

## Teaching Plan EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Date: July 28, 2019

Lesson Title: "Diligent"

Lesson Passage: 2 Timothy 2:14-26

### ABOUT THIS LESSON

Our lesson passage contains a wealth of advice related to church leadership, as Paul instructs Timothy, his young protegee' in ministry. He cautions him against squabbling over words, implying that such disputes can have a detrimental effect in a church. False prophets can lead naive followers astray, but those who claim the name of the Lord must stand aloof from such unrighteousness. If Timothy wants to be an effective Christian leader, he must resist the temptation to be quarrelsome; instead, he must discipline himself to be gentle with everyone, even those who need correction.

### TEACHING/LEARNING GOALS

(1) Describe two kinds heretical teachings that might have caused dissension in Ephesus. (2) Name three different words that are at the heart of disputes among Christians today.

### BEGINNING THE LESSON

Observe that disputes over words, the problem that Paul referred to as "word-battles" (2 Tim. 2:14) still troubles churches today: For example, in one Baptist church, a business meeting was disrupted by a dispute over whether or not the educational director should be listed as a "minister." A man who insisted that this title should always be reserved for pastors said angrily to the person who disagreed with his opinion, "Sit down, you're making a fool of yourself!" (Most of the people in the meeting were thinking, as Paul wrote to Timothy, that this dispute was "much ado about nothing.")

### TEACHING PROCEDURES

1. Comment on 2 Tim. 2:14-16: (1) In v. 14 Paul tells Timothy to give the people a solemn warning in the presence of God "not to fight over words" (literally, "do not word battle"). (2) Comment on the probable nature of the disputes referred to as "godless chatter" in verse 16: Paul is probably referring to two kinds of heretical influences that had crept into the Christian community in Ephesus. [a] Undoubtedly, there were still vestiges of the worship of the goddess, Artemis, which so saturated the daily customs of family and community life in Ephesus. [b] Many Bible scholars agree that the beliefs that were "falsely called knowledge" (1 Tim. 6:20) within the Ephesian congregation were incipient "Gnostic" teachings that, for example, questioned the Genesis creation account on the grounds that a good God could not have created an evil world. (They believed that the material world is totally bad, while the spiritual world is good.)  
APPLICATION: Today, a variety of terms are used to describe the Bible--infallible, inerrant, verbally inspired, plenary inspiration, and the like. While all these words express reverence for and belief in the Scriptures, they evoke considerable controversy.

2. Why should such disputes over words be avoided? In the first place, Paul argues, word-battles do no good (v. 14); in the second place, such "godless chatter" leads people into ungodliness (v. 16). In 2 Tim. 2:15 Paul presents the Christian alternative to wrangling over words: "Study" means "be eager," "do your best." "Rightly divid-ing" means "cutting straight" or "plowing a straight furrow." One Bi-ble scholar, Bill Hendrickson, phrases Paul's thought like this: "Handle the word of truth rightly instead of waging thoroughly use-less word-battles which upset the listeners, instead of paying any attention to profane, empty-chatter."

3. In 2 Tim. 2:17-18, Paul names two of the ringleaders of the heretical teachers who have misled people with their "empty chatter." Their names are Hymenaeus and Philetus. They have upset the faith of some by saying "the resurrection has already occurred." EXPLANATION: The Gnostics rejected the traditional doctrine of the resurrection, insisting that a Christian's resurrection occurred at baptism. While Paul believed that baptism symbolized a spiritual resurrection which occurred when God imparted new life to those who were dead in sins and trespasses (refer to Rom. 6:4; Eph. 2:5-6), he definitely taught the resurrection of the body, like that of Jesus when he was raised from the grave (1 Cor. 15:3-8,13). EXPLANATION: The heretical teach-ers denied the bodily resurrection, in keeping with the Gnostic be-lief that whatever is spiritual is good, and whatever is material is evil. So, they insisted, since the body consists of matter it is evil and, thus, cannot be raised from the dead.

4. Comment on Paul's precautionary warning to the young pastor Timothy against yielding to the desires of youth (v. 22): We are not quite sure what Paul had in mind, but he probably classified youth-ful desires in three categories: (1) Pleasures--food and drink, entertainment, sexual desires. (2) Power--dominance over others. (3) Possessions--greed, desire for money and possessions.

5. Observe that verses 23-24 echo the warning in vv. 14-16: First-century churches, like today's churches, were agitated by "stu-pid, senseless controversies" (v. 23). Paul was so disgusted with such quarreling that he told Timothy to have nothing to do with it.

## CLOSING THE LESSON

A final comment: Our criteria for Christian leaders should include Paul's warning, "the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome." But, on the positive side are the other three virtues mentioned in v. 24--kindness, skill in teaching and patience.

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