands.
Reach for me today, Lord, and use me.*

(January 19)

Isaiah 64:8

Yet, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.

v. 21 If therefore, a person cleanse himself from these, he shall be a vessel for honorable use, having been set apart, useful to the master, having been prepared for every good work.

Paul is now **APPLYING THE TRUTH** and has changed the word from **“VESSEL”** to **“A PERSON”**:

“IF THEREFORE, A PERSON CLEANSE HIMSELF FROM THESE.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

What is clean and set apart for special use can easily get contaminated and be rendered unusable through contact with the corrupt. Paul was concerned that Timothy, his choicest disciple, keep himself in a usable condition for the Lord.
p. 755

Isaiah 52:11 (KJV)

. . . be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord.

GOD DOES NOT DO HIS WORK THROUGH DIRTY VESSELS, AND SO THE CHALLENGE COMES BEFORE US TO BE CLEAN.

1 John 1:9 (KJV)

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Psalms 119:9, 11 (KJV)

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.
Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

2 Corinthians 7:1 (KJV)

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

1 John 3:3

And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Hebrews 12:1

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

John 15:2

Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit.

Psalm 51:2

Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.

Psalm 51:10

Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

“IF THEREFORE, A PERSON CLEANSE HIMSELF FROM THESE.”

PAUL is here referring to those who have deviated from the truth and are “vessels” meant for “dishonorable use.”

The **PROMISE** then comes:

“He shall be a vessel for honorable use, set apart, and useful to the master, equipped for every good work.”

There are **THREE THINGS** that are said about a clean vessel. It is:

1. **“A VESSEL FOR HONORABLE USE,”**
2. **“SET APART, USEFUL TO THE MASTER,”** and
3. **“PREPARED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK.”**

“IF THEREFORE, A PERSON CLEANSE HIMSELF FROM THESE.”

The word “THESE” in this context refers to **THREE DIFFERENT GROUPS**:

1. Those who are **WRANGLING**

2 Timothy 2:14

Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless, and leads to the ruin of the hearers.

2. Those participating in **WICKEDNESS**

2 Timothy 2:19

Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness.”

3. The **WAYWARD**

2 Timothy 2:20

Now in a large house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some indeed for honorable use and some for dishonorable use.

Wiersbe says:

The important thing is that the honorable vessels not be contaminated by the dishonorable ones. The word “these” (2:21) refers to the vessels of dishonor (2:20). Paul is admonishing Timothy to separate himself from false teachers. If he does, then God will honor him, set him apart, and equip him for service.

p. 137

Milne states:

The onus for usefulness rests on the individual leader. He must cleanse himself from everything that hinders his progress or defiles his profession (Heb. 12:1f.). This self-cleansing operation is the pre-condition for being instrumental, holy, useful and prepared in the service of Christ.

p. 155

He says further:

- Becoming an instrument for noble purposes means being capable of doing great work for God.
- Holiness means being separated from all iniquity and being available for God.
- Being useful to the Master of the house means being effective in the Lord's service.
- Being prepared to do any good work means that a man is in a ready frame of mind to buy up every opportunity for doing good.

pp. 155-6

King says:

Let a man decide not to have his company amongst “the lower classes” of Christians; let him beware of those who are content with anything less than the best, or they will sooner or later drag him down to their poor level. If a man, therefore, by a deliberate, specific, and complete act (such is the force of the Greek verb) cut himself clean from the life, the company, the habits, the outlook, the behaviour, of the second-rate, he is well on the way to becoming himself in the first-class, as represented by our word “honour”. Be this our aim, and, by the SPIRIT, our attainment.

p. 78

Lea & Griffin say:

The separation from sin implied in v. 19 is specifically urged in v. 21.
p. 219

They say further:

Paul had three encouraging words about an instrument “for noble purposes.” First, such a person is “made holy,” set apart for a special purpose before God. Second, he is “useful to the Master.” Third, he is “prepared to do any good work.” He will be ready to undertake whatever the Lord calls him to do. Those who are most useful to God will find that there are ignoble practices, attitudes, and ideas they must avoid (v. 20). Paul had urged his readers to effect that separation.

p. 219

Knight says:

The condition is that one cleanse oneself from the defilement of fellowship with “these” and the effects of their teaching and actions (cf. 3 Jn. 10-11).

p. 418

3 John 9-11

I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say. For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, neither does he himself receive the brethren, and he forbids those who desire to do so, and puts them out of the church. Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God.

Fee says:

Paul's own application of the analogy (a "therefore" tying it to v. 19, through v. 20, is left untranslated in the NIV), though it does not seem to fit very well, is precisely the one *he* wants to make. It has to do with verse 19, that those who name God's name, Timothy and the believers—those who are known by God—are to turn away from evil, especially in the form of the false teachings of such as Hymanaeus and Philetus.

p. 261

He says further:

Thus, **if a man** (probably purposely ambiguous as in v. 19, but now certainly moving back to include Timothy) **cleanses himself** (using the language of the ritual cleansing of vessels) **from the latter** (the false teachings), **he will** become "a vessel for honor" . . .

p. 261

Fee then says:

A very common interpretation of the ambiguous *apo toutōn* (lit., “from these,” which the NIV translates **from the latter**) is that Timothy is to “sternly separate himself from teachers like Philetus and Hymenaeus” (Kelly; so most commentaries), which Kelly calls “the obvious exegesis” (p. 188). Though there may be good reason to look at it this way, the context seems to demand “false teachings” as the emphasis more than the “false teachers” themselves. The imperatives in both vv. 14 and 16 have to do with the teachings, as does the **wickedness** (or “evil”) in v. 19b. So also do the imperatives in the paragraph that follow, and in this instance Timothy is even to try to “instruct” his opponents in hopes of winning them back—which is especially difficult if v. 21 is seen as a kind of excommunication of them.

p. 262

Griffiths raises the question:

Are there influences and uncleannesses in our lives which defile us and prevent our being useful? In the old Rwanda revival Christians were thought of as each holding a water pot: the Lord wants to fill them with the water of life, but cannot or will not do so if they are defiled by sin, anger, self-pity, or impurity. Timothy must cleanse himself and his hearers. Then they will be holy, useful and ready for use—clean instruments, sterilized from all sin, whom the Lord can use.

p. 192

Gaebelein says:

By purging himself from all those who are unto dishonor, the servant of God shall be unto honor, sanctified and prepared for every good work. For this separation from evil is not merely negative; it is the effect of the realization of the word of God in the heart. I then understand what the holiness of God is, His rights over my heart, the incompatibility of His nature with evil. I feel that I dwell in Him and He in me; that Christ must be honored at all costs; that that which is like Him alone honors Him; that His nature and His rights over me are the only rule of my life. That which thus separates me unto Him, and according to what He is, separates me thereby from evil. One cannot walk with those who dishonor Him, and, at the same time, honor Him in one's own walk.

pp. 191-2

Stott says:

It would be difficult to exaggerate the privilege which the apostle here sets before Timothy in verse 21. Indeed he extends it to any and every Christian minister or worker who will fulfil the condition, for his statement is couched in quite general terms: 'if anyone purifies himself'. The privilege is described by simple, yet beautiful expressions. 'He will be a vessel for noble use.' This is then elaborated by three further expressions: 'consecrated' (permanently set apart), 'useful (or 'serviceable') to the master of the house' and 'ready for any good work'. No higher honour could be imagined than to be an instrument in the hand of Jesus Christ, to be at his disposal for the furtherance of his purposes, to be available whenever wanted for his service.

p. 72

He continues:

To purify ourselves 'from these' is essentially to purge their falsehood from our minds and their wickedness from our hearts and lives. Purity, then—purity of doctrine and purity of life—is the essential condition of being serviceable to Christ.

That this is the correct interpretation is confirmed by the fact that the metaphor of the great house and its vessels (verses 20 and 21) is sandwiched in between two clear allusions to personal holiness: 'Let every one who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity' (19) and 'So shun youthful passions and aim at righteousness . . .' (22).

p. 73

Lenski says:

Still another predicative participle enriches Paul's meaning: "having been (and thus remaining) prepared and ready for every good work."

p. 810

Matthew Henry says:

Now we should see to it that we be vessels of honour: sanctified for our Master's use. Every vessel must be fit for its Master's use; everyone in the church whom God approves must be devoted to his Master's service and meet for his use.

p. 1896

J. Vernon McGee says:

In these verses a believer is pictured as a vessel. If a vessel is to be usable, it must be clean. For example, imagine you are walking across a desert, and you come to an oasis. You are parched and almost dying of thirst. You find two cups there. One is made of gold and highly ornamented, but it's dirty. The other is an old crock cup. It will just barely hold water because it is cracked, but it is clean. Which one would you use? Now give God credit for having as much intelligence as you have. He too uses clean vessels; He does not use dirty vessels. Remember in the second chapter of John's gospel we read of the Lord Jesus making wine at a wedding. He had the servants drag out the old beat-up crocks (which the Jews used for purification) and had them filled with water. He took those old unattractive crocks and used them for His glory. And today God is looking for clean vessels to use—not beautiful, but *clean*.

p. 468

Kelly says:

The meaning of **these** can only be 'these latter utensils', i.e. those for ignominious purposes.

p. 188

Demarest says:

What more could anyone desire? To be “*satisfied*” is to be set apart for God’s service. There is no greater calling than this. To be “*useful for the Master*” is the most noble expression of a basic human need. We can be an Onesiphorus to Jesus Himself! To be “*prepared for every good work*” is the mature product of a walk with Christ. Such is the joy and reward for vessels of honor.
p. 268

Larson says:

God can use only clean or holy vessels. This parallels the Jewish tradition of cleansing vessels for temple use or for religious ceremonies and holidays. God cannot bestow his glory upon anything evil or tainted. The Christian life demands unswerving obedience and allegiance to Christ. It places responsibility upon each believer to maintain a pure, unpolluted life. Such a person is **holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work**.
p. 288

Calvin says:

Here God declares openly how he desires to be served, by a good and holy life.
p. 143

Towner says:

Second, once cleansed the true believer is “set apart” (reserved for something special), which is what *made holy* means (compare Rom. 12:1). And God, *the master* of this household, determines such a one to be *useful* for service. In the final analysis, this instrument proves to be *prepared to do any good work*. That is, this Christian will be equipped to live a life in which genuine faith continually finds expression in tangible, visible ways . . .
p. 187

Barnes says:

The word “*these*” refers, here, to the persons represented by the vessels made to dishonour, as mentioned in the previous verse. The idea is, that if one would preserve himself from the corrupting influence of such men, he would be fitted to be a vessel of honour, or to be employed in the most useful and honourable service in the cause of his Master.
p. 228

Lock says:

. . . he is prepared for the tasks prepared for him, Eph 2:10 . . .
p. 101

A. T. Robertson, commenting on the phrase “HAVING BEEN PREPARED,” says that in the Greek this is a:

Perfect passive participle of *hetoimazō*, in a state of readiness, [it is an] old and common word, elsewhere by Paul only I Cor. 2:9 . . .
p. 621

1 Corinthians 2:9

but just as it is written, “Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has PREPARED for those who love Him.”

Barclay says:

No Christian should ever think of fitting himself for honour; every Christian must always think of himself as fitting himself for service.
p. 206

Guthrie says:

The *vessel unto honour* is carefully delineated in three ways. First, he is *sanctified*, i.e., set apart for a holy purpose. Secondly, he is *meet for the master's use* (*euchrēstos*, another word used elsewhere only by Paul). Both Mark and Onesimus are described by the same word as being useful to the apostle . . . yet the Christian's serviceableness to Christ here is of much greater importance. And, thirdly, he is *prepared unto every good work*, which lays the main emphasis upon readiness for any good work rather than on the good work itself.

pp. 152-3

Hughes says:

Cleansing your life will make you an honorable vessel with great usefulness. This is the exact opposite of the contemporary delusion that character is irrelevant! A holy inner life is essential to doing any good work in this life.

This calls for a conscious, willful cleansing—"If a man cleanses himself." But this is never, in Paul's thinking, something we do apart from grace (cf. Ephesians 2:8-10; Romans 11:6). Paul's advice elsewhere was, "Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Philippians 2:12, 13). God does it. And then by his grace we will do it.

p. 217

He says further:

Such people become golden, and their works match. Instead of being wood, hay, and straw, they are gold, silver, and precious stones (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:12). Far from their character being irrelevant, it is everything. What they are inside determines what they do.

p. 217

MacArthur says:

In verses 21-26, Paul sets forth nine characteristics that mark the faithful, godly believer who is the vessel of honor. He will have a cleansed life (v. 21a), a sanctified soul (v. 21b), be useful to God (v. 21c), be prepared for service (v. 21d), have a pure heart (v. 22), and have a discerning mind (v. 23), a gentle manner (v. 24), a humble spirit (v. 25a), and a compassionate attitude (vv. 25b-26).

p. 88

He says further:

These things refer to the vessels of dishonor mentioned in the previous verse, **from** which **a man** who is faithful **cleanses himself**. As noted, vessels of dishonor are defiled people in the church, and Paul's exhortation is therefore for godly believers to separate themselves from the fellowship of impure believers, who are not clean, not obedient, not submissive to the Lord, and not eager to serve.

Sin is contagious, and association with openly sinful and shameless people is morally and spiritually dangerous. "He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm" (Prov. 13:20).

p. 88

He continues:

. . . willing association with ungodly believers, vessels of dishonor, inevitably will cause some of their sin to infect you, whether you realize it or not. "Do not be deceived," Paul therefore warns; "Bad company corrupts good morals" (1 Cor. 15:33). Fellowship with defiled church members develops tolerance for their defilement.

p. 89

MacArthur says further:

Christians not only are **sanctified** by having a right relationship to God but also are being **sanctified** as they grow in fulfilling God's purpose of righteous living. That is the meaning of the term used here. "For this is the will of God, your sanctification," Paul declares; "that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality. . . . For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification" (1 Thess. 4:3, 7). The **sanctified** life is a life of purity, holiness, and godliness. It is **a vessel for honor**, worthy for the Lord to use. pp. 90-91

He says finally:

A vessel of honor to the Lord is **prepared for every good work**. *Hetoimazō* (**prepared**) carries the idea of willingness and eagerness as well as of readiness.
p. 92

WHAT A JOY AND FULFILLING EXPERIENCE TO BE THIS KIND OF VESSEL, **"USEFUL TO THE MASTER!"**

GOD NEEDS YOU!

Someone once asked **Francis of Assisi** how he was able to accomplish so much. He replied, "This may be why: The Lord looked down from Heaven and said, 'Where can I find the weakest, littlest man on earth?' Then He saw me and said, 'I've found him. I will work through him, and he won't be proud of it. He'll see that I am only using him because of his insignificance.'"

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Satan is quite content for us to make any number of beginnings as long as we never complete anything.

—SAINT FRANCIS OF SALES (1567-1622)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

There is no heaven with a little of hell in it—no plan to retain this or that of the devil in our hearts or our pockets. Our Satan must go, every hair and feather!

—GEORGE MACDONALD (1824-1905)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

(Great Souls at Prayer: Fourteen Centuries of Prayer, Praise and Aspiration
by Mary W. Tileston) New Canaan, CT: Keats Publishing, Inc.
Copyright – unknown, 1983.

O Thou most sweet and loving Lord, Thou knowest mine infirmities, and the necessities which I endure; in how great evils and sins I am involved; how often I am weighed down, tempted, and disturbed by them. I entreat of Thee consolation and support. I speak to Thee Who knowest all things, to Whom all my inward thoughts are open, and Who alone canst perfectly comfort and help me. Thou knowest what things I stand in most need of. Behold, I stand before Thee poor and naked, calling for grace, and imploring mercy. Refresh Thy hungry suppliant, kindle my coldness with the fire of Thy love, enlighten my blindness with the brightness of Thy presence. Suffer me not to go away from Thee hungry and dry, but deal mercifully with me, as oftentimes Thou hast dealt wonderfully with Thy saints—Amen.

Thomas à Kempis.

p. 166

Spurgeon says:

On the vessel to honour you can see *the hall mark*. What is the hall mark which denotes the purity of the Lord's golden vessels? Well, He has only one stamp for everything. When He laid the foundation what was the seal He put upon it? "The Lord knoweth them that are His, and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from all iniquity." That was God's seal, the impress of the great King upon the foundation-stone. Do we find it here? Yes, we do.

p. 873

Spurgeon says further:

One very dear to me has put the story into rhythm.

“Oh, that I were a cup, a golden cup
Meet for the Master’s use!
Brimming and trembling with that draught of joy
(The love of His belov’d and purchas’d ones)
Which fills His heart with gladness.’

So spake a poor, vile, broken, earthly thing,
A worthless castaway.
The Master heard, and when He passed that way
He stoop’d and touch’d it with his *wounded* hand—
When lo! its baseness vanish’d, and instead
There stood a *goldlen* chalice wondrous fair,
And overflowing with deep love for Him.
He raised it to His gracious lips, and quaffed
‘The wine that maketh glad the heart of God,’
Then took the cup to heaven.”

p. 873

2 Corinthians 4:7

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves;

v. 22 Now be fleeing from the passions of youth, but pursuing after righteousness, faith, love, peace in company with those who are calling upon the Lord out of a pure heart.

Verse 22 is the **KEY VERSE** to Step #7:

SATANIC SEDUCTION: I AM KEEPING MY EYES ON JESUS.

There are going to be **THREE COMMANDS** in these next two verses that form a critical battle plan for victory in the face of satanic seduction. You have the **TWO COMMANDS** in verse 22:

1. **“BE FLEEING”** and
2. **“BE PURSUING.”**

In verse 23 we will have the **COMMAND**:

3. **“BE AVOIDING.”**

The emphasis upon the **“vessel”** in verse 21 was upon the **EXTERNAL**.

The emphasis, here in verse 22, is upon the **INTERNAL**.

There is a **NEGATIVE** and a **POSITIVE COMMAND** in verse 22:

NEGATIVE—“BE FLEEING FROM THE PASSIONS OF YOUTH”

POSITIVE—“BE PURSUING AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS, FAITH, LOVE, PEACE IN COMPANY WITH THOSE WHO ARE CALLING UPON THE LORD OUT OF A PURE HEART.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Timothy was still a young man (cf. 1 Tim. 4:12), and even though he was probably mature beyond his years, he might have still displayed some of the characteristics and passions of the young: impatience, intolerance, love of argument, self-assertion, partiality. Timothy was to **flee the evil desires of youth** (probably Paul did not have sexual passions in mind here, at least not primarily), **and pursue** the opposite virtues: **righteousness, faith, love . . . and peace.**
p. 755

Just as **JOSEPH FLED FROM POTIPHAR'S HOUSE** and would have nothing to do with his wife, so Paul is making a plea that Timothy be one who flees:

"THE PASSIONS OF YOUTH."

1 Timothy 6:11, 12 (version unknown)

But as for you, oh man of God, be fleeing these things, but be going after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and confess the good confession before many witnesses.

Whereas, the **NEGATIVE COMMAND** is to:

"BE FLEEING FROM THE PASSIONS OF YOUTH."

The **POSITIVE COMMAND** is to be "PURSUING AFTER" **FOUR THINGS:**

1. **"RIGHTEOUSNESS,"**
2. **"FAITH,"**
3. **"LOVE,"** and
4. **"PEACE IN COMPANY WITH THOSE WHO ARE CALLING UPON THE LORD OUT OF A PURE HEART."**

Knight says of these words:

δικαιοσύνη means generally “righteousness, uprightness.” This virtue, as all Christian virtues, is brought about by the transforming work of Christ . . . which is accomplished in Christians by the Holy Spirit . . . Paul indicates later in this letter that all scripture is profitable “for training in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:17) and thereby sets up scripture as the standard of righteousness.
p. 421

He then says of the word “FAITH”:

. . .when used in a list of virtues, means either “faithfulness,” i.e., “reliability,” or “faith,” i.e., “trust” in God.
p. 421

He then says of “PEACE”:

. . . in the NT and Paul denotes tranquility, harmony, and stability. In particular, the peace brought by Christ enables Christians to live at peace and to continually pursue that which makes for peace with one another . . .
p. 421

He comments further on the phrase:

. . . “out of a pure heart,” [that is] one cleansed from sin, seems to be added to designate those who call upon the Lord, [that is] confess the Lord, in reality and who have changed lives (v. 19), reiterating the idea of cleansing (v. 21).
p. 422

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says about the “PURE HEART”:

While Timothy must oppose the false teachers, he was to be at peace with his brethren who were honest before God. The clear implication is that the false teachers were dishonest before God . . .

p. 755

Lea & Griffin say:

With the dangerous false teaching Paul had described, there were some specific actions Timothy needed to take. Negatively, he was to avoid certain traits and action (vv. 22-23). Positively, he was to try to rescue false teachers from their involvement with error (vv. 24-26).

p. 219

They say further about the “PASSIONS OF YOUTH”:

In this context the “evil desires of youth” are not so much a reference to sensual allurements as to expressions of youthful immaturity. Hotheaded answers and extended discussions of trivia can hinder effectiveness, not only for youthful disciples but for those of all ages. Young men can be characterized by partiality, intolerance, half-heartedness, and unwarranted self-assertion. These were the qualities Timothy was to avoid.

p. 219

Milne says something similar:

These include such intensities as anger, impatience, impetuosity, rebellion, aggression, lust, vanity, self-centredness, self-will, obstinacy. Youth is the time when the natural passions are most strong, hence the need for a firm stand against them.

p. 156

Milne then says further:

If the battle against evil desires is to be pursued successfully, then individual believers must join with their brothers and sisters in the Christian community, where together they can work out and work at their common salvation. The urge to excessive privacy and individualism must be resisted, and fellowship with fellow-Christians on a regular basis must be established. But not any church gathering will do, only one where the members call on the Lord out of a pure heart.
pp. 156-7

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown rightly observe:

There are many lusts from which our greatest safety is in *flight* (Gen. 39:12). Avoid occasions of sin.
p. 1378

Quinn & Wacker paraphrase the first command in verse 22:

Shun juvenile desires.
p. 667

This is part and partial of the process involved in carrying out the first phrase in verse 21:

“If therefore a person cleanse himself from these.”

Quinn & Wacker paraphrase verse 21:

So if a person will only purge himself of that drivel, he will be a utensil for a noble purpose—hallowed, useful to the master, ready for any excellent deed.

p. 694

Here is their complete paraphrase of verse 22:

Shun juvenile desires. Rather pursue upright conduct, faithfulness, charity, peace, in company with those who invoke the Lord from a clean heart.

p. 696

Wiersbe says:

God's grace enables us to overcome our three great enemies: the world (v. 4), the flesh (v. 22), and the devil (v. 26).

p. 803

Lange raises the question:

Would Timothy be a vessel unto honor, then he must not only purify himself from the corruption *without* (i.e., outside of) him, but must do battle also *inwardly* with that which was impure within him. In this way this exhortation hangs together with the foregoing context, without any violence.

p. 100

Liefeld says:

The word "pure" has the same root as "cleanse" in verse 21. The "heart" is, as throughout Scripture, the inner person, which is dedicated either to good or to evil.

p. 261

Wilson says:

As Timothy was still a young man [see *1 Tim* 4.12], Paul bids him flee from all youthful desires (e.g. impatience, conceit, dogmatism, contentiousness, as well as sexual lust) which are inconsistent with the positive virtues he must pursue, namely, righteousness, faith, love, and peace. For in so doing he will keep company with those who 'call on the Lord out of a pure heart', which clearly implies that the pastor must not be less holy than his flock! The exhortation thus shows that character is more important than charisma.
p. 147

Hendriksen says:

Such sinful desires, as the footnote also proves, can be classified more or less after the manner of modern psychology (though here these yearnings would hardly be called *sinful*), as follows:

- (1) *Pleasure*, etc., the inordinate craving for the satisfaction of the physical appetites: the "lust" for food and drink, pleasure-madness, uncontrolled sexual desire . . .
- (2) *Power*, etc., the ungoverned passion to be Number 1, the lust to "shine" or be dominant. This results in envy, quarrelsomeness, etc. The sinful tendency is included prominently in such references as Gal. 5:16, 24; II Peter 2:10, 18; Jude 16, 18.
- (3) *Possessions*, etc., uncontrolled yearning for material possessions and for the "glory" that goes with them . . .

Objectively speaking, Christ triumphed over the first when in the first temptation he said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:1-4); over the second, when in the second temptation he refused to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple (Matt. 4:5-7); and over the third, when in the third temptation he refused to receive as a gift out of Satan's hand "the kingdoms of the world and their glory" (Matt. 4:8-10). As a result of his triumph he in a far more glorious sense received from his heavenly Father the very things with which the devil had tempted him.

pp. 272-3

Hendriksen also makes this very important observation:

Grammatically it is also possible to interpret Paul's words as meaning no more than this: "Timothy, continue to do exactly as you have always been doing. Keep on in your present course, fleeing away from the desires of youth and pursuing righteousness, faith, love, peace," etc. But, though the tense used in the original *permits* this interpretation, it does not *require* it. It is, moreover, in line with Paul's very practical bent of mind to assume that these crisp commands bear some reference to reality, and were warnings that were actually needed, yes needed even by Timothy because of certain character-weaknesses, however unpronounced they may have been. In our desire to do full justice to the beauty of Timothy's character, let us not equip him with wings!

p. 273

Lenski says:

The very tense of these two imperatives answers such as interpretation. "Keep on fleeing youthful lusts" means that Timothy has ever been doing this very thing; "keep on pursuing righteousness," etc., points to the same continuance. The two also ever go together and signify: "Ever keep on in the true and blessed course you have followed all these years!"

p. 812

MacArthur says:

This verse presents five characteristics of a **pure heart**, which itself is a fifth characteristic of an honorable vessel for the Lord. This verse is almost identical to the apostle's admonition in his previous letter to Timothy: "Flee from these things, you man of God; and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness" (1 Tim. 6:11).

p. 92

Hughes says:

... “Flee youthful desires!” (literal Greek translation). Run, and keep on running, Timothy. Do not get sucked into fruitless controversy by your detractors. Do not allow yourself to succumb to impatience and harshness. It is so important to remain a vessel for noble purposes.
p. 218

He then says further:

The picture created by Paul’s contrasting commands of “flee” and “follow” (KJV) is dynamic. Timothy was to flee as fast as his feet would carry him away from the headstrong desires of youth (impatience, harshness, the love of debate). At the same time he was to sprint, arms stretched out, after righteous conduct, faith (trust), love for others, and peace.

Such divinely ordered flight and pursuit would insure the maintenance of his life as a vessel for honor.
p. 219

Guthrie says:

The secret is to be found in the concluding words, *out of a pure heart* . . . for peace and purity are never far apart.
p. 153

Stott says:

So, then, putting back together these two parts of Paul’s exhortation which we have studied in separation, we are both to run away from spiritual danger and to run after spiritual good, both to flee from the one in order to escape it and to pursue the other in order to attain it. This double duty of Christians—negative and positive—is the consistent, reiterated teaching of Scripture. Thus, we are to deny ourselves and to follow Christ. We are to put off what belongs to our old life and to put on what belongs to our new life. We are to put to death our earthly members and to set our minds on heavenly things. We are to crucify the flesh and to walk in the Spirit. It is the ruthless rejection of the one in combination with the relentless pursuit of the other which Scripture enjoins upon us as the secret of holiness.
p. 75

Fee says:

The commands introducing this section flow directly from the application of the analogy of verses 20-21, but all the time in the context of the concerns that began in verse 14. In “cleansing himself from these things” (v. 21), Timothy is again urged to avoid the foolish arguments of the false teachers, which only lead to quarrels. On the contrary—and this is a new theme—he is to try to rescue people from their entrapment by error.
p. 263

He then says still further:

Perhaps, too, as with verse 19, it is a word of encouragement to Timothy by reminding him that now all “have bowed the knee to Baal.”
p. 264

Barclay rightly observes:

The Christian must never seek to live alone, detached and aloof from his fellow men. He must find his strength, his joy, his support in the Christian fellowship. As John Wesley said: “A man must have friends or make friends; for no one ever went to heaven alone.”
p. 207

Towner says:

Verse 22 resumes the portrait of God’s worker, which began at verse 15, by introducing another basic but sweeping area of contrast—lifestyle. “Godliness” does not occur in this listing of the virtues that mark genuine Christianity . . . But it is godliness, the visible life that proceeds from true faith, that Paul describes here . . . As in 1 Timothy 6:11, the demands of God (v. 21) and the presence of spiritual impostors make pursuit of this life something of an emergency.
p. 187

Towner then says:

Paul excludes them from God's people with the phrase *out of a pure heart*. This term designates genuine believers, who have been cleansed from sin . . . God has claimed them, and they desire the life that pleases him.
p. 188

Larson says:

The bottom line is that each person chooses whether he will be fit for God's use. This sobering thought brought Paul to this urgent plea: **Flee the evil desires of youth**.
p. 288

He then says:

Fleeing provides only half the equation, however. As we flee from evil, we must **pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace**. Christianity does not consist merely of prohibitions, but of positive and powerful actions.
p. 288

Demarest says:

Timothy must have been thirty-six or thirty-seven years old at this point, hardly a young man just getting in touch with his sexual feelings. Youthful lusts can also be selfish ambition, undue focus upon one's self, stubbornness, arrogance, and the like. None of these are confined to youth, but they are the central issues of maturing.
p. 268

FLEE TEMPTATION!

In his book *Three Steps Forward Two Steps Back*, Charles Swindoll wrote, “Do not try to co-exist peacefully with temptation . . . If you are weakened by certain kinds of music, you are playing into the hands of Satan himself to listen to it. If you’re weakened by certain . . . pictures that bring before your eyes things that build desires within you that you can’t handle, then you’re not counteracting sin and temptation. You’re tolerating it. You’re fertilizing it. You’re prompting it. If the newsstand is something you can’t handle, stay away from it! Quit clucking your tongue and shaking your head as you linger over the pages. If you’re weakened by relationships with certain people, abstain from them . . . There’s a word for those folks who linger and try to reason with lust: victim.”

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

TEMPTING THOUGHTS

A young man was discussing his personal life with his pastor. The wise preacher listened to his mild list of supposed sins and felt that the young fellow had not been completely honest. “Are you sure that’s all?” he asked. “Yes, pastor,” said the boy. “Are you positive you haven’t been entertaining any impure thoughts lately?” the pastor continued. “Oh, no,” the youth replied, “but they’ve sure been entertaining me!”

Now, temptation is not sin. For it to develop into sin, we have to welcome it, to dwell on it, and to enjoy it.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

A ROSE IS A ROSE

The teacher of a sex education class used a rose as a powerful object lesson. To the boys in the class she said, “This rose represents a girl, and every time you have sex with her you’re taking away part of her.”

She passed the rose to each boy in turn and had him pull off one petal of the flower. Then she handed the bare stem to the last boy and said, “This is your wife.”

Citizen, Oct 21, 1991. Page 7.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

A WINNING COMBINATION

J. Allan Petersen writes: “Two little girls were cutting through a field on their way to school. An angry bull began to chase them. One girl screamed in fright, ‘Let’s stop here and pray that God will protect us!’ The other girl, a bit wiser, said, ‘No, let’s run and pray.’

“So it is with conquering temptation: your feet and God’s strength.”
[New Man, Jul/Aug 1995. Page 52.]

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

For a thing to be satanic does not mean that it is abominable and immoral; the satanically-managed man is absolutely self-governed and has no need of God.

—OSWALD CHAMBERS (1874-1917)

I believe Satan to exist for two reasons: first, the Bible says so; and second, I’ve done business with him.

—DWIGHT LYMAN MOODY (1837-1899)

Satan must be the most frustrated personality in the universe! His army of demons is compelled to obey Jesus, and whatever the devil does to discourage a Christian, God can use for the Christian’s benefit.

—BILLY GRAHAM (1918-)

Satan wastes no ammunitions on those who are dead in trespasses and sins.

—CORRIE TEN BOOM (1892-1983)

The devil never sleeps, and your flesh is very much alive. Prepare yourself for battle. Surrounding you are enemies that never rest.

—THOMAS Á KEMPIS (C. 1380-1471)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

SWIMMING WITH SHARKS

A crewman on a south Seas fishing vessel found himself in the kind of situation no one ever wants to be—swimming with sharks!

He was hired to process fish, but the cantankerous captain didn't think he was working fast enough. One day a school of sharks was following the boat, and in an outburst of anger the captain ordered his slow-working crewman thrown overboard! The hapless fellow swam as fast as he could, caught up with the ship, and was pulled on board.

This reminds me of a danger that we face as believers. Once in a while, we may find ourselves unexpectedly thrown into a situation where the ungodly are “swimming” all around us—at a business convention, at a party, in a dormitory, or even in the workplace—and temptation seems overwhelming. We are in real danger. In a spiritual sense, we're “swimming with the sharks.”

When that happens, our best option is to “flee” temptation and choose to do what is right (2 Tim. 2:22). That may mean physically leaving a place or situation as fast as possible (Gen. 39:12). In any case, we need to reach out to God, calling on Him for help and protection—so we don't become shark food.

—DCE

*The house of sin is brightly lit,
The door is open wide;
When voices urge you, “Come on in,”
Their call must be denied.—DCE*

**IF YOU FLEE FROM SIN,
YOU WON'T FALL INTO IT.**

(From Our Daily Bread, Friday, July 9, 1999)

THE FATAL FIRST STEP

Alypius, a fourth-century music theorist, was often urged by his neighbors to watch the gladiators in combat. He refused because he abhorred the brutality of those barbaric contests.

One day, however, he was coerced to attend. Determined not to witness the glory spectacle. Alypius kept his eyes tightly closed. But a piercing cry prompted him to peek just as one of the fighters received a fatal wound. Author J. N. Norton comments, “[Alypius] finer sensibilities were blunted, and he joined in the shouts and exclamations of the noisy mob about him. From that moment he was a changed man—changed for the worse; not only attending such sports himself, but urging others to do likewise.”

Even though Alypius had entered the arena against his will, his exposure to evil shows what can happen to the best of people when they get one small taste of destructive pleasure. Before they realize it, they become enslaved.

The apostle Paul told Timothy to flee from evil (2 Tim. 2:22), to nip it in the bud. He knew that replacing evil desires by pursuing the righteous things of God is the best way to stay out of trouble.

The step that's worst is often that fatal first! —RWD

*We can't afford to play with fire
Or tempt a serpent's bite,
Nor can we ever think that sin
Will bring us true delight.—Anon.*

**GIVE SIN AN INCH
AND IT WILL TAKE A MILE.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Friday, December 12, 1997)

The **SEVENTH STEP** to a fantastic finish is:

SATANIC SEDUCTION: I AM KEEPING MY EYES OF JESUS.

The **DICTIONARY** defines the word **“SEDUCTION”** as:

seduction

1. **leading astray of somebody:** the act of persuading somebody to do something wrong . . .
2. **luring of somebody into sex:** the act of persuading somebody to have sex, especially by using a romantic or deceptive approach.
3. **tempting thing:** something that tempts, persuades, or attracts

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OTHER WORDS that would communicate this thought are:

ALLUREMENT,

TEMPTATION,

BAIT,

DECOY,

SIREN SONG,

INDUCEMENT,

FASCINATION,

APPEAL, and

ATTRACTIVENESS.

SATAN IS A MASTER AT THIS ART!

Revelation 12:9

And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Just as he seduced Eve in the garden, so he is constantly looking for opportunities to exercise his art with each of us.

2 Corinthians 2:11

in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

2 Corinthians 11:3

But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds.

Ephesians 4:26, 27

Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity.

HINDERED BY SATAN

John Dorsey describes the devil's tactics in the following poetic words:

"I had a battle fierce today
 Within my place of prayer;
 I went to meet and talk with God,
 But I found Satan there.
 He whispered, 'You can't really pray,
 You lost out long ago;
 You might say words while on your knees,
 But you can't pray, you know.'
 So then I pulled my helmet down,
 Way down upon my ears,
 And found it helped to still his voice
 And helped allay my fears,
 I checked my other armor o'er;
 My feet in peace were shod;
 My loins with truth were girded 'round;
 My sword the Word of God.
 My righteous breastplate still was on,
 My heart's love to protect.
 My shield of faith was all intact—
 His fiery darts bounced back.
 I called on God in Jesus' name,
 I pled the precious blood—
 While Satan sneaked away in shame,
 I met and talked with God!"

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Lovers

The nearly right
And yet not quite
In love is wholly evil
And every heart
That loves in part
Is mortgaged to the devil.

Stevie Smith (1902-1971), British poet and novelist.
Collected Poems "To the Tune of the Coventry Carol" (1975).

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Idleness

For Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748), English Nonconformist theologian and hymn writer.
Divine Songs for Children "Against Idleness and Mischief" (1715).

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Civilization

It is so stupid to modern civilization to have given up believing in the devil
when he is the only explanation of it.

Ronald Knox (1888-1957), British priest and writer.
Let Dons Delight (1939).

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Temptation

Many a dangerous temptation comes to us in fine gay colours that are but skin-deep.

Matthew Henry (1662-1714), British nonconformist minister.
An Exposition on the Old and New Testament (1710).

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Sexes

Why are women . . . so much more interesting to men than men are to women?

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), British novelist, critic, and feminist.
A Room of One's Own (1929).

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Adultery

Lady, lady, should you meet,
 One whose ways are all discreet,
 One who murmurs that his wife
 Is the lodestar of his life,
 One who keeps assuring you
 That he never was untrue,
 Never loved another one . . .
 Lady, lady, better run!

Dorothy Parker (1893-1967), U. S. writer and wit.
Enough Rope "Social Note" (1926).

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Betrayal

Is there, in human-form, that bears a heart
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?

Robert Burns (1759-1796), Scottish poet and songwriter.
"The Cotter's Saturday Night" (1786).

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Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, tells them of their former condition in:

Ephesians 2:1-3

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

He then tells us what we need to do in light of this fact:

Ephesians 6:10-13

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

Bill Cosby, speaking to graduates, says in:

(Congratulations! Now What?: A Book for Graduates by Bill Cosby)
New York, NY: Hyperion. Copyright – William H. Cosby, Jr., 1999.

In the words of General Custer when he spotted five thousand Sioux:
What *now*?
p. 7

(Great Souls at Prayer: Fourteen Centuries of Prayer, Praise and Aspiration
by Mary W. Tileston) New Canaan, CT: Keats Publishing, Inc.
Copyright – unknown, 1983.

O Merciful Lord, enlighten Thou me with a clear shining inward
light, and remove away all darkness from the habitation of my heart.
Repress Thou my many wandering thoughts, and break in pieces those
temptations which violently assault me. . . .

Thomas à Kempis.

p. 188

(The Perfect Christian: How Sinners Like Us Can Be More Like Jesus by
Tony Evans) Nashville, TN: Word. Copyright – Tony Evans, 1998.

The devil is smart. As I said before, he doesn't waste his time
tempting you and me in areas where we are not vulnerable. He is a student
of our lives. He has a game film on us, and he studies it like a football coach
who watches hours of film on his next opponent so he knows his opponent's
habits, tendencies, and preferences.

Satan's film on your life goes all the way back to your unsaved days.
He and his demons have studied that tape so long that they know what you
like to do, what you like to think about, the places you like to go, and the
people you like to hang out with.

Knowing all of this, the devil's strategy is to put before you
circumstances and people that will bring out the sinful tendencies you have.
So when you see how the devil has lined up against you, what you need to do
is draw on the power of Jesus Christ and call a new counter play at the line of
scrimmage—what is termed in football an audible. You change the play so
that the devil's knowledge of your tendencies and weak spots does not give
him the power to control your thoughts and actions.

p. 159

(Devotional Classics: Selected Readings for Individuals & Groups edited by Richard J. Foster & James Bryan Smith) San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins. Copyright - RENOVARÉ, Inc., 1990, 1991, 1993.

All of the saints passed through times of temptation and tribulation, and they used them to make progress in the spiritual life. Those who did not deal with temptations successfully fell to the wayside.

—Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471)

p. 185

Temptation reveals our instability and our lack of trust in God; temptations reveal who we are. This is why we must pay attention to them.

—Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471)

p. 185

(Made Perfect in Weakness: The Amazing Things God Can Do With Failure by Gary J. Oliver) Colorado Springs, CO: Chariot Victor Publishing / Cook Communications. Copyright - Gary J. Oliver, 1995.

I recently came across a humorous “CATHY” cartoon strip that illustrates what can happen when we don’t immediately take every thought captive. Once again Cathy is struggling with her diet. Once again she has good intentions.

Frame 1: I will take a drive but won’t go near the grocery store.

Frame 2: I will drive by the grocery store but will not go in.

Frame 3: I will go in the grocery store but will not walk down the aisle where the Halloween candy is on sale.

Frame 4: I will look at the candy but not pick it up.

Frame 5: I will pick it up but not buy it.

Frame 6: I will buy it but not open it.

Frame 7: Open it but not smell it.

Frame 8: Smell it but not taste it.

Frame 9: Taste it but not eat it.

Frame 10: Eat, Eat, Eat, Eat, Eat!⁶

6. From “CATHY” cartoon by Cathy Guisewite. Used with permission of Universal Press Syndicate.

p. 40

(The Seeking Heart: Volume 4: The Library of Spiritual Classics by Fenelon)
Auburn, MA: The SeedSowers Christian Book Publishing House.
Copyright -Christian Books Publishing House, MCMXCII.

On the other hand, Christianity is not found in a multitude of rules, nor in holding yourself back from every pleasure. Just yield yourself to God without reserve. Live in the present moment. Let God do what He sees fit without resisting Him, and agree with God without trying to justify what you want to do. Temptation is a necessary part of a Christian's life. Don't be upset by even the most shameful temptation. Look at God and dwell continually in His presence—He will keep your feet from falling.
p. 142

(Quote Unquote compiled by Lloyd Cory) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books / SP Publications, Inc. Copyright – SP Publications, Inc., 1977.

You are not tempted because you are evil; you are tempted because you are human. (FULTON J. SHEEN)

Temptation is not sin but playing with temptation invites sin. (J. C. MACAULAY)

The forces of temptation often attack a man's garrison of resolution by surprise, to win a quick victory and blow up the walls of fortification. (DOUGLAS MEADOR)

p. 330

There are several good protections against temptation, but the surest is cowardice. (MARK TWAIN)

What makes resisting temptation difficult for many people is they don't want to discourage it completely. (FRANKLIN P. JONES)

Most people who fly from temptation usually leave a forwarding address. (AUSTRALASIAN MANUFACTURER)

Nothing makes it easier to resist a temptation than a more attractive one. (QUOTE)

Many of the world's most attractive temptations are like some television commercials: frequently deceptive and frightfully costly. (WILLIAM A. WARD)

Temptation can cause us to succumb, sink, sin, or stand. (WILLIAM A. WARD)

Temptations discover what we are. (THOMAS À KEMPIS)

p. 331

(Inspiring Quotations compiled by Albert M. Wells, Jr.) Nashville, TN:
Thomas Nelson. Copyright - Albert M. Wells, Jr., 1988.

Morality, like art, consists in drawing the line somewhere.

—G. K. Chesterton

p. 135

Columnist Herb Caen wrote in the San Francisco Chronicle: “Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up. It knows it must run faster than the fastest lion or it will be killed. Every morning a lion wakes up. It knows it must outrun the slowest gazelle or it will starve to death. It doesn’t matter whether you are a lion or a gazelle; when the sun comes you, you’d better be running.”

Spurgeon wrote likewise: “If you are not seeking the Lord, the Devil is seeking you. If you are not seeking the Lord, judgment is at your heels.”

In the Christian life, it’s not enough simply to wake up. We are called to run, to become more like Christ, to press ahead in godliness.

—Bill Effler, San Mateo, CA

(From *Parson’s Technology*)

CAT AND MOUSE

A cat dies and goes to Heaven. God meets him at the gate and says, "You've been a good cat all of these years. Anything you desire is yours, all you have to do is ask."

The cat says, "Well, I lived all my life with a poor family on a farm and had to sleep on hardwood floors." God says, "Say no more." And instantly, a fluffy pillow appears. A few days later, 6 mice are killed in a tragic accident and they go to Heaven. God meets them at the gate with the same offer that He made the cat.

The mice said, "All our lives we've had to run. We've been chased by cats, dogs and even women with brooms. If we could only have a pair of roller skates, we wouldn't have to run anymore." God says, "Say no more." And instantly, each mouse is fitted with a beautiful pair of tiny roller skates.

About a week later, God decides to check and see how the cat is doing. The cat is sound asleep on his new pillow. God gently wakes him and asks, "How are you doing? Are you happy here?" The cat yawns and stretches and says, "Oh, I've never been happier in my life. And those Meals on Wheels you've been sending over are the best!"

(Received via e-mail from Treeta D. Mayfield, May 29, 2001)

(The Most Brilliant Thoughts of All Time: In Two Lines or Less edited by John M. Shanahan) New York, NY: HarperCollins. Copyright – John M. Shanahan, 1999.

All men are tempted. There is no man that lives that can't be broken down, provided it is the right temptation, put in the right spot.

Henry Ward Beecher, 1813-1887

p. 19

(How Now Shall We Live? by Charles Colson & Nancy Pearcey) Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House. Copyright – Charles Colson, 1999.

What I want to fix your attention on is the vast overall movement towards the discrediting, and finally the elimination of every kind of human excellence—moral, cultural, social, or intellectual. And is it not pretty to notice how “democracy” (in the incantatory sense) is now doing for us the work that was once done by the most ancient Dictatorships?

SCREWTAPE (a devil in C. S. Lewis’s *The Screwtape Letters*)

p. 331

Much of our present culture is described by **BUBBA** when he says:

(Bubba Speak: Texas Folk Sayings by W. C. Jameson) Plano, TX: Republic of Texas Press. Copyright - W. C. Jameson, 1998. 195 pp.

IMMORAL

His morals got a leak in ‘em somewhere

p. 81

(Faith Under Fire: Standing Strong When Satan Attacks by Steven J. Lawson)
Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books. Copyright - Steven J. Lawson, 1995.

Nowhere is this confrontation between Christ and Satan more vividly described or more strategically fought than in the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. Here was the original Desert Storm, a full-scale war waged 2,000 years ago. So important was this battle that it is recorded in three of the four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Here is the conflict of the ages!

The long-awaited, much-anticipated battle between the two superpowers—Jesus and Satan. One on one. Head to head. Face to face. Eye to eye. Jaw to Jaw. Digging in their heels. Engaging in all-out war. Squaring off in a winner-take-all clash.

There in the barren Judean desert, the archenemy of God, Satan, launched a surprise attack on the Son of God. With premeditated intent to destroy Christ's mission on the earth, the Adversary unloaded all the artillery of hell upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Holding back nothing, the Devil spent his entire war chest on this act of aggression.

Wave after wave of assault was fired by Satan against Christ. For forty days and nights an intense battle for the soul of Christ was waged. Blow after blow was struck in this intense spiritual war between opposing empires.

Satan sought to disqualify the Son of God from His mission as the Savior of the world. But Christ stood His ground, resolutely, responding to each temptation with an offensive aggression of His own.

Imagine yourself there on the scene! For forty long days Satan has been tempting Christ. And for the entire time the test has clearly revealed that Jesus is the sinless Son of God, living in constant, humble submission to the Father. He has not faltered once. Now these three final temptations, recorded by the gospel writers, bring the forty days to an end.

Like the battle between David and Goliath, this war in the wilderness was a representative battle. When David and the Philistine giant fought, each warrior represented his respective side in a winner-take-all brawl. Similarly, Christ and Satan squared off and locked horns in the Judean desert in a battle that affects every one of us. Christ's victory in the wilderness is the victory of all who put their trust in Him. And Satan's defeat means the defeat of all who follow him.

p. xii-xiii

(Faith Under Fire: Standing Strong When Satan Attacks by Steven J. Lawson)
Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books. Copyright - Steven J. Lawson, 1995.

Christ *knew* that Satan was no match for the invincible weapon—the *Word of God*. He *knew* that the Devil cannot stand up to the sovereign Spirit—the *Holy Spirit of God*. He *knew* that the Evil One can never penetrate the impregnable defense—the *full armor of God*. Jesus *knew* this. So confidently He stood up to the Devil.

This boldness should characterize the confidence with which we face temptation. “No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper” (Isaiah 54:17). God said that—I didn’t!
p. 184

(The Christian in Complete Armour by William Gurnall) Chicago, IL: Moody Press. Copyright - James S. Bell, Jr., 1994.

The farther along the road to success, the more crooks there are who will try to cheat you. And the closer the Christian gets to heaven, the more there are who will try to cheat his soul and steal his crown of glory if they can. Mark this well: You can never defend yourself alone against Satan; nor with Satan, against God. But align yourself with Christ, and you will be delivered from both self and Satan.
(March 20)

v. 23 But be avoiding foolish and stupid speculations knowing that they are giving birth to quarrels.

We now have here in verse 23 the **THIRD OF THREE COMMANDS** that Paul has given to Timothy to provide a game-plan for **AVOIDING SATANIC SEDUCTION**. We have:

1. verse 22—“be fleeing from the passions of youth,”
2. verse 22—“be pursuing after righteousness, faith, love peace in company with those who are calling upon the Lord out of a pure heart,” and
3. verse 23—“**BUT BE AVOIDING FOOLISH AND STUPID SPECULATIONS.**”

Ephesians 4:14

As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

Paul is telling Timothy to **AVOID** all the “**WHAT IF’S**” knowing that:

“THEY ARE GIVING BIRTH TO QUARRELS.”

Acts 17:11

Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so.

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

Paul is saying here that a lot of time can be wasted in speculating about spiritual things. Whenever you accept something by faith there is always an opportunity for speculation in many areas. When you have a difference of opinion on a given subject, of course, immediately you will have a quarrel on your hands.

James 3:14-18

But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Barclay says:

Once a leader is involved in senseless and unchristian controversy he has forfeited all right to lead.

p. 208

MacArthur says:

As we saw in the second chapter of the second letter, Paul admonishes the younger pastor to warn those under his care “not to wrangle about words, which is useless, and leads to the ruin of the hearers” and to “avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene” (2 Tim. 2:14-17).

The truth and purity of ideas that go into the mind are of the utmost importance. An automobile needs filters to trap harmful objects in the gasoline, oil, and air. If not filtered out, even small particles of dust or grime can cause an engine to lose power, stop running, and suffer permanent damage. In the same way, an accumulation of even seemingly insignificant moral and spiritual pollution can corrupt a Christian’s mind and heart, making him less and less effective and usable in the Lord’s work. The things we allow to enter our minds affect our thinking, our beliefs, our values, our motives, and our priorities. And the more willingly we allow them to enter, the more powerfully they affect us. The writer of Proverbs wisely observed that “a fool does not delight in understanding, but only in revealing his own mind,” and that “a fool’s lips bring strife, and his mouth calls for blows” (Prov. 18:2, 6).

p. 96

Quinn & Wacker translate the verse:

Steer clear, however, of foolish and undisciplined researches.

p. 668

Lea & Griffin say:

Timothy needed to cultivate a sense of what to avoid. Some questions were “foolish and stupid” (“silly and ill informed,” Phillips). The result of discussing them would be further quarrels and strife, and because of this result Paul directed Timothy to avoid even the discussion of the questions.

p. 220

Demarest says:

The reason we are to avoid arguments is stated simply: “*They generate strife.*” Strife is never the climate for communicating the love of God or developing human relationships.

p. 269

Larson comments:

These bogus leaders and their followers were motivated by selfishness. Such inner drives always degenerate into petty **quarrels** and divisiveness.

p. 289

A. T. Robertson, dealing with the word:

Ignorant (apaideutous). [is an] Old verbal, here only in [the] N.T. . . . Untrained, uneducated, “speculations of a half-educated mind” (Parry).

p. 621

J. Vernon McGee says:

Some folk are continually wanting to argue with me about nonessentials. I don’t have time for that. We are living in a world that is on fire! Let’s get the Word of God to it before it is too late.

p. 468

Matthew Henry says:

He cautions him against contention, and (v. 23) cautions him against *foolish and unlearned questions*, strifes of words. Those who advanced them thought themselves wise and learned; but Paul calls them foolish and unlearned.

p. 1896

THE POWER OF BELIEF

Neil Anderson writes: “Freedom from spiritual conflicts and bondage is not a power encounter; it’s a truth encounter. Satan is a deceiver, and he will work undercover at all costs, but the truth of God’s Word exposes him and his life.

“When I was a boy on the farm, my dad, my brother, and I would occasionally visit our neighbor’s farm. The neighbor had a yappy little dog that scared the socks off me. When it came barking around the corner, my dad and brother stood their ground, but I ran. Guess who the dog chased? I escaped to the top of our pickup truck while the little dog yapped at me from the ground.

“Everyone except me could see that the little dog had no power over me except what I gave it. Furthermore, it had no inherent power to throw me up on the pickup; it was my belief that put me there. That dog controlled me by using my mind, my will, my emotions, and my muscles, all of which were motivated by fear. Finally, I gathered up my courage, jumped off the pickup, and kicked a small rock at the mutt. Lo and behold, it ran!

“Satan is like that yappy little dog: deceiving people into fearing him more than God. His power is in the lie. He is the father of lies who deceives the whole world, and consequently the whole world is under the influence of the evil one. He can do nothing about your position in Christ, but if he can deceive you into believing his lies about you and God, you will spend a lot of time on top of the pickup truck! You don’t have to outshout him or outmuscle him to be free of his influence. You just have to ‘outtruth’ him. Believe, declare, and act upon the truth of God’s Word, and you will thwart Satan’s strategy.”

[The Bondage Breaker by Neil T. Anderson. Harvest House, 1990. Pages 22-23.]

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

“I wouldn’t say my wife is a poor housekeeper, but she doesn’t turn on the stove. She just lights the grease.”

Teenager: Can I call you back in 15 minutes? I can’t talk now, I’m in the middle of a tantrum.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Arguing is a game that two can play at. But it is a strange game in that neither opponent ever wins. —Benjamin Franklin

Religious contention is the Devil's harvest. —French proverb

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Satan is a chronic grumbler. The Christian ought to be a living doxology. —MARTIN LUTHER (1483-1546)

Satan uses the problems of this life to slander God's character; he tries to make us think that all the calamities and miseries and wrongs spring from God. —OSWALD CHAMBERS (1874-1917)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

Are You a Crab?

Charles L. Allen in *The Miracle of Love* writes of a fisherman friend who told him that one never needs a top for his crab basket. If one of the crabs starts to climb up the sides of the basket, the other crabs will reach up and pull it back down. Some people are a lot like crabs.

(From *Parson's Technology*)

STRATEGIES OF SATAN AND BELIEVERS

1. Annihilate the church or neutralize its witness from within (Acts 5:1-6).
2. Virulent persecution from without.
3. Smother its witness by according it great popularity.
4. Disturb the unity of the church by creating discord and division.
5. Subversion of the church throughout apostasy and heresy (2 Peter 2:1-2).

Satan is No Myth, J. O. Sanders, Moody, 1975, pp. 72ff

(Logos Library System)

v. 24 Now the servant of the Lord must not be quarrelsome but to be kind toward all, skillful in teaching, bearing evil without resentment.

Here the apostle describes for Timothy “THE SERVANT OF THE LORD” in a **NEGATIVE** and a **POSITIVE** way.

NEGATIVE:

“[he] **MUST NOT BE QUARRELSOME BUT**”

POSITIVELY he must be characterized in **FOUR WAYS**:

1. **“TO BE KIND TOWARD ALL,”**
2. **“SKILLFUL IN TEACHING,”**
3. **“BEARING EVIL WITHOUT RESENTMENT,”** and then
4. **“IN GENTLENESS CORRECTING THOSE WHO ARE OPPOSING”** (we will be considering this in verse 25).

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

False teaching will always be divisive, but **the Lord’s servant** should **not** be a fighter but a promoter of unity . . .
p. 755

A. T. Robertson, speaking of the opening phrase “NOW THE SERVANT OF THE LORD MUST NOT BE QUARRELSOME” or:

Must not strive . . . [says] Rather, “it is not necessary for him to fight” (in such verbal quibbles).
p. 621

Quinn & Wacker say, commenting on the phrase “NOW THE SERVANT OF THE LORD MUST NOT BE QUARRELSOME BUT TO BE KIND TOWARD ALL”:

gentle. *Ēpion* is a term that occurs only once otherwise in the NT, but there very significantly, for in 1 Thess 2:7 Paul says of himself, Silvanus, and Timothy that “as apostles of Christ we might have made demands on you, but we were gentle . . . among you, like a nurse, taking care of her children.”
p. 669

MacArthur says:

The effective **bond-servant** of the Lord is not concerned about justifying or vindicating himself but about serving the Lord without bitterness, vengeance, or anger, and with graciousness, kindness, and patience.
p. 99

Liefeld says:

The picture in the context is of meeting the opposition of aggressive, controversial people, absorbing the pain without losing one’s temper and lashing back at them.
p. 261

The Bible Knowledge Commentary, speaking of the final phrase “BEARING EVIL WITHOUT RESENTMENT,” says:

. . . lit., “ready to bear evil treatment without resentment”; [it is] used only here in the NT).
p. 755

Lange says:

. . . mild, gentle, benevolent, and affectionate, emphatically, towards *all*; not alone towards his associates in the faith, but towards those with whom he comes in contact.

p. 101

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

“The servant of the Lord” must imitate his master in not *striving contentiously*, though uncompromising in earnestly contending for the faith . . .

p. 1378

Knight observes:

He now immediately joins (δε) to that the forthright comment that “the Lord’s servant” himself must not be quarrelsome . . . Paul then moves by contrast . . . to three things that the Lord’s servant should be: “kind to all,” “able to teach,” and “patient when wronged.”

p. 423

He says further:

Although the Lord’s servant may not be able to be at peace with all (v. 22), he is still called on to be kind and gentle to all.

p. 424

Barnes says:

The meaning is, that the servant of Christ should be a man of peace. He should not indulge in the feelings which commonly give rise to contention, and which commonly characterize it. He should not struggle for mere victory, even when endeavouring to maintain truth; but should do this, in all cases, with a kind spirit, and a mild temper; with entire candour; with nothing designed to provoke and irritate an adversary; and so that, whatever may be the result of the discussion, “the bond of peace” may, if possible, be preserved;

...
p. 229

It is Calvin who says:

The more qualified a person is to teach, the more he shuns disputes and controversies. The speed at which some people become irritated leads Paul to say that the Lord’s servant should also be **not resentful**.

p. 145

“NOW THE SERVANT OF THE LORD MUST NOT BE QUARRELSOME BUT”:

1. **“TO BE KIND TOWARD ALL”**

It is important that we notice that this kindness is to be toward everyone. This is the servant of the Lord manifesting the fruit of the spirit.

2. **“SKILLFUL IN TEACHING”**

1 Timothy 4:6

In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.

1 Timothy 4:15, 16

Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

3. **“BEARING EVIL WITHOUT RESENTMENT”**

1 Thessalonians 5:15

See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men.

Romans 12:18-21

If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. “But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

1 Peter 2:20, 21

For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

Matthew 5:11, 12

“Blessed are you when men revile you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

STRONG—AND GENTLE

There was a time in my life when I enjoyed debating with people who represented religious cults. When they said that Jesus is not God or that another book has equal authority with the Bible, I had them read Scripture passages that proved them wrong. I felt a bit smug when I saw them eager to end the conversation. But I never led any of them to the Savior.

I may have won an argument, but that's all. I'm afraid they saw me as arrogant, not the gentle and humble man I should have been as a servant of the Lord (2 Tim. 2:24). I really don't blame them. I find myself annoyed when a know-it-all tries to force his views on me.

We are not to be weak, though, bending to the winds of error. We can be firm in our convictions without coming across with an I'm-better-than-you attitude. We can communicate the truth without beating the other person over the head with it.

By dealing gently with people who have been caught up in religious error, I have seen some of them come to know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. When we humbly try to correct those who are deceived, we open the door for God to lead them to repent and to acknowledge the truth. —HVL

What wisdom lies in gentleness!

What force true meekness holds!

As truth combines with Christlike love,

God's wondrous grace unfolds. —DJD

THE GOOD NEWS SHOULDN'T BE SHARED IN BAD TASTE.

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Tuesday, May 14, year unknown)

(Inspiring Quotations compiled by Albert M. Wells, Jr.) Nashville, TN:
Thomas Nelson. Copyright - Albert M. Wells, Jr., 1988.

But I will write of him who fights
And vanquishes his sins,
Who struggles on through weary years
Against himself and wins.

—Caroline Begelow LeRow

p. 177

The true test of character is not how much we know how to do, but how
we behave when we don't know what to do.

—John

Holt

p. 22

(God's Little Devotional Book by Honor Books, Inc.) Tulsa, OK: Honor Books,
Inc. Copyright - Honor Books, Inc., 1995.

In *Les Misérables*, Victor Hugo tells of Jean Valjean, whose only crime was the theft of a loaf of bread to feed his sister's starving children. Valjean served nineteen years for this crime before being turned out penniless on the streets. Hardened and unable to find work as a former convict, Valjean finally makes his way to the home of a good old bishop, who gives him supper and a bed for the night. He serves Valjean using his best silver platters and candlesticks, which Valjean recognizes as being highly valuable.

Yielding to temptation, Valjean steals the bishop's silver plates and slips away from the bishop's home, but is soon caught and returned by watchful police. When shown the silver plates, the bishop says to the apprehending policeman, "Why, I gave them to him." And then turning to the thief Valjean, he adds, "And Jean, you forgot to take the candlesticks." A shocked and eternally grateful Valjean accepts the candlesticks as more than valuable silver pieces, but as expressions of love beyond measure. The bishop's act brought about a true repentance and changed life.

p. 79

One commentator noted that you can tell what a man's relations with God are by looking at his relations with his fellow men. If a man is at variance with his fellow men, if he is a quarrelsome, competitive, argumentative trouble making creature, he may be a diligent church attender, he may even be a church office-bearer, but he is not a man of God. If a man is distant from his fellow man, it is good proof that he is distant from God; if he is divided from his fellow men, he is divided from God.

(From *Parson's Technology*)

v. 25 In gentleness correcting those who are opposing; If perhaps God may grant them repentance resulting in a knowledge of the truth.

“The servant of the Lord must not be quarrelsome but” he is to be:

1. “kind toward all,”
2. “skillful in teaching,”
3. “bearing evil without resentment,” and now
4. “IN GENTLENESS CORRECTING THOSE WHO ARE OPPOSING.”

This **CORRECTION** is to be done in **“GENTLENESS.”** Not to be done in **ANGER**, but rather to be done with soft words.

The **REASON** Paul makes the admonition to be doing this “IN GENTLENESS” (the goal and objective in mind) is that:

“PERHAPS GOD MAY GRANT THEM REPENTANCE RESULTING IN A KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH.”

What Paul is saying is that if this is done in the right way, there is hope that God may grant repentance to the opponents who are in error. As a result of their repentance they will be coming to a knowledge of the truth.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

. . . in the hope that God will grant them repentance (“a change of heart and conduct”) **leading them to a knowledge . . . of the truth.** The goal is always remedial, never punitive . . . The purpose must always be to edify Christ’s body, not tear it down . . .
p. 755

Calvin points out:

Paul says that it begins with **knowledge of the truth**, meaning that man's mind is blinded so long as he stubbornly holds out against God and his teaching. Illumination is followed by release from the devil's grip.

Unbelievers are so intoxicated by Satan that in their stupor they are unaware of their misery. But when God shines the light of his truth on us, he wakes us up out of our deadly sleep, breaks through the chains that bind us, and makes us obey him.

p. 145

Knight points out:

Two things are said simultaneously . . . The first is that "God . . . gives . . . repentance" . . . It is he who changes the heart and turns a person around (cf. Tit. 3:5). The second is that in the case of the "opponents" all that Paul can say is that God "may" . . . give them repentance.

p. 425

The word "MAY" is a WISH-PRAYER.

THIS PRAYER WILL BE ANSWERED IF TWO THINGS ARE TRUE:

1. **THE SERVANT OF THE LORD IS GENTLE IN HIS APPROACH** and
2. **THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS THERE IN CONVICTION TO GUIDE INTO TRUTH.**

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

. . . their minds being corrupted (ch. 3:8), and their lives immoral. The cause of the spiritual ignorance which prompts such "questions" is moral, having its seat in the *will*, not in the intellect (John 7:17). Therefore repentance is their first need.

p. 1378

MacArthur says:

The *prautēs* kind of **gentleness** reflects a spirit of humility that does not focus on self but on the Lord and on others in His name. It has nothing to do with impotence or shyness or weakness or cowardice. It is power supplied by, and willingly put under the control of, the Holy Spirit, in faithful submission to the Word and will of God. When one is truly meek, he talks not of himself but of his Lord.
p. 100

He says further:

Paul is not speaking of personal differences of opinion but of the **opposition** of disobedient believers. The **opposition** may pertain to “foolish and ignorant speculations” (v. 23) or to the more serious matters of doctrine or morals they lead to. Every minister encounters situations in the church that demand correction and sometimes rebuke.
p. 101

He says finally:

The motivation of such correction should be the sincere desire that **perhaps God may grant them repentance**. That is always the motivation of a humble and compassionate heart. Paul told the immature, worldly believers in Corinth, “I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us” (2 Cor. 7:9). Even when those who are corrected are resentful of us and unrepentant, as some in Corinth were in regard to Paul, there is never a place in godly correction for personal animosity or judgmental self-righteousness.
p. 101

Quinn & Wacker translate the verse:

considerate in correcting the unmanageable. Lit. “with considerateness . . . correcting . . . those who oppose . . .
p. 670

They complete the verse by saying:

just in case God may grant them a change of heart that will lead back into full knowledge of the truth.
p. 670

Larson says:

If a leader’s heart is pure, humbled before God’s grace, he can then **gently instruct** those who err, **in the hope that God will grant them repentance.** God’s earnest desire to draw all people into loving relationship with himself should motivate the pastor to deal kindly with those who oppose him.
p. 289

Demarest says:

Gentleness is the first step. More and more, I think of gentleness as a major mark of maturity. It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). My picture of gentleness is a large linebacker-like man holding a little baby, tenderly and securely. All of the man’s strength and power is focused on providing the baby with care, comfort, and security. I see gentleness as the quiet use of strength to bear up the other person. It is being sensitive to the feelings and needs of the other, acting to help and never to hurt.
p. 270

Lea & Griffin say:

The phrase “in the hope that” does not imply that God hesitates to give repentance but that human beings often refuse to accept it. Paul presented repentance as a gift given by God.

p. 221

Barclay says:

There may be greater sins than touchiness, but there is none which does greater damage in the Christian Church. He must discipline his opponents in *gentleness*; his hand must be like the hand of a surgeon, unerring to find the diseased spot, yet never for a moment causing unnecessary pain. He must melt the frigidity of opposition with the warmth of love. He must love men, not batter men, into submission to the truth.

p. 208

Milne says:

His secret prayer will continue to be that the Lord will work through his efforts to give them the needed repentance, causing them to know the truth for themselves in a life-transforming way.

p. 158

Hawthorne & Martin say:

Such opponents of true teaching still need “repentance so that they may come to know the truth” (2 Tim. 2:25), that is, they need to convert.

p. 44

King says:

It is a medical term. Professor David Smith says it signified a “sufferer who bore his malady bravely and uncomplainingly”. Those upsets and irritations caused by these opposers are as unpleasant symptoms which Timothy is to bear with patience, even to treat with humour. They will not fail to be impressed by such a god-controlled response to what they have had to suffer. p. 84

Focusing on the word “**REPENTANCE**” in the Scripture, let us sight a few passages from the Word:

2 Corinthians 7:10

For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

Romans 2:4

Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

Jeremiah 31:19

After I strayed, I repented; after I came to understand, I beat my breast. I was ashamed and humiliated because I bore the disgrace of my youth.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

OLD SOLDIERS KNOW

When the fiftieth anniversary of the battle of Gettysburg rolled around in 1913, the few Civil War veterans who were still alive decided to stage a re-enactment of one part of that famous battle—Pickett's charge. The Union veterans took their places among the rocks along the ridge, and the Confederate veterans began marching across the field toward them. Then an amazing thing happened.

As the old man of the Union began to rush down the hillside toward their former enemies, a great shout went up. But instead of engaging in hand-to-hand combat as they had done a half-century before, they threw their arms around each other. They wept as they embraced one another.

Novelist and theologian Frederick Beuchner comments: "As we lie in the dark looking back over one more day of our lives coming to an end, we might ask ourselves which of the obscure little wars we all engage in could end the same way if only we had eyes to see what those old men saw as they fell into each other's arms on the field of Gettysburg."

[Christian Century, Jul 17, 1996. Page 721.]

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

(The Seeking Heart: Volume 4: The Library of Spiritual Classics by Fenelon)
Auburn, MA: The SeedSowers Christian Book Publishing House.
Copyright -Christian Books Publishing House, MCMXCII.

Remember that you are not called to be well-served, but to serve Him well.
Learn to be gentle and patient with all that disturbs you.
p. 70

(The God of the Towel: Knowing the Tender Heart of God by Jim McGuiggan)
West Monroe, Louisiana: Howard Publishing Co. Copyright - Howard
Publishing Co., Inc., 1997.

Harry doesn't see him as often as he used to, but when he sees him and asks how he's doing, he always gets the same answer—"Terrific, thanks. If it gets any better I won't be able to stand it"—and the same practiced smile. Off the smiling sinner goes—to his eventual death!

Too ashamed to confess his shame, too self-despising to get his mind on lovely things so he can grow, too lonely to go it alone, too weak to beat it by himself, and too afraid to reveal it to the strong, who might think him a hypocrite. ("Can you imagine him creeping around reading that filth?" he can hear them saying if the word gets out.)

So the weakling capitulates and dies!

p. 227

Would you rather that the weak hide their anguish and awful need or come to someone strong for help in overcoming? Wouldn't you rather they ask for help than burn in their shame? Sure you would!

I don't mean we shouldn't plainly denounce sin—we should! But to lump the struggling disciple with the impenitent clods outside of Christ is a mark of stupidity!

p. 228

(Will God Heal Me? by Ron Dunn) Sisters OR: Multnomah Books. Copyright
- Ron Dunn, 1997.

There is no folly, no God-dishonoring theology, no iniquity, no sacerdotal puerility for which chapter and verse may not be cited by an enslaved intelligence.

Edward White, Inspiration

p.77

(Gettin' There: How a Man Finds His Way on the Trail of Life by Steve Farrar) Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright – Steve Farrar, 2001.

David admitted that he had made a disastrous decision to sleep with Bathsheba. He then admitted that he had orchestrated the murder of one of his most loyal servants. He pulled out the stopper and poured out the whole mess before the Lord (who knew it all anyway).

David didn't just mouth the words; this repentance was wrenched from the man's very core. He *abhorred* what he had done. He felt wretched that he had stolen a valiant soldier's wife—and then plotted the man's death. David refused to gloss over his moral failures or make excuses for himself. He didn't play the victim game and blame it on booze or a personality disorder or an abusive childhood. From his heart of hearts he declared his shame and repulsive sin to God. His heart was broken, contrite, ashamed, guilty, and full of sorrow for what he had done.
p. 76

(Grace for the Moment: Inspirational Thoughts for Each Day of the Year by Max Lucado) Nashville, TN: J. Countryman / Thomas Nelson.
Copyright – Max Lucado, 2000.

*If we say we have no sin,
we are fooling ourselves,
and the truth is not in us.*
1 JOHN 1:8

We do ourselves no favors in justifying our deeds or glossing over our sins. Some time ago my daughter Andrea got [a] splinter in her finger. I took her to the restroom and set out some tweezers, ointment, and a Band-Aid.

She didn't like what she saw. "I just want the Band-Aid, Daddy."

Sometimes we are just like Andrea. We come to Christ with our sin, but all we want is a covering. We want to skip the treatment. We want to hide our sin. And one wonders if God, even in his great mercy, will heal what we conceal.

How can God heal what we deny? How can God touch what we cover up?

A Gentle Thunder

p. 224

(Reflections for Ragamuffins: Daily Devotions from the Writings of Brennan Manning by Brennan Manning) San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco. Copyright – Brennan Manning, 1998.

Often I have been asked, “Brennan, how is it possible that you became an alcoholic after you got saved?” It is possible because I got battered and bruised by loneliness and failure, because I got discouraged, uncertain, and guilt ridden and took my eyes off Jesus. Because the Christ encounter did not transfigure me into an angel. Because justification by grace through faith means I have been set in right relationship with God, not made the equivalent of a patient etherized on a table.
p. 165

(The Christian in Complete Armour by William Gurnall) Chicago, IL: Moody Press. Copyright - James S. Bell, Jr., 1994.

Satan longs for you to quench the Spirit by trying to calm your own conscience. There is more hope for a sick man when his disease is discovered than when it is hidden in the heart and cannot be seen outwardly. Satan is so afraid of losing his throne inside you that he tries to smother your conscience with carnal lukewarmness and extinguish the Holy Spirit’s convicting work.
(October 15)

Just As I Am

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Just as I am, and waiting not,
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Just as I am, tho' tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in Thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

("Just As I Am" by Charlotte Elliott) *The New Church Hymnal*, Lexicon Music, Inc., 1976. #478)

v. 26 And they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him, under the spell of his will.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

False teaching and all its negative consequences in the church are always the handiwork of Satan, but God in His grace often salvages the situation through the Christlike ministry of His servants.
pp. 755-6

Luke 15:17

“But when he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger!’

Genesis 4:6, 7

Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.”

Lea & Griffin say:

Here it was Satan who took individuals captive to do his will. Judas, into whom Satan entered (Luke 22:3), was an example of someone taken captive by Satan to do his will.
p. 222

Larson says:

Beyond the human sphere, God and Satan enter man's spiritual struggle. Those who refuse God's truth come under the influence of **the devil who has taken them captive to do his will**. Satan traps people into his service through clever arguments, fear, and appeals to selfish pride and ambition. Christians should exercise a healthy awareness of the participation of Satan in the thinking of unbelievers. Contending for truth involves contending with spiritual powers; we must not be so naive as to think we confront on purely human terms.

But God remains faithful. He also contends for human souls and minds. As a measure of his grace, he grants repentance. God is sovereign over the universe and all created beings. We should never become overwhelmed at Satan's methods or power. Satan and God are not equals.
p. 290

MacArthur says:

Repentance leads disobedient believers out of their sin and falsehood into **the knowledge of the truth**. *Epignōsis* represents more than mere factual information. It is deep, thorough spiritual *knowledge* of God's truth, which, as with repentance, only He can supply.

It is only through God's gracious provision of repentance and knowledge of His truth that anyone, including sinning believers, **may come to their spiritual senses**.

p. 102

He comments further on the word translated:

. . . (**come to their senses**) literally means to return to soberness, indicating that falsehood and sin produce what might be called a type of spiritual inebriation, a stupor resulting in loss of judgment and proper control of one's faculties. The destructive effect of false teaching and sin numbs the conscience, confuses the mind, erodes conviction, and paralyzes the will.

p. 102

MacArthur says finally:

God's provision of genuine repentance and knowledge of His truth enable a believer to **escape from the snare of the devil**, after **having been held captive by him to do his will**. As Paul apprised Timothy in the previous letter, even an overseer can "fall into reproach and the snare of the devil"

(1 Tim. 3:7). It is a fearful thing that, because of sin and unfaithfulness, **the devil** can actually **snare** and hold a believer **captive . . . to do his will**. The vessel of dishonor becomes a pawn of Satan to work his evil **will** within the very body of Christ. Such is the terrible and tragic power of sin.

But our gracious "God is faithful," Paul assures us. He "will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it" (1 Cor. 10:13). Not only does the Lord know "how to rescue the godly from temptation" (2 Peter 2:9), but He even promises His unfaithful, dishonorable vessels that "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).
p. 102

Knight, commenting on the "KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH" in verse 25, says:

Therefore, the phrase as a whole indicates a person's coming to know and acknowledge that truth.
p. 425

He says further about verse 26:

Here Paul gives the ultimate explanation for the opposition of the "opponents"—they are held captive by the devil—and thus also what is needed from that perspective, which is release from the devil's snare. In this way he moves back behind the human level (i.e., opposition) to the evil one and his hold on the life of those in opposition.
p. 425

Knight says further:

The devil's grasp is broken when the opponents spiritually break out of the intoxicating effect of that snare and "come to their senses" . . . "[the] snare," "[the] trap" . . . is used figuratively here of the intellectual allurement of error. The trap is one that the devil sets for others.
p. 425

He continues:

The participial clause that follows expands on this reason that the "opponents" are in the devil's snare . . . and on what that involves . . . The perfect passive participle . . . (literally "being captured alive") conveys the sense of "having been taken and held captive" and expresses the decisive hold that the devil has.
p. 426

He then says:

The opponents were taken captive *in order to do* "the will of that one" (literally).
p. 426

He continues by saying:

. . . "that one" refers to the devil.
p. 426 (paraphrased)

Knight concludes then by saying:

This remarkable and helpful section sets forth the duty of the Lord's servant and the attitude with which he should conduct himself. The central focus of this duty is teaching and correcting those in opposition so that they may repent and learn the truth (vv. 24-25). The Lord's servant must seek to communicate this truth in such a way that opponents embrace it and abandon their error with proper remorse. God's servant thus seeks to be the instrument through whose efforts God brings them to himself.
p. 427

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown comment on:

. . . **recover themselves**—*Greek*, “awake to soberness,” viz., from the spiritual intoxication whereby they have fallen into the snare of the devil.
p. 1378

Hawthorne & Martin say:

The term, “devil” (*diabolos*), is found in Ephesians 4:27 and 6:11, and is used with some frequency in the Pastorals . . . A Greek term, meaning “slanderer” or “adversary,” *diabolos* is used in the LXX to translate the Hebrew *śātān*.
p. 863

Hawthorne & Martin say further:

Believers, and particularly church leaders, must be on the lookout for the “snare . . . of the devil” . . . For an *episkopos* who is a recent convert, conceit can lead to condemnation by the devil (1 Tim 3:6). Some, perhaps Hymenaeus and Philetus who have “swerved from the truth” (2 Tim 2:18 NRSV), have already fallen into that snare and have been held captive (2 Tim 2:26). They may still, by the ministry of Timothy, be granted repentance and knowledge of the truth.
p. 865

King says:

How many are all unconsciously ensnared in that trap: they would be greatly surprised, and highly incensed, if they were told they were, and it is only when they try to escape that they become really aware of their imprisonment. How cleverly the devil lures us, working with, and working upon, the thing that fascinates us. Mice don't like traps; but they do like cheese—and there lies the tragedy. There is a passage (James [1] i. 14), where we are given what one might call the physiology of temptation—"every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed". That is the way Satan lures us, draws us away: he plays upon our lust, our particular strong leaning or liking—that's the cheese! So he gets us. How did these people of Timothy get into that undesirable situation?
pp. 84-85

He says further:

The late **Dean Alford** puts it this way, "These people have, in a state of intoxication, been entrapped; and are enabled, at their awaking sober, to escape". So they recover themselves. One is reminded of the prodigal, in Luke [15] xv. 17, who "came to himself". He had not been himself for a long time. **Benjamin Disraeli** once said of W.E. Gladstone that he was "intoxicated with the exuberance of his own verbosity"; well, that prodigal, it seems, was intoxicated with the exuberance of his own conviviality—he had completely lost himself. But "when he came to himself"—he saw his utter folly, and found his way back home again. So he recovered himself; and so these parishioners of Ephesus, these prisoners of Satan, shall be restored . . .
p. 85

Calvin says:

For although the irresistible impulses to evil that carry them away result from Satan's power over them, they do not have to follow his wishes. In fact, they are following Satan wholeheartedly and will follow him wherever he directs. So their captivity is voluntary.
p. 146

Barnes says:

The word which is rendered *recover* in the text, and *awake* in the margin . . . occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly means, to become sober again, as from inebriation; to awake from a deep sleep; and then, to come to a right mind, as one does who is aroused from a state of inebriety, or from sleep. The representation in this part of the verse implies that, while under the influence of error, they were like a man intoxicated, or like one in deep slumber. From this state they were to be roused as one is from sleep, or as a man is recovered from the stupor and dulness of intoxication.
p. 230

He says further:

Whatever is the allusion, the general idea is clear. It is an affecting representation of those who have fallen into error. They are in a deep slumber. They are as if under the fatal influence of some stupefying potion. They are like birds taken alive in this state, and at the mercy of the fowler. They will remain in this condition, unless they shall be roused by the mercy of God; and it is the business of the ministers of religion to carry to them that gospel call, which God is accustomed to bless in showing them their danger.
p. 231

Lange says:

Since the Lord knows indeed them that are His, so also, in point of fact, He distinguishes them from those who do not belong to Him, and will never permit Himself to make any mistake through the mere outside of these latter. If every one who names His holy name must depart from all unrighteousness, then sin can never succeed, even when it has already crept into the temple of the Lord, in destroying it wholly.
p. 100

A. T. Robertson says of the word:

They may recover themselves . . . First aorist active subjective . . . [is a] late and rare word, to be sober again, only here in N.T., though *nēphō* is in 1 Thess. 5:6. *Out of the snare of the devil . . .* They have been caught while mentally intoxicated in the devil's snare (I Tim. 3:7).
p. 622

He then says further:

This difficult phrase is understood variously. One way is to take both of *autou* and *ekeinou*, to refer to the devil. Another way is to take both of them to refer to God. Another way is to take *autou* of the devil and *ekeinou*, of God. This is probably best, "taken captive by the devil" "that they may come back to soberness to do the will of God." There are difficulties in either view.
p. 622

Matthew Henry says:

The misery of sinners, v. 26. They are slaves to the worst of task-masters. They are taken in a snare, and in the worst snare, because it is the devil's.
p. 1896

He says further:

The happiness of those who repent; they recover themselves out of this snare. Those who before were led captive by the devil at his will come to be led into the glorious liberty of the children of God.
p. 1896

Towner says:

The importance of the mind is seen too in *come to their senses* (a return to clarity of thinking) in verse 26. The false teaching has captivated minds and hearts to do the will of Satan; God's teaching clears these channels so that a decision for him may be made.

p. 189

Stott says:

Behind the scenes, invisible to men on the stage and in the audience, a spiritual battle is being fought out. The devil's grim activity is graphically depicted. He is likened to a hunter who captures his quarry alive in some clever 'snare' or trap. He also drugs or inebriates them, for the word used of his captive's escape . . . means literally to 'become sober' or 'come to one's senses again' (AG) after a period of diabolical intoxication. From such a captivity, in which men are both trapped and doped by the devil, only God can deliver them by giving them repentance unto an acknowledgment of the truth. Yet he effects the rescue through the human ministry of one of his servants, who avoids quarrelling and teaches with kindness, forbearance and gentleness.

p. 80

Guthrie says:

That they may recover themselves (ananēphō) means literally 'that they may return to soberness' (RV mg.), a metaphor implying some previous duping by evil influences. As in the case of intoxication the devil's method is 'to benumb the conscience, confuse the senses and paralyse the will' (Horton).

pp. 154-5

Hendriksen says:

He hopes, accordingly, “that they may return to soberness” . . .
 (This is the only occurrence of this compound verb in the New Testament. . . .
 Through the work of the ministry may be adversaries be brought back to
 their senses; may they be aroused from their dull stupor, being delivered “out
 of the snare of the devil,” that is, out of the snare set by the devil, the snare
 into which he had lured them, that they might do his will . . . That this is the
 meaning is clear from the words which immediately follow: “by whom they
 had been taken captive to (do) his will” (literally, “having been taken captive
 by *him* (that is, by the devil), for *that one’s* (the devil’s) will”).
 p. 276

Wilson says:

Only such a divinely given change of heart can arouse them from the
 stupefaction of their sinful state, so that they can escape from the snare of
 the devil, in which they were held captive to do his will. This means that
 sinners are so drugged by the devil’s potions that they mistake bondage for
 freedom, and remain his willing slaves until they are brought to their senses
 by the power of God’s grace.
 p. 149

Kelly says:

Actually it is the result of the machinations of Satan, who has trapped them
 in his **snare** . . .
 p. 191

Griffiths says:

False teaching is seen to be the work of the devil (verse 26): a snare set to
 catch the unwary. It is a horrible thought that as spies can be ‘turned’ to
 become ‘double agents’, so some who seem to belong to God’s people might
 turn out to be working for the Enemy. Hopefully, however, they can ‘escape
 from the devil’s trap’ . . . and be turned back again.
 p. 193

Before we conclude our study I think there are number of **OBSERVATIONS** that we need to make with regard to Satan's activity—especially as it relates to **HUMANITY**, both **SAVED** and **UNSAVED**.

First, we see him **BLINDING THE MINDS** of individuals with regard to receiving the gospel:

2 Corinthians 4:3, 4

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

In the **PARABLE OF THE SOWER AND THE SEED**, Matthew 13 and Luke 8, we read the Lord's commentary on the seed that is sown by the side of the road that the birds snatch up:

Luke 8:12

And those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be saved.

Luke 10:18

And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.

Luke 13:16

"And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?"

Luke 22:31, 32

Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”

2 Corinthians 12:7-9

And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me—to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

1 Thessalonians 2:18

For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and yet Satan thwarted us.

1 Timothy 6:9

But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

1 Timothy 3:6, 7

and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

In Judges 16 you have **SAMSON** messing around with the **"SNARE,"** which is the lap of **DELILAH**.

With **SOLOMON** you have him messing around with the **"SNARE,"** in that it is marriage to **FOREIGN WOMEN**.

Psalm 7:14

He who is pregnant with evil
and conceives trouble gives birth to disillusionment.

We understand how Satan's **"SNARE"** works when we read:

James 1:13-16

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

DON'T GET HOOKED!

It's a quiet spring morning. The mists are still rising as the fisherman glides to his favorite fishing spot. He's after one of those giant bass that hide among the weeds and sunken logs.

Now, this fisherman is probably an honest man who wouldn't cheat on his taxes. But when he's fishing, he's a cunning deceiver. He is out there to snare and to capture. To do that, he's not going to throw a bare hook in the water. That wouldn't fool the fish. So he disguises it with an attractive lure. He may even hide it with that old reliable—the night crawler. He wants the fish to take the bait without noticing the hook. By that time it will be too late. A skilled angler will give just the right jerk and set the hook. And that's the end of the fish's freedom.

Satan is also fishing. We are the fish. And the bait is whatever will lure us to take the hook. It usually appeals to a natural desire—such as our need for intimacy or success or security. He uses legitimate needs to hide his real intent, which is to get us to disobey God. He knows that to entice us to take the bait, he has to hide the hook. And he'll make it look as appealing as he can.

Satan is a cunning deceiver. Don't be fooled by his tactics.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

“PLEASE HELP ME STOP GRINDING!”

God's children still pay a high price for worldliness and often end up grinding at “the devil's mill of remorse.” A letter read in part: “Will you please help me? The agony I feel in my conscience is like an awful grinding, grinding, as I reap the results of my wasted years. I accepted Jesus at an early age, but later because I was told I was attractive and had a natural singing voice, I took a job in a nightclub. At 17 I married a man I met there. Christian friends urged me to use my talents for Christ, but I ignored them. I now have a girl 14 years old with an incurable disease. And listen, she has never been to church! God seems so far away, and I don't know how to reach my daughter. Please help me stop the terrible grinding or remorse!” The letter was signed, “A Brokenhearted Mother.”

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

SPRINGTIME OF LIFE

People who waste their early years often have bitter regrets later on. Scottish poet **Robert Burns**, who died at age 38 after giving his earlier years over to immoral living, expressed his feelings in the following lament:

“O man! while in the early years,
A prodigal of time!
Misspending all thy precious hours,
Thy glorious, youthful prime.”

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

No matter how many pleasures Satan offers you, his ultimate intention is to ruin you. Your destruction is his highest priority.

—ERWIN W. LUTZER (1941-)

The devil's most devilish when respectable.

—ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING (1806-1861)

The infernal serpent; he it was, whose guile,
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind.

—JOHN MILTON (1608-1674)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

MONKEY TRAPS

Monkey trappers in North Africa have a clever method of catching their prey. A number of gourds are filled with nuts and firmly fastened to a branch of a tree. Each has a hole just large enough for the unwary monkey to stick his forepaw into it. When the hungry animal discovers this, he quickly grasps a handful of nuts, but the hole is too small for him to withdraw his clenched fist. And he doesn't have enough sense to open up his hand and let go in order to escape, so he is easily taken captive.

This is a picture of many Christians. The devil with his crafty devices tried to ensnare them. He appeals to the appetites of the flesh which can lead to their spiritual downfall. As long as they hold on to worldly bait, they cannot escape from Satan's trap. But he keeps on urging, "Don't let go! Enjoy the pleasure of your sin just a little bit longer!" So, listening to the tempter's alluring voice, they continue in their evil way.

Dear friend, are you caught up in sinful practices that are destroying your testimony and preventing you from growing in grace? Stop and think it over. Get out of Satan's trap now while you can.

(From *Parson's Technology*)

When you're faced with a busy day, save precious time by skipping your devotions.

Signed, Satan.

(From *Parson's Technology*)

He is gone, but his works survive. His manuscript *Temptation* is one of the best I've ever read on the subject. **Bonhoeffer's** vivid description of our tendency to turn off the warnings when sin's allurements wink at us needs to be declared to every generation:

In our members there is a slumbering inclination towards desire which is both sudden and fierce. With irresistible power desire seizes mastery over the flesh. All at once a secret, smoldering fire is kindled. The flesh burns and is in flames. It makes no difference whether it is sexual desire, or ambition, or vanity, or desire for revenge, or love of fame and power, or greed for money, or, finally, that strange desire for the beauty of the world, of nature. Joy in God is . . . extinguished in us and we seek all our joy in the creature.

At this moment God is quite unreal to us, he loses all reality, and only desire for the creature is real; the only reality is the devil. Satan does not here fill us with hatred of God, but with forgetfulness of God. And now his falsehood is added to this proof of strength. The lust thus aroused envelopes the mind and will of man in deepest darkness. The powers of clear discrimination and of decision are taken from us. The questions present themselves: "Is what the flesh desires really sin in this case?" "Is it really not permitted to me, yes—expected of me, now, here, in my particular situation, to appease desire?" The tempter puts me in a privileged position as he tried to put the hungry Son of God in a privileged position. I boast of my privilege against God.

It is here that everything within me rises up against the Word of God.

(From *Parson's Technology*)

THE DEVIL'S BEATITUDES

Blessed are they who are too tired and too busy to go to church on Sunday, for they are my best workers.

Blessed are they who are bored with the minister's mannerisms and mistakes, for they get nothing out of the sermon.

Blessed is the church member who expects to be invited to his own church for he is part of the problem instead of the solution.

Blessed are they who gossip, for they cause strife and divisions that please me.

Blessed are they who are easily offended, for they soon get angry and quit.

Blessed are they who do not give their offerings to carry on God's work for they are my best helpers.

Blessed is he who professes to love God but hates his brother and sister, for he shall be with me forever.

Blessed are the trouble makers, for they shall be called children of the devil.

Blessed is he who has no time to pray, for he will be easy prey.

—Douglas Parsons, *Pulpit Helps*

(From *Parson's Technology*)

EASILY DISTRACTED

My son Steven is just beginning to learn the game of soccer. So we spend quite a bit of time kicking the ball around in the front yard. As I've tried to convey to Steven the little I know about the sport, he has developed some of his own strategy. For instance, he said, "I know how to get past my man. When I'm dribbling the ball, I can say, 'Hey, look over there!' When he does, I can dribble past him!"

As simplistic as this strategy of distraction sounds, it's similar to a scheme Satan uses on Christians—and it works. He has developed hundreds of ways to say, "Hey, look over there!" All he has to do is distract us, and he has us doing something other than serving or glorifying God.

One of the goals we should have as we strive to live for the Lord is to keep "looking unto Jesus" (Heb. 12:2). We look away from Jesus when we put our attention on others to criticize them. We look away when we let everyday concerns make us worry. We look away when we neglect His Word.

Satan is the great distractor. Let's ignore his urgings and keep our eyes on Jesus. When we do, we will find it easier to live in a way that glorifies God. Then we won't be doing Satan's will (2 Tim. 2:26). —JDB

There's victory for you over sin and its shame:

Look only to Jesus, there's power in His name.

The devil can't harm you nor cause you to sin;

By trusting the Savior the victory you'll win. —Anon.

**SATAN'S PLOYS ARE NO MATCH
FOR THE SAVIOR'S POWER.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Thursday, July 13, 1995)

GOOD AND EVIL

Good intentions can be evil,
Both hands can be full of grease.
You know that sometimes Satan comes as a man of peace.

Bob Dylan (1941-), U. S. singer and songwriter. Song lyric. “Man of Peace” (1983).

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DRUNKENNESS

Fifteen men on the dead man’s chest
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!
Drink and the devil had done for the rest—
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894), Scottish writer.
Treasure Island (1883).

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DEVIL

Renounce the devil and all his works.

Book of Common Prayer, 1662.
Public Baptism of Infants.

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DEVIL

One of love's April-fools.
The Devil watches all opportunities.

William Congreve (1670-1729), English playwright and poet.
The Old Bachelor (1693).

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NURSERY RHYMES

"Will you walk into my parlour?" said a spider to a fly:
" 'Tis the prettiest little parlour that ever you did spy."

Mary Howitt (1799-1888), British writer.
"The Spider and the Fly" (1834).

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WILDCAT

Writing in *Moody Monthly*, **Carl Armerding** recounted his experience of watching a wildcat in a zoo. "As I stood there," he said, "an attendant entered the cage through a door on the opposite side. He had nothing in his hands but a broom. Carefully closing the door, he proceeded to sweep the floor of the cage." He observed that the worker had no weapon to ward off an attack by the beast. In fact, when he got to the corner of the cage where the wildcat was lying, he poked the animal with the broom. The wildcat hissed at him and then lay down in another corner of the enclosure. Armerding remarked to the attendant, "You certainly are a brave man." "No, I ain't brave," he replied as he continued to sweep. "Well, then, that cat must be tame." "No," came the reply, "he ain't tame." "If you aren't brave and the wildcat isn't tame, then I can't understand why he doesn't attack you." Armerding said the man chuckled, then replied with an air of confidence, "Mister, he's old—and he ain't got no teeth."

Our Daily Bread

(Logos Library System)

(The Sins We Love: Embracing Brokenness, Hoping for Wholeness by Randy Rowland) New York, NY: Doubleday. Copyright – Randy L. Rowland, 2000.

As a boating enthusiast, I very much enjoy sea stories. One of the ancient tales of the sea is that of mysterious creatures known as sirens, those mythological creatures who appeared to sailors on watch. In the distance sirens looked ravishingly beautiful, but a brief glance led to fixation upon the form of the siren. The sound of their voices was a hypnotic lure that couldn't be resisted. At the point of full absorption with the glamour of the siren, sailors would jump overboard and swim to the object of their dreams. Upon arrival, they would discover an ugly, monstrous hag who would drag the sailor into the deep where he would drown and be eaten.

The Seven Deadly Sins are like sirens. They beckon us toward them as if they are indeed something lovely. We fall in love with everything about these sins. They seem to offer so much to us. But when we answer the call, investing ourselves fully in swimming and striving toward them, we find ourselves face to face with a nightmare that annihilates us.

p. 6

(Quote Unquote compiled by Lloyd Cory) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books / SP Publications, Inc. Copyright – SP Publications, Inc., 1977.

A life built on the sands of celebrity can be wrecked by the rains of reverses. A life built on the sands of materialism can be destroyed by the floods of adversity. A life built on the sands of pleasure can be blown down by the winds of disillusionment. Only the life that is built on the rock of character can withstand the tempests of time.

p. 47

Man's most deadly enemy is not cancer or heart disease but habit—all the routines of thinking, feeling, and doing that enable humans to get through life without living it. (LION)

p. 142

(Quote Unquote compiled by Lloyd Cory) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books / SP Publications, Inc. Copyright – SP Publications, Inc., 1977.

The best way to break a bad habit is to drop it.

(D. S. YODER)

p. 143

You're getting along in years when you don't dare to resist temptation for fear you won't get another chance.

(QUOTE)

You needn't worry about avoiding temptation after you pass 60.
That's when it starts avoiding you.

(JOBBER TOPICS)

p. 331

(Truth for Each Day: Meditations for Every Day of the Year by Vance Havner) Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co. Copyright – Fleming H. Revell Co., MCMLX.

“AND NOAH WAS DRUNK”

And Noah . . . was drunken. Genesis 9:20, 21

HERE WAS A man favored of God with a drowned world behind him and a new age before him, and yet, with all the privileges and responsibilities involved, he gets drunk! He had been a faithful preacher and had guided his household aright; his last days should have been his best, but he passes away in a shadow. Many a man just as blessed has failed God in the last chapter of his life.

p. 90

(Anchor Man: How a Father Can Anchor His Family in Christ for the Next 100 Years by Steve Farrar) Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers. Copyright - Steve Farrar, 1998.

I saw a cartoon the other day that hit the nail on the head. A five-year-old boy has been sitting on the couch watching TV when his mother comes into the room. She reaches to turn the set off, saying, "A new study says TV desensitizes children by not showing the consequences of violence, so let's turn it off." Behind her back, her five-year-old holds up a pistol and says to his mother, "Back away. Very slowly."

p. 124

(The Most Brilliant Thoughts of All Time: In Two Lines or Less edited by John M. Shanahan) New York, NY: HarperCollins. Copyright – John M. Shanahan, 1999.

If you take too long in deciding what to do with your life, you'll find you've done it.

George Bernard Shaw, 1856-1950

p. 37

(Gettin' There: How a Man Finds His Way on the Trail of Life by Steve Farrar) Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright – Steve Farrar, 2001.

He's a liar. He's always been a liar, and he always will be a liar. Jesus called him the father of lies. But he's very smooth, and he's very winsome. Forget the pitchfork and horns stuff, this is a charismatic salesman who could sell bad ice to a smart Eskimo.

p. 32

(The Strategy of Satan: How to Detect and Defeat Him by Warren W. Wiersbe) Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House. Copyright – Warren W. Wiersbe, 1979.

It is important that we learn to distinguish between Satan's accusations and the Spirit's conviction. A feeling of guilt and shame is a good thing *if it comes from the Spirit of God*. If we listen to the devil, it will only lead to regret and remorse and defeat.

When the Spirit of God convicts you, he uses the Word of God in love and seeks to bring you back into fellowship with the Father. When Satan accuses you, he uses your own sins in a hateful way, and he seeks to make you feel helpless and hopeless. Judas listened to the devil and went out and hanged himself. Peter looked at the face of Jesus and wept bitterly, but later came back into fellowship with Christ.

When you listen to the devil's accusations (all of which may be true), you open yourself up to despair and spiritual paralysis. "My situation is hopeless!" I have heard more than one Christian exclaim, "I'm too far gone—the Lord could never take me back." When you have that helpless, hopeless feeling, you can be sure Satan is accusing you.
pp. 85-86

(Reflections for Ragamuffins: Daily Devotions from the Writings of Brennan Manning by Brennan Manning) San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco. Copyright – Brennan Manning, 1998.

"The devil never rejoices more," said Francis of Assisi, "than when he robs a servant of God of his peace of heart." Peace and joy go a-begging when the heart of a Christian pants for one sign after another of God's merciful love.
p. 7

(Diamonds in the Dust: 366 Sparkling Devotions by Joni Eareckson Tada)
Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright – Joni Eareckson Tada, 1993.

Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones shares a wonderful illustration of this in one of his commentaries. He describes the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of God as two fields. When we become Christians, Jesus rescues us out of the Devil's dry, rocky pasture and places us in His green fields. But that old master, the Devil, yells at us from his side of the fence. We hear him cracking his whip and telling us to get back into his field where we belong. Fear and intimidation make us listen to his lies, and before you know it, we climb back over the fence. What's amazing is that we don't have to! The Devil is not our master!
 (May 23)

It is always good for us to remember that **SATAN IS A DEFEATED FOE.**

2 Thessalonians 3:3

But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.

Someone sent me a paraphrase of the PRAYER OF JABEZ that I really love:

1 Chronicles 4:10 (version unknown)

Lord, bless me indeed. Do something so big in my life that it is obviously from you. Increase my influence and opportunities for you, and give me a sense of your continual presence and direction. Protect me, and keep me from falling into Satan's traps. Amen.

CONCLUSION:

What lessons did you learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Satan's plan for your life is for you to live in denial, defense, defeat, and ultimately, destruction.

LESSON #2: Satan is very much aware of your weaknesses and tendencies. He has the home field advantage.

LESSON #3: Is the passion of your heart to be a "vessel for honorable use" (verse 21)?

LESSON #4: Is your "vessel" clean so that God can use you?

LESSON #5: Are you "useful to the master" and "prepared for every good work" (verse 21)?

LESSON #6: Are you "fleeing from the passions of youth" (verse 22)?

LESSON #7: Are you "pursuing after righteousness, faith, love, peace in company with those who are calling up the Lord out of a pure heart" (verse 22)?

LESSON #8: As far as you know right now, is your heart pure before the Lord?

LESSON #9: Are you "avoiding foolish and stupid speculations" (verse 23)?

LESSON #10: As a "servant of the Lord," are you "kind toward all, skillful in teaching, bearing evil without resentment, and in gentleness correcting those who are opposing" (verses 24 & 25)?

LESSON #11: Has the Lord used you recently to precipitate “repentance resulting in a knowledge of the truth” (verse 25)?

LESSON #12: Are there those in your circle of friends who have been caught in “the snare of the devil” and do you have a plan for helping them to come to their senses? (verse 26)

LESSON #13: Step #7 for a Fantastic Finish is recognizing satanic seduction: I am keeping my eyes on Jesus.

(Faith Under Fire: Standing Strong When Satan Attacks by Steven J. Lawson) Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books. Copyright - Steven J. Lawson, 1995.

“WARS ARE NOT WON BY EVACUATIONS!”

Such was the sober warning sounded by Prime Minister Winston Churchill to Britain’s House of Commons during World War II when England was under the threat of a Nazi Germany onslaught.

With the fate of France uncertain, the evacuation of British troops became necessary. Outnumbered and outmanned English troops had just engineered the most massive retreat in military history of its armed forces from mainland Europe. In fact, beginning on May 26, over 330,000 Allied troops had made the dangerous withdrawal across the English Channel on thousands of privately owned, small boats.

In the aftermath of this seemingly miraculous deliverance, England was in a mood of euphoria. The retreat had been pulled off successfully. And the British people celebrated as if they had won the war. But such an exodus was misleading. Victory had not been secured. Defeat had only been avoided—*temporarily*.

In an attempt to temper such ill-founded confidence, Churchill stood behind the podium of the House of Commons on June 4, 1940, and sounded a sober note of reality. No victory could be claimed.

“Wars are not won by evacuations!” he admonished.

It was considered by many historians one of the greatest speeches ever delivered. The finest speech of a thousand years, many said. A message worth a thousand guns, others said. Typically stoic British House members cried. So did the manly Churchill.

The Prime Minister concluded his message by calling upon all Englishmen to courageously defend their island to the death. As Churchill concluded his now-famous address, he deliberately sought to infuse a defiant spirit into his fellow countrymen when he said:

We shall not flag nor fail. We shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.

Such steel-willed resolve is absolutely needed to win wars. A strong, inner fortitude. An inflexible resolve. A deep dedication. A sense of purpose that declares, “We shall never surrender.” When attacked and facing impossible odds, victory mandates that men and women of indomitable determination fight on, no matter what the opposition.

“Wars are not won by evacuations!”
Nev-ah!

Exactly two weeks later, on June 18, 1940, England braced itself for the inevitable Battle of Britain—Hitler’s invasion by air. With the English people prepared to fight for their national survival, Churchill addressed Parliament again. His words called for iron-clad courage rarely found today.

Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilization. The whole fury and might of the enemy must very soon be turned on us. . . . Let us, therefore brace ourselves to our duties and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will say, “This was their finest hour.”

pp. 135-7

(The Christian in Complete Armour by William Gurnall) Chicago, IL: Moody Press. Copyright - James S. Bell, Jr., 1994.

This war is a spiritual holocaust. Either you destroy the power of Satan in your life by putting on the whole armor of God and keeping it on, or Satan will destroy you. The great saints of every century have been tried in the fires of temptation. And to a man they have been singed whenever Satan found the smallest chink in their graces. Do not disregard what history has repeatedly shown to be true.
(May 7)

Knight says:

Paul also combines here the responsibility of the Lord’s servant with his dependence on and recognition of God’s sovereignty. The focal point is what God’s servant is called on to do. But in the midst of this statement is interjected the truth that God alone gives repentance and brings people to knowledge of the truth, and that he does not do so as an automatic response to human labors. Paul speaks, rather, of God’s action with the cautious language of “if perhaps” . . . We are reminded of Paul’s earlier statement: “I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth” (1 Cor. 3:6).
p. 427

Larson says:

As believers, our responsibility is to speak God's truth, live out his nature, and pray earnestly for the salvation of those who continue in Satan's grip. We ask him, by virtue of his authority, to grant a change of heart to those who are estranged from his truth and love.
p. 290

(The Seeking Heart: Volume 4: The Library of Spiritual Classics by Fenelon)
Auburn, MA: The SeedSowers Christian Book Publishing House.
Copyright -Christian Books Publishing House, MCMXCII.

Often what you offer God is not what He wants. He usually wants that which you dread giving Him. It is Isaac, the well-beloved, that He wants you to give up. What He is after is what comes between you and Him. He will not rest, and neither will you, I might add, until you have given Him everything. If you want to prosper and enjoy God's blessing, don't hold anything back from Him. What comfort, freedom, and strength there is when nothing stands between you and God.
p. 78

When you are busy trying to get a sense of the feeling that He loves you, then you are still preoccupied with yourself. The more peaceful and open your spirit, the nearer you will sense your Lord.
p. 45

(Lord Foulgrin's Letters by Randy Alcorn) Sisters, OR: Multnomah.
Copyright – Eternal Perspective Ministries, 2000.

To get you started, here are **Foulgrin's Rules of the Sting**:

1. Never lose sight of your goal—Fletcher's enslavement.
 2. Find just the right bait, tailor-made for him. Be sure the hook is well hidden.
 3. Use as many lures as you can. He may pass on one but bite on the next, or spend his life moving from one to the other.
 4. Make him promises and actually keep a few now and then, so he doesn't catch on to the setup.
 5. Tempt your prey with what he wants to have, but give him what you want him to have. Lure him, coddle him, reassure him all will be well, even as you fatten him for Lord Satan's altar.
- pp. 23-24

Use television, computer, telephone, newspaper, sports events, work—anything and everything to distract him from self-evaluation. Why do you suppose technology and media exist but as tools for distraction? The briefest moments of musing could lead him to consider the state of his soul, and—Beelzebub, forbid—his eternal destiny.

p. 35

Sniff out Fletcher's weaknesses as a bird dog sniffs out his game. These are the bridges, the beachheads serving as avenues for our assaults. In Fletcher's case, you identified the footholds of anger, lust, pride, and materialism. All are promising. This is where you start.

p. 46

(The Perfect Christian: How Sinners Like Us Can Be More Like Jesus by Tony Evans) Nashville, TN: Word. Copyright – Tony Evans, 1998.

The story is told of a little boy who was being beaten up by a bully every day on his way to school. The boy's friends told him to go to school a different way. But the bully found out about that route, met the boy on his way to school, and beat him up.

Another friend advised the boy to carry a stick to school. He carried a stick one day, but the bully took the stick away from him and beat him with it. Nothing this boy tried worked to get rid of the bully.

One day as the boy was walking to school, the bully jumped out and clenched his fist. But instead of being afraid, the boy said, "Come on, I'm ready. I'll take you right now."

The bully couldn't believe this little kid had become so brave. But as the bully got ready to pounce on him, the boy's father stepped out from behind a bush; he was 6'10", 275 pounds. The bully said, "Uh-oh."

p. 162

(The Singing God: Discover the Joy of Being Enjoyed by God by Sam Storms) Lake Mary, FL: Creation House. Copyright – Sam Storms, 1998.

Satan will do everything within his diabolical power to sow the seeds of helplessness and hopelessness in your heart. He will remind you incessantly of past failures, insisting that God cannot love anyone who has so frequently fouled things up. He will make hay with what I call "satanic toos"—"You're *too* ugly for God to love, *too* dumb, *too* fat, *too* poor, *too* weak, *too* untalented, and worst of all, even if you overcome these deficiencies, you're *too* late!"

p. 147

SATAN'S POWER IS PERMITTED

Lest we be “terrified by our adversaries,” it is well to remember that Satan’s power is not inherent but permitted (Rom. 13:1). It is not unlimited, but controlled (Job 1:12; 2:6). It is not invincible, but broken (Luke 11:21-11). It is not assured of success, but is surely doomed (Rev. 20:2-3). Satan knows well that there is no ultimate victory for him. The pronounced sentence has only been postponed. But he works to hinder and postpone Christ’s final triumph. We can rejoice in the certainty of John’s assurance: “Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (I John 4:4).

J. Oswald Sanders, *Cultivation of Christian Character*,
(Moody Press, Chicago; 1965), p. 86

(Logos Library System)

FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT

An elderly preacher is reported to have prayed the following prayer each day: “O Lord, give me a backbone as big as a saw log and ribs like the large timbers under the church floor. Put iron shoes on my feet and galvanized breeches on my body. Give me a rhinoceros hide for skin, and hang up a wagonload of determination in the gable-end of my soul. Help me to sign the contract to fight the devil as long as I’ve got a tooth—and then gum him until I die.”

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

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COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads.

—Isaiah 35:10

I went to Westmont College's commencement exercises last week. At the podium the dean explained that "graduation" means a student is leaving something; he wanted to emphasize that Westmont's ceremony was a "commencement" exercise. He underscored to his students that they were beginning something new and exciting. It sure was a thrilling day on campus with the Santa Barbara mountains in the background, and the blue Pacific Ocean in the distance. It was a glorious commencement—the triumphant processional, the banners and color, the majestic music, and everyone embracing each other, smiling and offering congratulations.

To me, it was a hint of our commencement to come to heaven. We will graduate, leaving the old earth behind, as well as our old life. But more importantly the Day of Christ will be our commencement as we begin our new life in the new heavens and the new earth. It'll be Jesus' coronation as King of Kings. Our verse today underscores that it will be a triumphant processional with all the pomp and circumstance, banners, color, and music. Degrees and awards will be conferred upon the faithful. Everlasting joy will crown our heads as we embrace each other. "We're here! We've finally made it!" we'll exclaim. And the Lord Jesus will be at the center of it all.

How can you prepare for your heavenly commencement? Second Timothy 2:15 says, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." The phrase "do your best" implies excellence, earnestness, diligence, and faithfulness in your daily witness to others, as well as in your quiet time with the Lord Jesus. You are a student preparing for the most exciting commencement ever!

I'm looking forward to my graduation from earth, Lord, but I'm most excited about my commencement into heaven. Help me to prepare today for that marvelous ceremony!
(June 20)

One of my favorite things to do is to fish for trout and salmon. There is no greater thrill than to have a scrape with a oversized fish.

I love being seductive with the salmon and the trout.

I am reminded of a statement by **KARL MENNINGER** that I have hanging on my wall at home:

“When a trout rising to a fly gets hooked on a line and finds himself unable to swim about freely, he begins with a fight which results in struggles and splashes and sometimes an escape. Often, of course, the situation is too tough for him.”

Just remember that the **KEY** to the whole thing is to realize:

1. **Satan is a defeated foe.**
2. **“ . . . greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4).**

STEP #7 – Satanic Seduction: I am Keeping My Eyes on Jesus

Hebrews 12:1, 2

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.