



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

SET APART FOR GOD! - 2 TIMOTHY 2:21

COLORADO

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If you belong to God and have turned from sin to pursue holiness, if you name the name of the Lord as your God and Savior then you are a vessel in His house. What kind of a vessel are you? Is your life lived in faithfulness to the Lord or characterized more by unfaithfulness? Is your service to Christ noble, disciplined and hard-working? Do you seek to please and honor God or are you living more for your own pursuits and purposes? Are you a vessel for honor in the church or one for dishonor? All believers will give an account to the Lord for their life.

I. SET APART FOR GOD! - 2 TIMOTHY 2:21

2 Timothy 2:21: "Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work."

God's saving work in our life demands a response of holy, faithful commitment and dedication to Christ. Anything less would be cheap grace lacking true gratitude. Your salvation came at a high price. As believers, our life is no longer ours, but Christ's. Is He your passion and pursuit? Will you be a vessel of honor, faithful and useful to the Lord? Paul goes on to describe a vessel of honor in 2 Timothy 2:21. You will remember that a vessel refers to all true believers whether faithful or unfaithful and refers to the way that believers are found useful to the Lord in the work He has called them to.¹ Vessels of honor are faithful and noble in their service to Christ rather than nominal or even shameful.

A. "THEREFORE"- 2 TIMOTHY 2:21A

Summing up what he has taught in the previous verses, Paul presses the importance that those who belong to God and pursue righteousness are vessels of honor.

B. "IF A MAN CLEANSSES HIMSELF"- 2 TIMOTHY 2:21B

Paul makes clear if anyone wants to be used for the Lord's work, they must have a humble, repentant heart with the desire to please God in faithful obedience.

"cleanses" Greek **"ekkathairo"** completely purge, thoroughly clean out.

A holy, inner life is essential for doing any good work in this life.² Any vessel is useful to the Lord for His noble and good work when it is cleansed. If a bucket has been used for waste, it would have to be completely purged, cleaned of its filth before it could be used for some noble purpose. Clearly Paul is referring to the cleansing of repentance in the heart of every believers.

What "things" are we to cleanse our lives from? Paul refers back to the vessels of dishonor in 2 Timothy 2:20. We are to cleanse our life from anything that dishonors God. First and foremost would be sin of any kind in our life. Paul says that as believers our lives must be vigorously scoured out in complete, sincere repentance; constantly. We must not tolerate sin in any fashion or form. We can't be partially clean...for that is not clean at all. Our life must be one of obedient submission to the Lord desiring to please Him as our passion and pursuit. As vessels of honor we must be pure and clean in our thinking, our behavior, our talk, and our life. We cannot leave room for sin but immediately deal with it through confession to God, admitting what we've done followed with sincere repentance. The Lord knows we will sin, but we can't tolerate it in our lives if we are to be used for the Lord's noble purposes.

Too many Christians are willing to tolerate sin. Would any sin be okay to God? Our sin put Christ on the cross. No sin is too small or insignificant or permissible even if other believers do it. It matters how we talk, how we act, how we think and how we live. Just because another believer is doing it, it doesn't make it okay if God says to the contrary. Don't be fooled by such dangerous thinking. To be a vessel used for the Lord's honor means that we must purge and completely cleanout our impure life in any way that dishonors God. If we are not about that, then we are not a vessel that can be used for God's noble purposes. Will you be a vessel of honor, faithful and useful to the Lord? Or will you tolerate sin in your life?

So Paul calls on us to cleanse ourselves from impurity. First from sin and secondly, Paul has addressed impure doctrine and teaching in the church. If we want to be an instrument for noble purposes of God in His household, we must abstain from evil, keeping ourselves pure in life and impure, false doctrine. We must return to the pure gospel of Jesus Christ and not be relaxed in regards to the truth of Scripture. Paul has spent much time in this letter referring to life and doctrine and so he points back to what he has already taught. Right teaching will lead to right living. If we begin to deviate from the reliability of Scripture and the truths therein, it will show itself in your life.³ So Paul makes clear that if we want to be a vessel used for the Lord's noble purpose, we must be cleansed of our sin in life, deed and doctrine. We must take this to heart. So Paul exhorts Timothy, *"Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor..."* (2 Timothy

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS, GOVERNOR & SPOUSES: TUESDAY AT 7:15AM, CAPITOL BASEMENT, ROOM 0109

STAFF, LOBBYISTS, JOURNALISTS & SERGEANTS: TUESDAYS AT NOON, CAPITOL BASEMENT, ROOM 0109

Colorado

SET APART FOR GOD! - 2 TIMOTHY 2:21

(21) *“Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.”*

2:21) How does a believer move from being a vessel of dishonor to one for honor? Only through complete cleansing, vigorous scouring, complete purging...repentance.

C. “SANCTIFIED”- 2 TIMOTHY 2:21C

Paul says that a vessel fit for service to God is sanctified.

“**sanctified**” Greek “**hagiazō**” means to be set apart. A perfect, past participle which indicates a condition that exists.

When we come to know Christ in salvation we are set apart for God. This is a present reality, a condition that exists. But it is also a lifelong process as Philippians 1:6 states. Believers are set apart by having a right relationship with God in salvation and set apart, sanctified each day as they grow and mature, fulfilling God’s purpose for them. (1 Thessalonians 4:3, 7) The sanctified life is a life of purity, holiness and godliness; a vessel of honor worthy for the Lord’s use.⁴ So, a believer is set apart or sanctified in two ways: (1) believers are set apart from sin and (2) believers are set apart to God for His righteousness.

Vessels used in the Temple for worship to God were set apart, dedicated solely to God for His service. Just so, all believers are meant to be vessels of honor in the church. The believers’ supreme purpose and calling is to serve God. (2 Timothy 1:9) It is inconceivable that a vessel would be used first for vile waste and then noble purposes, alternating from filth to honorable service. That wouldn’t happen and it makes no sense. Yet is that how we view our lives? We are set apart from sin and unrighteousness to God for His righteousness. Our new redeemed life should have a distinct contrast when compared to our former, unsaved life.⁵ (Romans 6:19)

D. “USEFUL TO THE MASTER”- 2 TIMOTHY 2:21D

Paul says that a vessel fit for service to God is first cleansed thoroughly, sanctified and set apart from sin to God, and *“useful to the Master.”*

“**Master**” Greek “**despotes**” means master over a slave, owner, with unlimited authority.

Paul chooses this word “*Master*” in reference to God. He is our Master. In salvation we become not just rightly related to Jesus Christ, but we wholly belong to God. He is our Master and our Lord Who actually owns us.⁶ 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says, *“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”*

For every Christian, God is our Master and we have the privilege of being useful to Him in noble service.

So “*vessels for honor*” represent faithful believers who are useful and valuable to the Lord. In salvation they have turned from sin to pursue holiness. They are faithful and dedicated in their pursuit of righteousness no matter what pulls at them from the world because they know they are set apart for God. They love God and His Word and hold to the pure gospel. They seek to please Christ and desire to be useful in service for His honor and glory. God is sovereignly in charge and faithful believers will follow His will and purpose, seeking to please Him with all they think, say and do.

Keep in mind that Paul was concerned that Timothy didn’t lose his usefulness to Jesus Christ. That’s why this letter is so instructive. Paul was always concerned about this in his own personal life as 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 reveals. We are in no less danger of becoming lax or lukewarm in our relationship with Christ. We must constantly examine our life, deal with sin, unfaithfulness, laziness, making sure that we don’t become a vessel for dishonor.

E. “PREPARED FOR GOOD WORK”- 2 TIMOTHY 2:21E

Paul says that we are *“prepared for every good work.”* It means that we come packaged with a readiness to do the good work that God has prepared for us. Ephesians 2:10 says, *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”* We are given the Holy Spirit Who lives inside and empowers us to do God’s will. We have God’s Word which gives us wisdom and discernment and teaches us how to live and what pleases God. But Paul teaches in Philippians 2:12-13 that God is at work in our hearts through the Holy Spirit and we are to cooperate with this good work. With eagerness and willingness we are to work out in our lives what God is working in our hearts because you are set apart for God. May it be your burning desire to be used of God as a noble vessel of honor.

¹MacArthur, John Jr., *MacArthur Commentary on 2 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.88.

²Hughes, R. Kent and Chapell, Bryan, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus; To Guard the Deposit*. Crossway Books: Wheaton, Illinois, 2000. Pg. 217.

³Dever, Mark, *The Message of the New Testament; Promises Kept*. Crossway Books: Wheaton, Illinois, 2005. Pg. 366.

⁴MacArthur, John Jr., *MacArthur Commentary on 2 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.91.

⁵MacArthur, John Jr., *MacArthur Commentary on 2 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.90.

⁶MacArthur, John Jr., *MacArthur Commentary on 2 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.91.