

AN APPROVED WORKMAN
2 Timothy 2:14-26
4/23/17

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

We are not saved **BY** our works, but we are saved **TO** work.

But what does it take to be a workman who is approved of God?

READ 2 TIMOTHY 2:14-18

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE AN APPROVED WORKMAN?

1. An approved workman accurately handles the word of truth. 2:14-18

a. An approved workman doesn't wrangle about words. v. 14

The Bible repeatedly teaches that we are to contend for the faith. Jude 1:3

We are to confront those who teach another Jesus, gospel, or spirit. 2 Corinthians 11:3-4, 13-14 cf Galatians 1:6-9

What is prohibited in verse 14 is meaningless speculations and needless controversy.

- ◆ It is *useless*- it does no good.
- ◇ It has no positive value or practical impact
- ◆ *It leads to the ruin of the hearers*

b. An approved workman accurately handles the word of truth. v. 15

We should interpret the Bible in the same way that we would read any other literature

- Interpret the Bible in a normal historical, grammatical, contextual manner

One pastor taught a Christmas message out of the first half of Revelation 11:10.

Revelation 11:10a And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another . . .

- ◇ The **grammar** (*them*) rules out its talking about the birth of Jesus.
- ◇ The **context** of the last half of the verse shows that it has nothing to do with Christmas.

Revelation 11:10 And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

- Don't read things into the text.

Some misuse the passages that teach that we should love our neighbor as ourselves to teach an unbiblical concept of self-love. cf 3:2

- **Don't speculate on things we aren't told.**

Read 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 6:3-5,20-21

- ◆ Some find hidden meaning in the names of Old Testament genealogies.
 - ◆ Some come up with all kinds of supposed "Bible codes."
 - ◇ They take every so many letters in the Bible and tried to find secret messages from God.
 - ◇ Some teach that certain numbers or words in the Bible have symbolic meanings.
 - ◆ Some misapply the number 666 to anyone they don't like by using all kinds of mathematical manipulations.
 - ◇ They have come up with names like Hitler, Reagan, Obama, etc
 - ◆ Some treat the Bible as if it were an allegory.
 - ◇ They see the literal words as only a preliminary way to take them to a more profound spiritual meaning.
 - ◇ One pastor taught that the donkey that Jesus rode on Palm Sunday represents the Old Testament, the donkey's foal represents the New Testament, and the two Apostles who went to loose them show us the moral and mystical sense of the passage.
 - ◆ Many today don't take the creation account in Genesis literally.
 - ◇ They want to make it some kind of Hebrew poetic myth or allegory that teaches some supposed spiritual truth.
(One problem with this approach is that Genesis 1 isn't written in a Hebrew poetic form.)
 - ◆ Some say that in the NT Israel doesn't mean Israel (it means the church) and that what the Bible says about the 1000 year reign of Christ on earth isn't to be taken literally.
 - ◇ They say that it is to be taken figuratively or "spiritually".
- Using the Bible as allegory makes it putty in the hands of the interpreter.

c. An approved workman avoids theological speculation. vv. 16-18

Avoid worldly and empty chatter

Avoid foolish and ignorant speculations v. 23

There is a lot of foolish and ignorant speculation in regards to Biblical prophecy and the timing of the rapture. (1988, Y2K, Hale Bopp comet, Blood Moons, etc.)

Titus 3:9 But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless.

- ◆ They can lead to further ungodliness.

v. 17 False doctrine is dangerous and spreads quickly like gangrene (NKJV cancer).

Hymenaeus' and Philetus' names are in God's hall of shame.

v. 18 We are not certain exactly what the Hymenaeus and Philetus were teaching.

- ◆ They might have been teaching that the resurrection (rapture) had already occurred and that they were living in the middle of the Great Tribulation period.
- ◆ More likely they taught that believers had already entered their post-resurrection glorified state.

This reflects the ancient Greek view that matter is evil and spirit is good.

They probably taught that our spiritual identification with Christ's death and resurrection is the only resurrection we will experience, and that had already happened.

These false teachers upset the faith of some.

2. **An approved workman abstains from wickedness and pursues righteousness, faith, love, and peace. 2:19-22**

19 In the midst of all the theological confusion caused by false teachers, the solid foundation of God stands

- God knows those who are truly His.
 - ◆ He cares about those who have come to Christ.
 - ◆ His promises are unshakable.
 - ◆ Our salvation is secure.
- Those of us who know Him are to abstain from wickedness.

20-21 The illustration of the house refers to the church.

The vessels- represent those who are truly saved and those who are not

Those who abstain from wickedness demonstrate that they truly saved.

Cleansed

Sanctified

Useful to the Master

Prepared for every good work

22a Flee youthful lusts

This is referring to sins that tend to be characteristic of youth.

Not merely sexual sins, but also pride and the desire for fun, fortune, and fame.

Envy, jealousy, selfish ambition and an argumentative spirit

Cf vv. 23-25 Impatient, harsh, and contentious

22b Pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace

Righteousness- godly living

Faith- a sincere confidence and trust in God

Love- an unselfish commitment to God and others

Peace- harmony with others so much as it depends on you

3. **An approved workman is not quarrelsome, but patient and gentle. 2:23-26**

a. We are not to be quarrelsome. vv. 23-24a

We are God's bond-servants.

- ◆ We are here to serve God.
- ◆ We represent Him.
- ◇ As God's bond-servants we should not be quarrelsome.

- 14 Don't wrangle about words
- 16 Avoid worldly and empty chatter
- 23 Refuse foolish and ignorant speculations

b. Rather, we are to correct others with a spirit of gentleness. vv. 24b-26

- **Be kind**
- **Able to teach-** requires knowledge and skill
- **Patient when wronged-** slow to take up an offense and quick to forgive

25-26 Our goal should be their salvation.

- ◆ Not to win an argument
- ◆ Not to prove our superior knowledge
- ◆ Not to defend our honor

If perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth

- ◆ God is actively involved in the salvation process.
- ◆ It is God who brings us to the repentance that leads to salvation.
- ◇ Those who repent are delivered from the snare and captivity of the devil.

If you have not come to a saving faith in Christ, God is waiting to forgive you if you will only repent and come to faith in His Son.

John 3:15-16 so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. ¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

4. Truths That Matter

a. God cares about you and me.

- He knows you and is actively watching you. v. 14
- He communicates to us through the Scriptures. v. 15
- He actively pursues us and grants us the repentance that leads to salvation. v. 25
- Our relationship with Him is unshakable. v. 19

b. It is only right that we strive to be approved workmen.

- Accurately handle the word of truth. vv. 15-18
- ◆ Normal historical, grammatical, contextual interpretation
- ◆ Avoid theological speculation and needless controversy.

- Pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace. vv. 19-22
 - ◆ Pursue godly living
 - Respond to others with kindness and patience. vv. 24-25
 - ◆ Our goal is not to win argument, but to win people to Christ.
- c. **Make sure that you are a clean vessel, fit for the Master's use. 1 John 1:6-9**
- 1 John 1:6-7** If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; ⁷ but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.
- 1 John 1:8-9** If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.