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# The Charge to Graduates -- 2007

## 2 Timothy 2:23-26

*(This outline was taken from a portion of the Level One Counseling Notes, Lecture 8, written by Pastor Russ Kennedy)*

**Introduction** OK, now I want everyone to ‘fess up – there are times when you want to be just like Dr. Switzer, aren’t there!! “Get a grip on life; quit living like the world revolves around you and just STOP IT!!!!”

And for those who are guests, I am hoping that by now, you realize that what you just saw was not what Biblical Counseling is all about.

However, there are great temptations when you are trying to help someone who is caught in sin, to get frustrated, exasperated, and impatient with that person who cannot see their situation from God’s viewpoint. Paul took some time, in the last letter that he wrote during this lifetime, to instruct a younger pastor in this very area. We find that exhortation in 2 Timothy 2 and I am going to very briefly look at verses 23-26. If you have your copy of God’s Word, please turn there with me.

Let’s ask God to help us see what a God-honoring counselor is to be and do. <PRAY>

<READ TEXT>

### **Dangers from your Adversaries** **(v.23)**

Make no mistake; this is in a difficult environment. Timothy faces people who will wage war with words, overwhelm with vain and empty chatter, distract with foolish and ignorant speculations and engender quarrels. They will wrong Timothy and even be in open opposition to him. So we are talking about loud, abusive, overbearing, public opposition aimed at overwhelming a young, timid elder. The danger from these kinds of adversaries or counselees comes when we allow their sin to cause us to respond in a wrong way. We must reject foolish and ignorant "what-ifs" because we know that it stirs up squabbling and bickering. The word ignorant here has the idea of “speculations of a half-educated mind”<sup>1</sup>. Remember our heart model? The heart, who we are on the inside, believes and wants. These foolish and ignorant controversies come from those who do not have a fully informed belief in the truths and promises of the Scriptures. They may have a great education in the things of this world, but they are lacking in the most important instruction for a believer – the truths of the Scriptures.

But in this abusive and abrasive atmosphere, look at what our attitudes and actions are to be. And by the way, this is good counsel of whom you are talking to.

### **Humbleness in your Attitude** **(v.24a)**

Any one in service to the King must have this very important attitude. It is utterly essential to those who serve as elders/pastors and it is to be developing in all others. We must see ourselves as God's bond-servants, His slaves.

Maybe the fact that our modern translations no longer use the word *slave* to translate this word is actually a loss to us. When I am facing overwhelming opposition that may pose suffering and call for courage, I must simply view myself as God's slave.

## Characteristics of your Approach

(v.24b-25a)

Now look at what grace enabled strength looks like in God's men and women.

### Not Quarrelsome

You are not given to being easily stirred up to fight. In fact, it literally means “it is not necessary for him to fight”<sup>ii</sup>. He is not always looking for a fight. This is important. Courage is not brashness. Standing for truth must not be rooted in pride. Frankly, we all know people like this: they love a good debate and will engage you at the least provocation. One of the reasons that this was so crucial to Timothy was because he would be so diametrically opposite of the false teachers of his day. One of the black eyes that have been given to the Biblical Counseling movement has been this caricature of being Bible thumpers and table thumpers. Almost that “STOP IT” mentality. This **MUST NOT** be, as Paul tells Timothy.

### Kind to All

How easy it is in the midst of suffering and opposition to become unkind. How easy it is when people we are responsible for disobey and rebel. How easy it is to lose sight of God's agenda during those times when we cannot understand the other person's inability to see their sin and their lack of belief. How easy it is to be unkind when the person says that they believe what the Bible teaches, but in the lives they live, then deny it.

### Able to Teach

Careful, able instruction is what is called for in the midst of Satan snared, willful opposition. Remember in verse 23 he talked about ignorant controversies – they were untrained, undisciplined, uneducated. This is the way that God gives for us to help those who are struggling – teaching them God's Word.

### Patient When Wronged

Dealing with people is going to require patience and endurance. It is so easy to become exasperated and frustrated with people's hardheartedness and stubbornness. Make no mistake here. As we give people the truth, there will be persecution. Paul warns Timothy about that later on in Chapter 3. We can be maligned by other people who are influential to those to whom we minister. We can be called ignorant, and simpletons by those who are “the educated” around us. But our response must be patience when wronged.

### Gentle Correction

The word that is used here refers to child training and chastening. We are to correct and chasten others with gentleness.

## Expectations in your Actions

(v.25b-26)

How can we do this? Isn't it true that when we stand for truth and confront error and chasten wrong that what we are after often is self-vindication and we want others to change NOW! We can be kind, able teachers, patient and gentle in our correction when we realize that it is God who must give them the power to change, repentance. After all that you do with the Word, accurately handled and ably communicated, at the end of the day, true and lasting repentance leading to change **is what God and God alone does.**

And that repentance does two very important, distinct, yet connected things:

It causes them to acknowledge the truth. Any change that is not truth oriented is not God empowered change. This is true whether we are dealing implicitly with error and heresy or with sinful conduct.

It causes them to have an "awakening" in the soul (come to their senses) that frees from the devil's bondage. They come to see – that is to believe by faith in the soul, some truth that illumines the trap our soul's enemy has laid for them.

What kind of people is Timothy confronting? He is dealing with men and women who were ensnared by the devil and were doing the bidding of his will. This is where the power of the Word arising from purity in life and gentleness in method ministers so helpfully to others.

“And that they may return to soberness out of the snare of the devil (having been held captive by him) to do God’s will.”<sup>iii</sup>

### Conclusion

Counselors, and all Christians for that matter, should never be known as “STOP IT” kind of people. God has given us this portion of Scripture so that we would be ministering the Word of God through able teaching, with much gentleness and patience. And we are to do this until God grants repentance, in His time, and in His way, so that people come to their senses and become sober-minded to do the will of God from hearts that are changed into believing the truth and wanting to please God, no matter what. May God help all of us to be these kinds of people for His Glory.

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<sup>i</sup> A.T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, Volume IV, Baker Book House: 1931, Page 621

<sup>ii</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>iii</sup> Marvin R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament, Volume III, Eerdmans Publishing: Reprinted 1989, Page 309.