

# 2 Timothy: A Firm Foundation

## Related Resources

Verse by Verse Notes on the 2 Timothy Scriptures discussed on this page:

2 Timothy 2:14

2 Timothy 2:15

2 Timothy 2:16-17

2 Timothy 2:18-19

2 Timothy 2:20-21

2 Timothy 2:22-23

2 Timothy 2:24-26

Note: You can walk through this lesson on 2 Timothy 2:14-26 point by point in the chart below

The Power of God's Word - A Simple Inductive Study

Inductive Bible Study: Application

2 Timothy 3:16-17 Study of the Authority of God's Word

2 Timothy 3:16-17 Exposition

2 Timothy Overview Guard the Treasure

2 Timothy 2:19 Study of A Firm Foundation

2 Timothy Handle Accurately the Word of Truth

Life Hid and Not Hid by Alexander Maclaren

2 Timothy Commentaries

2 TIMOTHY 2:19 A FIRM FOUNDATION		
CHILDREN OF GOD		
WHO ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD?		WHAT DO THE CHILDREN OF GOD DO?
COLUMN 1 <b>(POINT 1)</b>  <b>What two groups are discussed in "the trustworthy statement" in (2Ti 2:11-13)?</b>  Faithful and faithless  <b>Where did we see the faithful and the faithless in 2 Timothy?</b>  1:15 All in Asia - faithless  1:16-17 Onesiphorus - faithful  4:10 Demas - faithless  4:11 Luke, Mark - faithful  <b>NOW GO TO COLUMN 3</b>	COLUMN 2 <b>(POINT 4)</b>  <a href="#">Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43</a>  <b>How is Jesus' speech characterized in the first segment (v24-30) compared to the second segment (v36-43)? Who is Jesus' audience in the first address? In the second address?</b>  (1) <a href="#">Parable</a> to great multitudes  (2) <a href="#">Interpretation</a> to His disciples	COLUMN 3 <b>(POINT 2)</b>  <b>What is Paul's instruction in (2Ti 2:14) to Timothy and all who are children of God?</b> Remind them of the truths of the gospel, of the trustworthy saying  <b>Why do we need to remind them?</b>  The tendency is to deviate from the clear teaching of the gospel  <b>What did Paul call the gospel (2Ti 2:8)?</b> "My gospel"  <b>Why "my" gospel?</b>

## POINT 2

>< >< ><

### (POINT 3)

In the midst of confusing teaching about the resurrection and others teaching their version of the gospel, how can a believer remain steadfast?

#### How does (2Ti 2:19) begin?

**Nevertheless** - In the face of disturbing news of false teaching and the negative effects on some individuals, Paul is drawing a comforting contrast = in spite of the fact that confusion exists, there is a firm foundation of God that **stands** (perfect tense)

#### What might the firm foundation refer to? (2Ti 2:19) (cf 1Ti3:15)

The firm foundation is most likely the true church founded upon the Rock Jesus Christ and composed of true believers

#### What does this firm foundation tell us about the child of God?

God knows His own (cf [2Ti 2:10](#), [Rev 3:1](#) Sardis)

His own abstain from wickedness

#### What does the 'seal' signify?

A seal provides security and authenticates - the king would take his signet ring and make an impression in hot wax on a document to authenticate that it was really from him

This seal represents God's stamp on those who are born again. God knows His own personally and individually. In that truth they can rest secure in the face of false teaching.

#### What does "abstain from wickedness" imply?

Outward evidence should be seen - this authenticates the person as a true believer.

## Explanatory Note:

**Parables** are given to clarify or emphasize some truth so first determine the occasion for the **parable**. In Matthew 13 the emphasis is on the phrase "**kingdom of heaven**" which occurs 8 times (out of a total of 31 times in Matthew's gospel).

Next observe the intended meaning which will sometimes be stated but if not, can usually be discovered by examining the **context** of the **parable**, specifically the **interpretation** of the parable as Jesus explained the situation in the present parable. Don't impose any meaning beyond what is clearly stated.

Every parable has one central theme or emphasis and teaches **one main truth**. **Details** of the story should not be given a meaning that is independent of the main teaching. Do not try to interpret every detail. Finally, do not use parables to as the sole or primary source of a particular teaching and do not use them to establish doctrine.

#### What is the main theme of Jesus' parable ([Mt 13:24-30, 36-43](#))?

"the kingdom of heaven"  
separation of wheat and tares

#### What is the central truth of Jesus' parable ([Mt 13:24-30, 36-43](#))?

Separation of good and evil

The **wheat** or sons of the kingdom will be separated from the tares or sons of the evil one at the end of this age when Jesus sends His angels to gather up the **tares** and will cast them into the lake of fire, while the righteous will shine like the sun in the Father's kingdom.

#### How does this parallel the truth of the seal in [2Ti 2:19](#)?

God knows those who are His...

Who are "**wheat**" and who are "**tares**" (those who do not abstain from wickedness but who continually commit lawlessness v41) and He will make an accurate distinction at the judgment

In contrast to other's gospel  
Which was a false gospel

#### What is Paul's solemn charge in ([2Ti 2:14](#)) and what does he add to emphasize its importance?

"In the presence of God" = important Don't wrangle about words  
No "word battles"

#### What kind of 'words' is Paul referring to in ([2Ti 2:14](#))?

"Wrangling over meaning of terms" (click example)  
Leads to arguments and quarrel

#### What is the fruit that comes from wrangling about 'words' ([2Ti 2:14](#))?

They are useless for nothing except that they intellectually upset some to the point of spiritual **ruin**

#### What is the best "preventative"... what is Timothy's (and our) responsibility ([2Ti 2:15](#))?

Be diligent (this will take some effort and initiative) to handle accurately the **Word** of truth by not wrangling about **words**

#### Why is it so important to accurately handle the word of truth?

Not just that we will stand approved before God some day in the future but even now to prevent useless quarreling which lead to the ruin of the hearers

#### What must we constantly avoid([2Ti 2:16](#))?

Worldly and empty chatter

#### Why?

Lead to further ungodliness

#### Who should we avoid ([2Ti 2:17-18](#))?

Men whose talk spreads like gangrene - they have gone astray from the truth (which implies they have in fact been exposed to the truth)

#### What is the specific "gangrene" Paul mentions ([2Ti 2:18](#))?

Teaching that resurrection has already taken place

#### What kind of "resurrection" would have

### Explanatory Note:

"**Abstain**" is in the aorist imperative which calls for immediate action = "Withdraw! Depart from! Remove yourself from the presence of!" and don't delay! The Greek word is **aphistemi** (from **apo** = separation of one thing from another + **histemi** = stand) which literally means to stand off from. Believers must make a conscious decision empowered by the Spirit to withdraw themselves from all wickedness, which in its essence is defined as loving sin more than loving God and His truth. Paul is saying that we must back up our profession with a holy walk.

**Let's look at some cross references which help us understand the two aspects of the seal on the firm foundation...**

[Matthew 7:21-23](#)

**How do we know Jesus is speaking about authentic vs false believers in ([Mt 7:21-23](#))?**

He is giving the criteria for entrance into the **kingdom of heaven**

In [John 3:3](#) Jesus instructed Nicodemus "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

**First, what are not necessarily the criteria of an authentic believer?**

[v21](#) Not one who calls Jesus "Lord" (one who has absolute ownership and uncontrolled power - talking about Jesus as Lord while denying He is Lord with our walk is not a genuine believer).

The NLT paraphrases it this way "The decisive issue is whether they obey My Father in heaven."

These are ones who **name** the Name of the Lord and yet fail to **abstain** from wickedness.

[v22](#) **Prophecy, cast out demons, perform miracles** - all in His Name

**Note:** Jesus says there are "many" in this category

### Explanatory Note:

Jesus' audience was well aware of the difficulty presented by having **tares** or "**darnel**" in one's field because darnel looks very much like wheat during its earliest stages, so that early separation from wheat is nearly impossible until the grain ripens, when the darnel reveals its true nature by a black rather than yellow head seen on the wheat. **Separation** is further complicated by the fact that the roots of the two intertwine. Ingesting wheat contaminated with darnel can produce poisoning (sleepiness, nausea, convulsions, even death). Jews called darnel "degenerate wheat". The two plants can be separated out, but the custom was to leave the separation until near the time of harvest.

Note that the field is the **world**, not the church as taught by such notables as Augustine, Luther, and Calvin.

As long as God's people are still in this world (the field), there will be unbelievers among them. This present age is not for judging others but for proclaiming the gospel that they might be saved. Even the most knowledgeable believer is not qualified to infallibly distinguish between true and false believers. In the present age, believers are not God's instruments of judgment and destruction but of truth and grace.

[Lu13:22-23](#)

**What was the occasion for Jesus' teaching in ([Lu13:22-23](#))?**

**Question** = are just a few saved?

**How does Jesus answer the question about salvation ([Lu13:24-28](#))?**

Strive to enter by the narrow door

**Who is the narrow door?**

Jesus said "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved...no one comes to the Father, but through Me" ([John 10:9a, 14:6b](#))

**taken place? (see [1Co15:17](#))**

They have to be portraying the resurrection as a "spiritual" one and not a literal bodily resurrection

**Note:** Paul wrote about the crucial importance of the resurrection in [1 Corinthians 15](#) about 10 years earlier. The risen Christ clearly taught His resurrection was of a literal body and not simply a spiritual resurrection (see [Luke 24:36-39](#))

**What is the result of their unsound doctrine?**

Upset (overturn, overthrow, subvert) the faith of some

**Who less likely to have their faith upset?**

Those who have handled accurately the word of truth, who have not wrangled over words, who avoid worldly and empty chatter

**NOW GO BACK TO COLUMN 1**

**POINT 3**

<> >< ><

**(POINT 5)**

**How does [2Ti 2:20](#) relate to the seal Paul has just explained? What is the metaphor? What is the distinction drawn by the metaphor?**

Paul has noted that one aspect of the seal of authenticity is abstaining from evil

Now he speaks of 2 classes of people using the **metaphor** of a vessel in a house (most likely picturing the church) and distinguishes the vessels (people) as some fit for honor and some for dishonor

**Why does Paul state we must cleanse ourselves from dishonorable vessels? ([2Ti 2:21](#))**

His charge is to separate from the dishonorable so that we will be vessels for honor, set apart as those God can use for His good work. Paul wants Timothy and us to be useful for the Lord's purposes but since the Lord is holy, He can by definition only use holy vessels and therefore we must by all means seek to be holy as He is holy in order to be useful.

**Why is cleansing ourselves from**

**What then are the criteria of an authentic believer? How do these correlate with the "seal" that marks the firm foundation?**

**v21** He **does** (as the habit of their life = present tense) **the will of Jesus' Father in heaven**

**What then are the criteria of an unbeliever?**

**v23** He **practices** (present tense) **lawlessness**

These are ones who **name** the Name of the Lord and who do not **abstain** from wickedness.

**Explanatory Note:**

The Greek word "**practices**" (**ergazomai** from **ergon** = work) means to engage in an activity involving considerable expenditure of effort and so to toil energetically and diligently. The picture when combined with the present tense is that of a habitual or lifestyle manifest by energetic effort to live as if there are no laws or no God.

**J. C. Ryle** says, "The Lord Jesus winds up the Sermon on the Mount by a passage of heart-piercing application. He turns from false prophets to false professors, from unsound teachers to unsound hearers" Not only can false prophets deceive us about the way of salvation, but we can deceive ourselves.

**How do we know for certain these are not believers?**

Jesus declares

**"I never knew you"  
"Depart from Me"**

**Explanatory Note:**

The rabbis of that day used to love to debate the question of whether many or few would be saved. But Jesus won't be drawn into this debate. His response is, "see to that you are saved." Thus He did not give a direct answer but gave a command (present imperative) instead to. "**Strive**" (**agonizomai** - our English "agonize") which literally means keep on laboring earnestly like an athlete preparing for the Olympics. He was not saying to be saved by **human works for they do not save** us. We are saved by entering through Jesus "**the** (narrow) **door**" (John 10:9) for there is no other way to the Father. But why does Jesus say "Strive to enter"? We must strive because there are many obstacles in the way - the world, the devil and probably the worst obstacle, our own flesh. There is a real difference between a mere seeking and striving to enter. A casual wish to be saved isn't enough, because there are too many obstacles on the way. (See the sermon [Self-Effort](#) on Luke 13:24 by J C Ryle)

**Gill** comments that "**strive**" means to be diligent in the use of means; to search the Scriptures with care; to attend on the preaching of the word with constancy, neglecting no opportunity; to pray earnestly for spiritual light, knowledge, and grace; to contend with every enemy that opposes the salvation of the soul, as sin, Satan, and the world; to bear all reproaches and persecutions, and press through all difficulties....

**A W Pink** comments "Ah, my reader, becoming a Christian is not done simply by holding up your hand in a religious meeting or signing some "decision" card. Alas, that such multitudes have been deceived by these satanic catch-pennies. "Enter ye in at the strait gate." It is not enough to listen to preaching about this "gate," nor to study its structure or admire the wisdom of its appointment: it must be entered. Sermons on repentance and faith in Christ avail us nothing unless they move our hearts to comply therewith."

**Why such a serious command?**

When the door to salvation shuts it is final

**dishonorable vessels so important according to [1Cor 15:33](#)?**

Stop being deceived...it's true

Evil, godless company has a continual, progressive effect of causing good character to shrivel, wither and rot. Don't be deceived or fooled when this adverse effect on your character is not experienced immediately for it may not be obvious at first, but the slow destructive effect is certain. (honorable vessels will become defiled and are then not useful for God's good works)

**What does Paul's instruction to the Thessalonians teach us about cleansing ourselves from dishonorable vessels ([2Th 3:6](#))?**

Continually (present tense) keep aloof (shun, try to avoid, keep your distance) from every brother who leads an **unruly** life (freeloading, sponging, idle, lazy)

**How were they "out of order"? ([2Th 3:11](#))**

They were (1) undisciplined (2) doing no work (2) busybodies = meddling in other's business.

**What else do we learn about cleansing ourselves from dishonorable vessels ([2Th 3:14-15](#))?**

**v14** Do not associate with those who do not obey

**v14** Do not regard him as an enemy

**v15** Admonish him as a brother

**What other actions should vessels of honor take in order to assure we are useful to the Master for every good work? ([2Ti 2:22](#))**

Flee youthful lusts

Pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace

Seek those of pure hearts (honorable vessels) as we pursue godly virtues

Refuse foolish and ignorant speculations

**What is will foolish and ignorant speculations produce?**

Quarrels

**What are vessels of honor to be**

**Explanatory Note:**

"Never" is a strong Greek word meaning never at any time.

"Knew" (speaks of intimacy in this verse) does not mean Jesus did not know **about** them but that He had no intimate, new covenant oneness with them.

"Depart" is a command (present imperative) and is a rare NT Greek verb (**apochoreo** from **apo** = from, implying dissociation or separation + **choreo** = give space, go from a place) means to move away from, with emphasis upon separation, clearly a picture of eternal banishment of the unsaved to hell, the lake of fire.

**NOW GO TO COLUMN 2**

**POINT 4**

and many will seek to get in

**How does Jesus answer the pleas of those on the outside to get in?**

([Lu13:25,27](#))

Jesus does not know them  
(twice - does not know where from)

They are evildoers

(Literally "**workers** of iniquity" - the point is sin was not their hobby but their full time occupation and they worked hard at it!)

Jesus tells them to depart

**What does Jesus say that justifies His condemnation?**

He had fellowship with them  
He taught them - the point is that you can know something about Jesus and not be saved. You can be in the presence of Jesus and not be saved.

**Who is Peter warning about in [2Peter 2:1-22](#) and where are they found?**

False teachers "among you" (church)

[Secretly introduce](#) destructive heresies (commentary)

Deny (as the habit of their life = their actions, not their words = present tense)  
Jesus (Master) Who paid for their sins

**Example of those who do not abstain from evil**

**What truth that parallels the "seal" in [2Ti 2:19](#) do you see emphasized in the regard to God's judgments of the world by flood and Sodom and Gomorrah by fire?**

**God knows those who are His**

[v5](#) Preserved Noah and 7 others

(Preacher of righteousness = abstained from evil)

[v6-8](#) Rescued righteous Lot

[v9](#) the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment

**What truth about the false teachers does Peter present that is a warning to**

**instead? What should be our attitude toward our Master?**

We are to be as **bondservants** (our will entwined with the Master's will)

Not quarrelsome

Kind to all

Able to teach

Patient when wronged

With gentleness correcting those in opposition

**What might God bring about to those who oppose us?**

He might grant repentance

Repentance can lead them to a knowledge of the truth = the gospel

They might come to the senses

And escape from the snare of the devil

**What did the devil's snare result in?**

Their doing his will

**In light of all the truth about the seal of God and the children of God what is Paul's applicable instruction from ([2Cor 13:5](#))?**

[2Cor 13:5](#) says

"**Test** (present imperative) yourselves (not the other person but yourself!) to see if you are in the faith; **examine** (present imperative) yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you--unless indeed you **fail the test**?"

Check your lifestyle, your obedience, your deeds, your actions and if it does not bother you to live in habitual sin, then the problem be that you have deceived yourself and that you are not saved. Once saved, always saved is true assuming you were truly saved at the outset.

**all to continually abstain from evil ( [2Peter 2:19](#) )**

By what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved

**What ultimately proves these false teachers do not have God's "seal of authenticity" and approval ([2Peter 2:22](#))?**

"A dog returns to its own vomit"

"A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire"

Their actions ultimately speak louder than their words! Clearly they are not those who abstain from wickedness but in fact run into it!

**Explanatory Note:**

The Believer's Study Bible has a well worded note on [2Cor 13:5](#) writing that

"This verse is not intended to rob believers of the assurance and security of their salvation. It is, however, intended as a warning to those who would follow false teaching and adopt a life-style that is inconsistent with the message of reconciliation (cf. 12:20, 21). To persist in either activity is a cause for serious introspection and a testing to see whether or not one is truly "in the faith."

**NOW GO TO COLUMN 3**

**POINT 5**