



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

FLEE... PURSUE... REFUSE! - 2 TIMOTHY 2:22-23

COLORADO

APRIL 28, 2015

Dan File, P.O. Box 1088, Lake City, CO 81235-1088/303-345-8830 / filefamily@centurytel.net

Paul was concerned that Timothy would lose his usefulness to Jesus Christ and that's why this letter is so instructive. We are in no less danger of becoming lax or lukewarm in our relationship with the Lord and must constantly examine our life, deal with sin, unfaithfulness, laziness; making sure that we don't become a vessel for dishonor.

I. FLEE...PURSUE...REFUSE! - 2 TIMOTHY 2:22-23

2 Timothy 2:22-23: (22) "Now flee from youthful lust, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. (23) But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels."

Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:21 that as believers our lives must be vigorously scoured out continually in sincere repentance. We must not tolerate sin in any fashion. 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, purging our impure life from anything that dishonors God. We must maintain our vessel, keeping it fit for noble service. So Paul gives Timothy a serious charge of imperatives to live by.

A. "FLEE" - 2 TIMOTHY 2:22A

So what is Timothy supposed to do with anything that can ruin his usefulness as a servant of God?

"flee" Greek **"phuego"** from which we get our word fugitive. A present imperative to continually be on the run to escape being captured.

Paul doesn't suggest or give an option for Timothy to do anything but *"flee"*, run and keep on running to keep from being captured by sin. It's imperative that Timothy would never be sucked into sin of any kind. He must flee continually to keep from being captured by sin. That imperative is given to every believer. We are to be constantly on the run from sinful passion or *"youthful lust"*. By *"youthful lust"*, Paul wasn't just simply referring to sexual desires, but sinfulness in general. These are qualities that often come from youthfulness and since Timothy was at least 30 years younger, Paul addresses him regarding a youthful temperament.

The only safe course for all believers is to flee from sin, run as though your life depended upon it; don't in any way succumb to pride, jealousy, envy, or being argumentative. Refuse all temptations to sin. We need to bring our desires under God's

constant control and fill our hearts and minds with His Word. (Psalm 119:9-11, James 1:21) Temptation is common to all but we must take God's way of escape. (1 Corinthians 10:13) We have two choices regarding the temptations we face; God's way and our way. We can be tempted, but that's not sin. We can be enticed, and that's not sin. It becomes sin when the lust or desire is dwelled on, focused on and then acted on. Our sinful desires lead us to sin and sin is missing God's standard of holiness, righteousness. Our flesh is weak and we are easily seduced. We must turn to the Lord for wisdom, turn to His Word and know as 2 Peter 2:9 says, *"The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation."*

So Paul strongly issues this imperative to all believers. Flee sinful desires like a fugitive on the run to escape being captured by youthful lust whether young or old. Run and keep running every day. Don't get sucked into fruitless controversy, don't succumb to impatience and harshness. Remain a vessel for noble purposes.¹ Flee *"youthful lust"* for it can ruin the usefulness of any servant of God and pursue godliness.

B. "PURSUE" - 2 TIMOTHY 2:22B

The believer must not be motivated by sinful desires rather pursue a life that is pleasing to God. What does that life look like? First Paul says that we must *"pursue"* godliness! Again, this is an imperative and not a suggestion. We are to follow hard after, chase after all that pleases God. We are to set our sights on, aim for all that is good. Romans 12:21 says, *"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."* We must expend our life pursuing, chasing hard after *"righteousness, faith, love and peace"*.

"Righteousness" refers to that which is just and lawless. It is conforming to all God commands and has appointed. God is that standard of absolute righteousness and Scripture defines it for us if we have any questions. It is right conduct of the one who pleases God. It is pursuing a conduct that glorifies God in all things. It is an obedient life which pursues righteousness.

"Faith" refers to a combination of belief and trust. It's having a sincere faith as well as a confidence in the Lord. It's believing and trusting God. Trust will characterize the life of a believer. The faithful believer will be truly loyal to God, to His Word, God's work and God's people.² It's having a life of integrity, loyalty and trustworthiness. We must pursue, chase hard after faith and faithfulness.

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

FLEE... PURSUE... REFUSE! - 2 TIMOTHY 2:22-23

(22) *“Now flee from youthful lust, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. (23) But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels.”*

“Love” refers to the first and foremost fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5:22 which seeks the highest good for our neighbor and nothing less no matter what they do to us. It is a love of choice not feelings or emotions. It is a love of the will, determination and not an impulse. This kind of love focuses on the welfare of the one loved, not based on attractiveness or worthiness of those being loved. Rather this love is based on true needs and is selfless and selfgiving. This is the kind of love our Lord has for sinful mankind.³ (John 3:16, Romans 5:8, 1 John 4:7-21) We must pursue hard after this kind of love with a growing affection for one another. Simply put, it is loving people with all their faults and weaknesses just as God loves us. It is imperative that we chase hard after loving God and one another!

“Peace” refers to a serenity, harmonious relationships between God, believers and all people. Romans 12:18 commands us to *“If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.”* We are to pursue harmony with one another. That means work hard for that. It means making every effort on our part to have a right relationship with God, with other believers and with our fellow man. It’s something we all want, but few actually pursue when there is conflict. But it’s imperative that we pursue peace. We must chase after this virtue. It doesn’t just happen and this isn’t just a suggestion from God. Do you want to be a noble vessel for honor? Pursue a life that is godly and peaceable no matter what your station in life might be.

And then Paul adds that we are to pursue godliness *“with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”* Those who *“call on the Lord”* refers to all true believers who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ and have called upon Him for salvation. Through His grace, mercy, and forgiveness, they have come to know Him. (Romans 10:9-13) A *“pure heart”* refers to a heart that has been cleansed. It is the same root word used in 2 Timothy 2:21 of a clean, useful vessel. It is a heart that has been completely purged, thoroughly cleansed from sin. It is a holy, inner life that has been cleansed, essential for doing any good work in this life.⁴ It is a pure heart cleansed only by repentance from God. Scripture is the only perfect guide to a pure heart that will be diligent to pursue godliness. Psalm 119:9 says, *“How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy Word.”* So what is Paul saying? We are not to *“pursue”* godliness alone, by ourselves, apart from other believers. We are called to press hard after godliness together with other believers. We are to frequent the company of fellow Christians. Hebrews 10:23-25 says, *“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for*

He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.”

Timothy was to **flee** as fast as his feet would carry him **away** from the headstrong desires of youth, impatience, harshness, contentiousness, and thinking he was always right. At the same time he was to **pursue**, run, sprint toward with arms stretched out **after** righteous conduct, faith and trust, love for others and peace.⁵ Is this the kind of life you are engaged in?

C. “REFUSE” - 2 TIMOTHY 2:23

Finally Paul warns again, with an imperative to *“refuse”* to listen or take part in any arguments that are silly or stupid with false teaching and teachers. As we learned in previous verses, these result only in strife and are profitless. They lead to quarrels, misunderstandings and confusion. These are *“speculations”* that have no certain basis of truth, disputes that are controversial. Paul is not prohibiting intelligent, probing discussions but rather useless wrangling’s that only divide and confuse. We must have good judgment that can discern between profitable and useless. Of course we must always be able to give a defense for the hope that is in us as 1 Peter 3:15 says. Paul spent much time presenting and defending the gospel with many. But this refers to the fruitless, unproductive debates that produce strife. They are worthless because they question Scripture, distort truth, create doubt, undermine confidence in God and often lead to compromise and thus they damage the church. We are to refuse, not just avoid, but never take part in disputes which have no certain basis of truth because it leads to ruin, it has a catastrophic effect. It carries the idea of being overturned, or overthrown spiritually. It causes confusion and doubt. These false words intentionally subvert the truth and replace it with error. This can work to the ruin, the catastrophe of those who hear it because it replaces truth with lies.⁶

A noble vessel for God’s honor *flees...pursues...refuses!* Are you?

¹Hughes, R. Kent and Chapell, Bryan, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus; To Guard the Deposit*. Crossway Books: Wheaton, Illinois, 2000. Pg. 218.

²MacArthur, John Jr., *MacArthur Commentary on 2 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.94.

³MacArthur, John Jr., *MacArthur Commentary on 2 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.94.

⁴Hughes, R. Kent and Chapell, Bryan, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus; To Guard the Deposit*. Crossway Books: Wheaton, Illinois, 2000. Pg. 217.

⁵Hughes, R. Kent and Chapell, Bryan, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus; To Guard the Deposit*. Crossway Books: Wheaton, Illinois, 2000. Pg. 219.

⁶MacArthur, John Jr., *MacArthur Commentary on 2 Timothy*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.74.