

Pursue Righteousness

Key Verse: "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."
—II Timothy 2:22

Selected Scripture:
II Timothy 2:14-26

babblings," and "foolish and unlearned questions." (II Tim. 2:14,16,23) Rather, Paul states we should "study to shew thyself approved unto God." (vs. 15) The primary focus of our study of God's Word is that it might have its sanctifying effect upon us, make us 'approved unto God.' He further says that in doing so we will not be ashamed, but will be "rightly dividing" God's Word. That is, such study and application will have the effect of directing one's paths (*Vine's Expository Dictionary* comment on 'dividing'), as the psalmist says, "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."—Ps. 23:3

The Apostle Paul continues this lesson by saying that some had not heeded these warnings, even to the point of damaging the faith of others. (II Tim. 2:17,18) This is a dangerous condition, and Paul counsels any

TODAY'S LESSON contains several warnings of the Apostle Paul given to Timothy and to us. These warnings seem to be centered in the thought that the true follower of Christ should not be engaged in strivings and debates, whether along lines of Truth or otherwise, which do not build up the body of Christ. Such things Paul says include

"words to no profit," "vain

guilty of such things to “depart from iniquity.” (vs. 19) As a result, there will be those in God’s plan who attain varying degrees of faithfulness, described as “vessels of gold and of silver, . . . also of wood and of earth, . . . some to honour, and some to dishonour [less honour].” (vs. 20) Continuing, Paul admonishes any tending toward these unrighteous traits of character to purge themselves from these things, that they might be “a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.”—vs. 21

The Key Verse lists many of the righteous and Christlike characteristics, which, in all of the Lord’s people, are to be pursued and gradually replace the tendencies of the fallen flesh. The pursuit of righteousness, faith, charity (love), peace, all out of a pure heart, is a most noble, and life-consuming work. We are not to think of these as merely something to be casually striven for. The word ‘follow’ in this verse is the same Greek word as is translated “press” in Philippians 3:14, where Apostle Paul says, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Here we are again impressed with the thought that ‘the prize of the high calling’ will only be attained by diligent, and constant, effort. Such effort does not mean that we will be perfect, or always achieve the high standard of character set before us to which we desire to attain, but it does mean we will continually follow, pursue, and press toward these things.

In the closing verses of this lesson, the Apostle Paul gives special counsel to Timothy as an elder in the church. “The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.”—II Tim. 2:24,25 ■