

II Timothy, Sermon #14

II Timothy 2

We learned last week that we are to be vessels of honor and in order to do this, we are to be sanctified (holy) (transformation) – so that we can be fit for the Master’s use and ready for anything He calls us to do.

God restates this to us in a practical way.

I’ve entitled today’s message “The Pursuit of Honoring God”

People pursue many things—happiness, excellence, money, woman, man, job

II Timothy 2:21

Let us stand for the reading of God’s Holy Word

II Timothy 2:21-23

Let us pray.

You may be seated.

The Pursuit of Honoring God

Vs. 22

Far too many are losing the battle to **youthful lusts** . . .
This is not just for the young person—this is for all people.

The story of the life of King David shows how dangerous temptation is.
David was “a man after God’s own heart” – Acts 13:22
How could David descend so deep into sin?
He did not run away from youthful desires even though he was an older man.

What does the Bible say? “Flee youthful lusts.”

The word “flee” in the Greek is the term “fugitive,” which refers to a person who is continually on the run in order to escape capture.

We cannot flirt with sin; we must not fool around with sin.
We cannot think—“I can handle this” or “a little bit doesn’t matter.”
The Bible teaches us that we cannot even trust ourselves.

Proverbs 3:5, *“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.”*

A “vessel of honor” is continually on the run, as it were, from the sinful passions that started in us when we were young.

It is estimated that Timothy was in his thirties.
He, therefore, was relatively **youthful**, but was still tempted by many sinful **lusts** that are characteristic of young people.

These lusts involve much more than sinful sexual desire.

They also include pride, craving for wealth and power, inordinate ambition, jealousy, envy, an independent spirit, and many other sinful **lusts**.

A holy person is known by what he runs from.

We are called on to not only to flee, but to follow/pursue (vs. 22)—purity does not happen by accident.

God is calling on us today.

To **pursue** after virtue is the other side of fleeing **youthful lusts**.

We are running away from certain things and we are running toward these things.

Both **flee** and **pursue** are imperatives.

God is not making a suggestion to us—He’s telling us what to do.

If we want to be a vessel of honor, this is what we have to do.

A believer who does not run *from* sin and *toward* **righteousness** will be overtaken by sin.

The only way not to “be overcome by evil” is to “overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21).

Psalm 1:1-2, *“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight [desire] is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.”*

Flee lusts and follow what? Vs. 22 – righteousness—the right things.

This means I am to do right in relation to both God and man.

I. Righteousness

In whatever age the faithful live, the only guide to **righteousness** is God’s Holy Word. Living a life honoring to God involves faithfully pursuing and obeying the truth of this Book.

Do we honestly pursue the Word of God? Implement its teachings?—therefore honoring God.

This is an essential part of the Christian life.

Even the youngest child of God is able to successfully **pursue** the Lord's **righteousness**.

Matthew 6:33, *“But seek [desire] ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”*

Secondly, the Godly believer also will **pursue faith** – vs. 22

Did you know we grow in our faith?

When someone gives me bleak news or something is impossible—PTL!

This is where God can show Himself strong.

Faith is a tremendous confidence in God—an unshakable conviction that what God says is so and will always be so.

This honors God.

The truly faithful Christian will be loyal to God, to God's Word, to God's work, and to God's people.

Faithfulness—we have to work to be faithful.

People do not automatically read their Bibles, spend time in prayer, go to Wednesday night services.

Faithfulness for the Christian is not natural.

III. God's vessels of honor pursue charity (love) – vs. 22

The willingness to sacrifice ourselves for God and man

This is the kind of love that focuses on the welfare of another, not on self-gratification or self-fulfillment.

Love is not based on the attractiveness or worthiness of those who are loved, but on their needs, even when they are most unattractive and unworthy.

It is selfless like Christ.

I Corinthians 13:1-5

Turn back to II Timothy 2

IV. The Godly believer also will **pursue peace** – vs. 22

In this context it does not refer to absence of warfare but to harmonious relationships, between men and God and between people, especially between Christians.

Romans 12:18, *“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”*

Four things that we are to pursue—and we are to pursue this with other believers
– vs. 22

Vs. 22c

With them that call on the Lord—that little phrase is a description of genuine Christians.

This phrase, **“calling on the Lord,”** regards our salvation.

To **call on the Lord** is the equivalent of placing our faith in Him.

Romans 10:12-13, *“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”*

But not everyone who calls on the Lord for salvation – honors God with their life.
 Many fail to faithfully serve and obey Him.
 Many people are vessels of dishonor.

We are to be with believers who have a pure heart—those that are pursuing
 holiness/God themselves

We are to fellowship with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart
 Name one friend, one person, that you fellowship with that is pursuing God.
 That person, those people—are the people we need to be around.

We need to pray for one another and encourage one another to pursue the Lord.

Purity – clean hands, clean heart, clean mind

The Christian with **a pure heart** diligently pursues the righteousness, faith, love, and
 peace mentioned in the first half of this verse.

He is the “vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master—prepared for every good
 work” mentioned in the previous verse.

On top of this – vs. 23

God does not want us corrupted by **foolish and ignorant arguments**, which make
 us divisive—literally, splinter.

Foolish has the root meaning of being mentally dull and is the word *moros* from which
 we get our English word “moron.”

Unlearned means ignorant.

Questions refer to that which is controversial and seriously disputed having no certain
 basis in truth.

Of course, God is not advising believers to avoid all controversy and discussion of the faith.

We are to . . .

I Peter 3:15, “. . . *sanctify the Lord God in our hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us with meekness and fear.*”

Paul spent much time presenting and defending the Gospel as he went from city to city (Acts 17:2; 18:4; 18:19; 24:25).

Paul reasoned (dialogue) with them out of the Scriptures.

In this passage, God makes clear that he is not speaking about responsible discussion of Scripture and theology.

He rather forbids fruitless and unproductive debates **that produce quarrels.**

Such questions not only are worthless but are ungodly.

They tear down; they don't build up.

Earlier in this chapter, the apostle commanded Timothy in vs. 14

Paul gives almost identical counsel to Titus (Titus 3:9).

In this pursuit of honoring God, we are not to allow ourselves to get tangled up/tripped up

These are things to avoid.

So, in regards to **II Timothy 2:23**, a vessel of honor to God must develop a discerning mind.

The undiscerning mind is “tossed and carried about.”

It has no anchor.

Ephesians 4:14, God desires, *“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”*

These church people in Ephesus were struggling with this.

Look back at I Timothy 1:3-6.

I Timothy 4:7

A believer needs to have a filter just like a car 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 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.

The power of ideas on a Christian’s mind and God knows that the only protection against false and evil notions is God’s truth and righteousness.

(Phil. 4:8) Our minds are to be treasure troves, not garbage dumps.

From the early days of the church and continuing almost unabated to our own day, many believers have forsaken personal study of Scripture and have fallen prey to all kinds of false ideas and practices.

Not bothering to check what they read and hear against God’s own Word.

There were a group of people in the Bible that God . . .

Acts 17:11, *“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched [daily examining] the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”*

Just because something comes in a Christian package, just because something is stamped “Christian”—does not mean it comes from God.

There are things to flee from.

There are things to pursue after.

There are things to avoid.

The Pursuit of Honoring God

Let us stand for closing invitation.

The holy vessel of God is to flee.

Are there any sins in my life that I need to run from?

The holy vessel of God is to follow.

Am I pursuing God? His righteousness?

Are my friends pursuing the Lord, too? We may need to change our friends.

Are we avoiding the arguing, bickering, and quarreling that seems to dominate many believers' lives?

We cannot pursue these things in our life until we have received Jesus Christ as personal Savior.

Rear of Document

Timothy's name in the Greek is two words which put together mean God-honoring,
God-honoring vessel