



2 TIMOTHY

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Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. 2 Timothy 1:13

Paul now exhorts Timothy to go further than he has thus far. He has been implored to not be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord (v.8), but now he is told that a “pattern” has been laid down in order to do this. The word is found only here and in 1 Timothy 1:16. It indicates an outline, or a sketch. Thus, Paul is telling Timothy that he has been given an outline already that he is to not deviate from. He says this with, “Hold fast the pattern of sound words.” Timothy’s ears have received the necessary pattern from Paul which he was then to follow. As he says further, “which you have heard from me.”

While Paul and Timothy traveled, evangelized, and taught, Timothy learned the outline of sound doctrine from his mentor. He had also encountered the Judaizers and false teachers who would tear the flock away from the simple gospel which is found in Christ Jesus the Lord. But Paul seems to indicate now that Timothy himself is susceptible to being led astray – and it is so. This is not just a warning for Timothy, but for all. It is as natural as breathing to want to include oneself in any such equation. But the gospel – from beginning to end – must be about Christ alone. Paul’s exhortation is a simple, but forceful, reminder that there is a pattern which has been set, and which needs to be held fast to. There is to be no wavering from it, and no going outside the lines which have been carefully laid down for those of the faith.

And further, Paul encourages him to hold fast to it “in faith.” One can teach about Jesus without faith. Even a person of faith can do so. The difference is often noticeable to those who hear. Teachers cannot allow teaching to become rote and lifeless. Instead, as with Paul exhorting Timothy, they are to hold fast to the faith, and to teach in faith. In so doing, those

they teach will be enlivened by the faith which comes from the teacher who is faithful. Added to that by Paul is also “love.” A message can be mechanical, as if piecing together components of something. A message can be angry, it can be filled with bitterness, or it can be subversive. Such teachings are not in love. One can be wholly opposed to something, like abortion, but they can present the message in a stern but loving way. Righteous indignation does not have to include unrighteous anger.

To teach in faith and love then is what is proper, but there is already an example to follow. It is those “which are in Christ Jesus.” He is the object of our faith, and He is love. By contemplating His words, by following His example, and by speaking in a manner which emulates Him, the man of God will hold fast the pattern of sound words, in the proper way. But again, Paul says the pattern is the one “you have heard from me.” The gospel message to the Gentile led church is given by the hand of Paul. It outlines our doctrine in Christ Jesus, and it is to be adhered to and passed on in faith and love.

Life application: For sound church age doctrine, we are to follow Paul’s epistles as the outline. Everything else is to be taken in relation to them. Understanding this context will keep the rest of Scripture properly aligned for us as we read it and assimilate it into our lives.

That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.
2 Timothy 1:14

The words here reflect the same thought as that of 1 Timothy 6:20 – “O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust.” This “good thing” is the gospel message of Christ and all that is rightly associated with it. It includes proper doctrine, teaching in love, fleeing unrighteousness, etc. Paul is imploring Timothy to be a man of God who proclaims the word of God which speaks of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul tells Timothy, “This was committed to you.”

Paul had personally laid his hands upon Timothy (along with other elders as is noted in 1 Timothy 4:14), and he had entrusted to him the responsibility of the most important treasure any person could ever possess. Having it so committed to him, Timothy is now implored to “keep by the Holy Spirit” this good thing.

Men of God wrote the word of God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. As this is so, it is only right to entrust the Holy Spirit to be the one to secure it rightly in ourselves. The word “keep” signifies “having an eye on.” It refers “to the uninterrupted vigilance shepherds show in keeping their flocks” (HELPS Word Studies). Man’s mind is prone to wander, his thoughts are corrupted by the sin nature, and his ability to discern what is right is influenced by his character and presuppositions. In order to keep the gospel pure and untainted, a total reliance on the Holy Spirit is necessary.

When Scripture was written, it was done by the direct influence of God. Therefore, the direct influence of God, without all of those limitations of man, is necessary to rightly discern its meaning. And this isn't something which must be sought out and groped for. Instead, Paul says that the Holy Spirit "dwells in us."

This is to be taken in the limited sense of "believers" only. A person who has not received Jesus Christ does not have the Holy Spirit in him. However, upon belief, the Holy Spirit seals the believer (Ephesians 1:13, 14). From that moment, we are to grow in fellowship. This is done by being "filled with the Spirit," a passive action. We are to yield, and the Spirit will fill. In this, Timothy will be able to properly keep that which is entrusted to him, and each believer will be able to move into a closer relationship with God. But this process can also be quenched. Therefore, the admonition here is for Timothy to always fan the flame and be intimately connected to God through yielding to the Spirit. In this, he will certainly keep that which is entrusted to him.

Life application: No person is immune from quenching the Spirit. In fact, as long as we are in these mortal bodies, it is the default position. We must yield to the Spirit, and in so doing we will be filled. Eventually, if we pursue righteousness, the default position moves closer and closer to a full connection with the Spirit. But this bond can still be quenched, and so we must always remain on guard in this matter.