

2 Timothy 2:20-26

May 20, 2020

The “great house” in this passage stands in contrast to the “household of God” in 1 Timothy 3:15. If we understand it to be the visible church, it may indeed be larger and more outwardly impressive than that house, but is not entirely of God. In it are vessels of dishonor – unbelievers who “join” the church without entering through the one Door, Jesus Christ.

This passage tells us to purge ourselves from – what? Most translations will say from the unholy vessels. The original Greek, however, is from just “these things.” That would imply we are to separate from the *mixture* of holy and unholy.

Do not suppose that this command tells a person to become a disgruntled, self righteous hermit, finding fault with all gatherings of Christians. You cannot love Christ and despise His bride. Rather, we are to pursue **righteousness, faith, love, and peace** along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. These virtues cannot be practiced alone.

Questions for study and discussion:

1. This chapter never tells us to avoid one thing without pursuing another, not to give up without some compensating gain. Complete the table below.

Cleanse yourself from:	And you will be:
Flee:	Pursue:
Avoid/have nothing to do with:	Instead, be able to:
As the Lord's servant, do not be:	But, rather, to everyone be:

2. What is the difference between vessels made of precious metal and those made of wood and clay? Are they the same as the jars of clay in 2 Corinthians 4:7?

Nor is there permission to remain in an association we know to be wrong because we find it useful. “I question a lot of the teaching but I can do so much good there.” Rather, this passage clearly tells us that we become truly useful to the Master and prepared for good work *after* we cleanse ourselves and set ourselves apart as holy.

Also note that we are not told to depart from the house itself. Mr. Kelly, speaking of those who have obeyed the command to depart from iniquity, says, “By thus acting faithfully as far as they knew, did they thereby leave the house? The very reverse; they were only striving, in deference to scripture and in dependence on the Lord, to behave themselves better in that house. Christendom is not given up by walking more according to God’s will in the true path for Christians, whether individually or corporately.”

3. 1 Corinthians 5:13 says to purge the evil person from among the assembly. Is that the same as verse 21?
4. According to verse 21, what is needed for us to be useful to the Lord? (cf. 1 Tim. 5, 2 Peter 1:5-8)
5. It's easy to visualize the youthful passions/lusts of verse 22 as "teenage" issues. But they could apply to any of us. What are other examples of harmful passions, particularly in the context of other warnings nearby?
6. This epistle was written in a time of general departure from the truth and widespread false teaching. Verses 24 and 25 appear to prescribe a meek response. Is that sufficient?
7. What is the goal of correcting our opponents (assuming we are right and they are wrong, which we should never just assume)?