

The Work of

Faithful Ministry

Handling Truth and Error

An Exegesis of 2 Timothy 2:14–19

Presented to the California Pastoral Conference

Vallejo, California

January 28–29, 2008

Pastor Johann W. Caauwe

Introduction

This section of Scripture was chosen for our study because it is about fellowship. It lays the groundwork and principles for church fellowship. It encourages us to view and handle correctly the truth (God's Word, the treasure of fellowship) and also the errors that threaten to destroy it.

But Paul was writing neither a dogmatics textbook nor a pastoral theology textbook. He does not give us a systematized outline of false teachings or a handbook of applications for any given situation. Paul was writing a letter to a young pastor. But since Paul knows that his ministry is nearly over, he gets to the heart of what gospel ministry is really all about. He offers himself as an example, a model. He gives instructions on how to carry out his ministry.¹

The letters are primarily about faithful ministry. It is interesting to notice how the doctrine of fellowship shows up in these letters. Perhaps it suggests how important this teaching and practice is. Perhaps it also suggests how relevant its study is for us.

Faithful ministry is hard work. There is no doubt about that and it is not news to any of us. St. Paul, the experienced missionary and pastor, knew that very well. And he would see to it that his young protégé Timothy got that message. Paul's second letter to Timothy is filled with encouragement to faithful ministry. In order to be able to do this work, Timothy needed encouragement and strength. He found that in the words of the faithful apostle, "You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2:1). May the grace of Christ also strengthen us to faithfully carry out the ministry he has given to us as we handle truth and error, even in these latter days.

Verse 14

Ταῦτα ὑπομίμνησκε διαμαρτυρόμενος ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ μὴ λογομαχεῖν, ἐπ' οὐδὲν χρήσιμον, ἐπὶ καταστροφῇ τῶν ἀκουόντων.

Keep on reminding [them of] these things, warning them before God not to battle about words. It is of no use and is disastrous to those who hear it.

Ταῦτα ὑπομίμνησκε

The Paul of 2nd Timothy is a reminiscent Paul. He is at the end of his ministry and it is only natural for him to look back. In chapter 1 Paul remembers (*ὑπόμνησιν*) Timothy's faith and how that faith came to be. But always a pastor, Paul uses those memories to remind (*ἀναμνησκω*) Timothy "to fan into flame the gift of God."

In 2:8, Paul told Timothy to "remember (*Μνημόνευε*) Jesus Christ." Now Paul is asking Timothy to look back to all the things Paul passed on to him, and pass them on to others. *ὑπομίμνησκε* is a present imperative, an activity Timothy has been doing and is to continue doing. It suggests that it is something he will have to do on a regular basis. So this is not simply a matter of imparting knowledge. These are things he is going to have to repeat over and over again.

The object of the verb is *Ταῦτα*. "These things" are the things of which Paul has been reminding Timothy. He has reminded him of God's grace (1:9), the gospel (1:10), the hardship and suffering

¹ There are 76 imperatives in Paul's two letters to Timothy. Only the letter of James has a higher occurrence of imperatives in the New Testament.

that come as a result of this ministry (1:12; 2:3, 9,10), and trustworthy sayings about living and dying with Christ (11-13).

Whom is Timothy to be reminding? Most likely Paul has in mind the “reliable men” to whom Timothy is entrusting Paul’s message: *ταῦτα παράθου πιστοῖς ἀνθρώποις* (2:2). Timothy now has the role of trainer and teacher. He is now passing on to others what Paul passed on to him.

διαμαρτυρόμενος ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ

διαμαρτυρόμενος is a present participle of attendant circumstance. At the same time that Timothy is reminding them about the truth, he also must teach them how to handle error.

In 1 Timothy 5:21 Paul used this same phrase in the first person (*Διαμαρτύρομαι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ*). There he was charging Timothy to guard these things (*ταῦτα*). Again, what Paul did to Timothy, he is now to do for others. He is to earnestly testify with God as his witness. Used with the infinitive, it takes on the form of a solemn charge or warning.

μὴ λογομαχεῖν

This is the prohibition Timothy is to pass on to his audience.

What does Paul mean by “battling about words”? First we can rule out the possibility that Paul is minimizing the importance of words or that words are not worth fighting for. Paul considered words—the words of Scripture—very important. Even individual words and their grammar and syntax are important to Paul. Consider the argument he made in Galatians on the basis of the singular form of the word “seed.”² Or consider the mass of writing and speaking that Paul employed as he “fought the good fight” (4:7). So Paul is not talking about using words to make doctrinal points from Scripture—even if it’s a battle.

Is he talking about fighting over words when there is no real disagreement? Possibly. Luther makes the comment that *λογομαχεῖν* means “to be in agreement in substance and yet to quarrel about words.”³ Our Seminary dogmatics notes also make the point: “Complete agreement in doctrinal terminology is not necessary for church fellowship. We should not battle about mere words.” This is a valid point, but perhaps not the one Paul is making in this context.

Isn’t this basically the same threat that Timothy has been dealing with all along? In his first letter, Paul writes, “If anyone teaches false doctrine and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words (*λογομαχίας*)...” (1Tim 6:3,4). The description of the one who quarrels about words is that of a false teacher. The nature of the false teaching is not spelled out here, but he does mention two problems with it:

ἐπ’ οὐδὲν χρήσιμον

Nothing useful or productive comes out of this kind of arguing. It does not edify or strengthen faith.

² Galatians 3:16. You might also think of the church’s battle over single words in doctrinal controversies.

ὁμοούσιος (Athanasius vs. Arius), *est* (Luther vs. Zwingli). These were battles for the truth, not battles about words.

³ Luther’s Works. Vol. 40, p. 119.

ἐπὶ is the only preposition that is regularly used with the dative, accusative and genitive cases.⁴ Here it is used with two cases in one sentence. Both uses seem to have the result of λογομαχεῖν in mind.

ἐπὶ καταστροφῇ τῶν ἀκουόντων

But this kind of talk is not neutral. It's not just a waste of time. στρέφω means to turn. καταστροφή means to overturn in a negative sense. This is what Jesus did to the tables in the temple. The LXX uses it for the destruction of Sodom. This is dangerous stuff. The people who are listening to these battles are in serious spiritual danger. Paul will elaborate more on this in vs. 16.

Verse 15

σπούδασον σεαυτὸν δόκιμον παραστήσαι τῷ θεῷ, ἐργάτην ἀνεπαίσχυντον, ὀρθοτομοῦντα τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας

Make every effort to present yourself approved before God as a worker with no need for shame, as you correctly handle the word of truth.

σπούδασον

The basic meaning of σπουδάζω is to hurry. It then takes on the idea of the effort and determination needed to hurry something along. There is work involved in this. This is also something that Timothy must continue doing, but the aorist emphasizes that you just have to *do* it.⁵

σεαυτὸν δόκιμον παραστήσαι τῷ θεῷ

This is what we're working towards. παρίστημι means to present something for use. Ministers present themselves at God's disposal. But we also want to present ourselves as δόκιμον. There is testing involved. Something that is δόκιμον is tested and is found to be authentic and reliable. Ministers would be of no use if their words were merely words. If their message was false, they would not be approved, but instead proven to be counterfeit.

⁴ Blass, DeBrunner, & Funk. *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961. p. 122.

⁵ While the KJV's translation "study" may not be the best modern English translation of σπουδάζω, it does suggest an application for pastors. We dare never forget this aspect of the work.

A pastor must not simply regard it as a good way to relax from his official duties when he can on occasion, in moments of leisure, engross himself in Scripture and theology. No, here he has God's command. The apostle of Jesus Christ makes the demand of every Christian bishop that he occupy himself constantly with doctrine and Scripture . . . This quiet, solitary work in his study does not have the same glamour as other portions of his pastoral activity, as when the pastor has direct contact with the congregation and its members, and is more tedious, demands more exertion and mental effort than any other official act. Therefore, a pastor is well nigh tempted to dispense with this duty and labor much more easily and much more quickly than with other official duties. But there he had better consider that the apostle, where he begins to set forth the real work of a bishop, mentions continuing pursuit of doctrine, of Scripture, as the main duty of a bishop and as a necessary basis and requisite for all wholesome speaking, teaching, exhorting, and rebuking. (George Stöckhardt on Titus)

Ministers work to present themselves for service τῷ θεῷ. They serve God and they seek approval from God. They are responsible to him for the work they have done on his behalf, as his spokesmen. This precludes any kind of people-pleasing. That's not the goal.

ἐργάτην ἀνεπαίσχυντον

This phrase is appositional to δόκιμον. An ἐργάτην is usually someone who works for hire, but is also used for those whose work is proclaiming (2 Cor 11:3, Phil. 3:2, Matt. 9:37/Luke 10:2). The *worker* idea underscores the effort of σπούδασον and makes a connection to the soldier, the athlete, and the farmer in verses 3–6. The minister of God understands his role in terms of the work God has given him to do.

The verbal adjective ἀνεπαίσχυντον tells us more about what kind of worker a minister aims to be. The shame in αἰσχύνω is not so much the feeling of shame, but the act of being disgraced, or shamed. In the Septuagint God is usually the subject.⁶ It seems to have more to do with the minister's relationship with God than his appearance before men (their favor or disfavor). Misusing God's Word would bring shame to a minister before God. He works hard to avoid that. The next phrase tells us how.

ὀρθοτομοῦντα τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας.

This participle is derived from the words ὀρθός and τέμνω. "Cut straight." The word is used in the LXX in Proverbs 3:6 "He will make your paths straight."

Obviously the phrase is a metaphor for handling the word of truth. But what is the main picture behind the word? BAGD suggests "guide the word of truth along a straight line" without being turned aside. Or perhaps the straight line is a road or path being cut (TDNT, VII, 111). That would draw a parallel to Galatians 2:14, where Paul notes that Peter and others were not "walking in line with the truth of the gospel" (ὀρθοποδοῦσιν πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου). Another illustration used is that of stonecutters making straight cuts so that stones may fit precisely into place or that of a farmer who plows a straight furrow.

Luther translates the phrase *recht teile*. The Word of truth is a whole and must be divided properly. Prof. Habeck explains, "So much is contained in the Word that it is impossible to use all of it in a given situation. It takes skill to determine which portion of the Word is to be applied to people in the changing circumstances of life."⁷ Walther explains possible origins of this interpretation: "The term ὀρθοτομοῦντα in this text, which has been rendered by 'rightly dividing,' is plainly used in a metaphorical sense. It is derived either from the action of priests when dividing the sacrificial offerings or from that of the head of a family when he apportions food and drink to the members of his household. The latter meaning seems to be the correct one; however, many of our theologians adopt the former."⁸

Moulton and Milligan, however, suggest that the emphasis should be on the adjective portion of the word.⁹ The point is that whatever it is we are doing with the Word, we should handle it correctly. It

⁶ TDNT, Vol. 1, p. 189.

⁷ Habeck, Irwin. *2 Timothy: Be Strong*. NPH, 1997. p. 44.

⁸ Walther, *Law & Gospel* p. 33

⁹ Moulton & Milligan, *Vocabulary of the New Testament*, p. 456.

is true (as Habecq notes) that this makes the applications of the phrase much more general, but it still includes the idea of properly distinguishing between law and gospel. We might note that there really is no correct use of the Word that is not an application of law or gospel.

However you translate the verb, this action has “the word of truth” as its object. The work of faithful ministry before God is properly doing something with the Word. Sometimes people will make the point that it is important to be faithful *with* the Word as well as *to* the Word. We might ask, however, “What’s the difference?” There is none. You cannot do one without the other.

The Word of Truth is not a portion of the Word of God. All of God’s Word is truth (Jn 17:17). Therefore, there is no portion of God’s Word that does not need to be handled correctly and no doctrine of Scripture is dispensable or unimportant.

Verse 16

τὰς δὲ βεβήλους κενοφωνίας περιῖτασο· ἐπὶ πλεῖον γὰρ προκόψουσιν ἀσεβείας

Turn your back on profane and empty talk; because [those who speak it] will advance even more into godlessness.

τὰς δὲ βεβήλους κενοφωνίας

With the δὲ Paul is returning to the discussion about quarreling about words. There is a sharp contrast between the Word of Truth and this kind of talk.

βεβήλους describes things that are common, in the sense that they do not belong in holy places, but only in common areas. βεβήλους words are those words that would not be proper in holy places. This kind of profanity is irreligious and irreverent. It does not belong with those who claim to speak of holy things.¹⁰

κενοφωνίας is empty talk. It describes words with no meaningful content.

Assuming that this is the same problem as at the end of 1 Timothy where the same words are used (6:20), and assuming that it’s the same problem as the “myths and endless genealogies” (1Tim 1:4) and the “godless myths and old wives’ tales” (1 Tim 4:7) and the word-quarrels (1 Tim 6:2) and the foolish and stupid arguments (2:23), Timothy is dealing with an ongoing problem in Ephesus. In the year(s) between his letters to Timothy the problem had not gone away. The work of dealing with error—whether it is from the outside or from within—takes time. It does not go away overnight.

περιῖτασο

How is Timothy to handle this kind of talk? Turn around and get away from it. περιῖστημι in the middle means to turn around for the purpose of avoiding.¹¹ The translation *avoid* probably doesn’t capture the strength of the vocable. Turn your back on this teaching. Don’t give it the time of day. Don’t contribute to it or waste your time debating it.

The present tense illustrates that this is an ongoing problem and needs to constantly be dealt with.

¹⁰ Most commentators describe the false teachings in Ephesus as an early form of gnosticism. If the Gnostics felt they had an inside track to God, Paul is saying that they are on the outside because of their teaching.

¹¹ Thayer, on περιῖστημι

ἐπὶ πλεῖον γὰρ προκόψουσιν ἀσεβείας

γὰρ provides the rationale for dealing with the problem this way. The subject of *προκόψουσιν* is either the teachings or the people who are doing the teaching. The *αὐτῶν* of the next verse suggests the latter.¹² They (the teachers) will advance even more. They will progress. *ἐπὶ πλεῖον* suggests that some progress had been made already. In the future more progress will be made. Even though these teachings are empty and are of no use, they are not static. What kind of progress are they making?

ἀσεβείας is a partitive genitive with the comparative *πλεῖον*, “more of ungodliness.” These teachers are making progress, but they are only removing themselves and their hearers further away from true worship of God and faith in God. Even though these words are “empty,” they are far from harmless.

Verse 17

καὶ ὁ λόγος αὐτῶν ὡς γάγγραινα νομὴν ἔξει. ὧν ἐστὶν Ὑμέναιος καὶ Φίλητος

And their teaching will grow like gangrene. Among them is Hymenaeus and Philetus.

καὶ ὁ λόγος αὐτῶν ὡς γάγγραινα νομὴν ἔξει.

καὶ gives a second reason to turn away from these teachings. Not only are the teachers making progress in ungodliness, but their teachings are hard at work as well.

There are two vivid word pictures that Paul uses here. The first is in the verb. *νομὴν ἔξει* literally means to “have pasture.” Picture a cow grazing in the field. The cow only stands still as long as there is grass within reach. If she wants more, she has to move. False teaching always looks for a place where it can feed, grow, and flourish.

The second picture adds to the first. False teaching feeds “like gangrene.” Gangrene is defined as “localized death and decomposition of body tissue, resulting from either obstructed circulation or bacterial infection.”¹³ Whereas animals go to pasture to live and grow. False teaching feeds and grows so that it may kill. It destroys. Left unchecked, it will kill. It requires dramatic measures to prevent it from spreading further. Very often the only way to prevent the death of the whole body is to cut off the infected limb.

ὧν ἐστὶν Ὑμέναιος καὶ Φίλητος.

Now Paul gets specific. He names names. He wants Timothy and the others in Ephesus to know that this is not some hypothetical false teaching. He’s not just saying, “False teaching is really bad and there are false teachers out there.” This was really happening in their midst. It was people that they knew.

The relative *ὧν* is a partitive genitive indicating that these two men are part of a larger group of teachers—these are just two examples. Hymenaeus is likely the same as in the former letter, whom Paul had “handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme” (1 Tim. 1:20) Nothing more is known about Philetus.

¹² Add to it the fact that in the next chapter Paul writes that evil men will go (*προκόψουσιν*) from bad to worse (vs 13).

¹³ New Oxford American Dictionary

Verse 18

οἵτινες περὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἡστούχησαν, λέγοντες [τὴν] ἀνάστασιν ἤδη γεγονέναι, καὶ ἀνατρέπουσιν τὴν τινῶν πίστιν.

who have lost their way concerning the faith, saying that the resurrection already happened, and they are overturning the faith of some.

οἵτινες περὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἡστούχησαν

οἵτινες takes the place of the simple relative and points back to the group of teachers of which these two are included. ἀστοχέω means to miss the mark or to go astray. The verb στοχάζομαι means to aim or shoot at. We might assume that these teachers were aiming for the truth. And they no doubt thought they had it. They were wrong. But they missed—by a mile. In effect, these teachers have done the exact opposite of “correctly handling the word of truth.”

λέγοντες [τὴν] ἀνάστασιν ἤδη γεγονέναι

Just as Paul previously named some of the teachers, he now names one of the teachings which missed the mark. The circumstantial participle tells us how it happened. They said that the resurrection had already happened.

The UBS editors apparently include the article τὴν in brackets because manuscript **8** and a handful of others do not include the article. There is still considerable early and widespread support for keeping the article. The resurrection these teachers are referring to is the resurrection from the dead. But since they claim that it has already taken place, they are, in fact, not talking about *the* resurrection. The resurrection that has already taken place (so they say) must be a spiritual resurrection, a resurrection that occurred at conversion or baptism (Romans 6). The spiritual resurrection of conversion has happened indeed, but that is not what Jesus promised on the last day. By “believing” in this resurrection, they denied the bodily resurrection from the dead on the last day. And, as Paul points out in 1 Corinthians 15, it also denies Christ’s resurrection. “And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless (κενος) and so is your faith” (1 Cor 15:14).

Here we finally have a concrete example of the false teaching that Timothy was up against. But notice that Paul does not give us a laundry list of the errors and false teachings present in Ephesus 67 A.D. There were certainly others. But he only cites this one. You might argue that he mentions this one because it is such a fundamental truth and because of the potential damage caused by denying it (cf. next phrase).

But perhaps Paul mentions just one example because he is really talking about error and false teaching in general.¹⁴ It really doesn’t matter what the teaching is—it’s false! If you wander from the truth, it doesn’t matter which direction you’re going. If you divert from the narrow middle road, you will find yourself in the ditch. Does it really matter what side of the road you fall off?

καὶ ἀνατρέπουσιν τὴν τινῶν πίστιν

This καὶ connects the two main verbs. They wandered away (aorist) and now (as a result) they are overturning people’s faith (present). The resurrection is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. Casting doubt upon this foundation is like tipping it all upside-down. A single doctrine falsified is

¹⁴ Notice that the main verb here is “wandered away from the truth.” This is the key thought. The resurrection is an example.

capable of destroying faith—any single doctrine. All you need to do is carry it to its logical conclusion and it will turn faith upside down. Paul warns that this is what is happening to some.

But not all. There are some who have not been led astray by these teachers. The next verse explains why.

Verse 19

ὁ μέντοι στερεὸς θεμέλιος τοῦ θεοῦ ἔστηκεν, ἔχων τὴν σφραγίδα ταύτην· ἔγνω κύριος τοὺς ὄντας αὐτοῦ, καὶ· ἀποστήτω ἀπὸ ἀδικίας πᾶς ὁ ὀνομάζων τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου.

But the firm foundation of God stands. It has this seal: “The Lord knows those who are his” and “Let the one who calls on the name of the Lord turn from unrighteousness.”

ὁ μέντοι στερεὸς θεμέλιος τοῦ θεοῦ ἔστηκεν

μέντοι provides a contrast. False teaching will bring destruction. It will rock the boat and shake things up, BUT it cannot shake the “firm foundation of God.” What is God’s foundation? What is God building? God is building up his church. Paul uses a different word in 1 Tim 3:15, but the picture is the same: “...God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation (ἐδραίωμα) of the truth.”¹⁵

God’s foundation is firm (στερεὸς - solid, hard) and it stands (ἔστηκεν - perfect). Once the foundation is laid it will continue to stand forever.

ἔχων τὴν σφραγίδα ταύτην

Lest anyone doubt that God’s foundation is still standing, considering all the attacks that have been made upon it. God has placed a seal upon his foundation. A seal on a document proves that the document is authentic and legally binding. The seal on an envelope certifies that it has not been tampered with.

σφραγίδα is singular. There is one seal, but has two mottos inscribed on it.

ἔγνω κύριος τοὺς ὄντας αὐτοῦ

The aorist ἔγνω is not referring to an action in time. Most commentators refer to this as the gnomic aorist. It is an act that is good for all time. But it is not simply a present. It is not merely acknowledging the Lord’s knowledge right now. We are talking about the knowledge God *always* has. God always *has* and always *does* know who are his. These words incorporate both election and preservation. In eternity God (fore)knew his own. In time God knows those who are his.

God’s knowledge of his own is also not merely a tally of those who currently believe. γινώσκω is a personal, intimate knowledge. The Lord knows his own in the same way that the Good Shepherd knows his sheep (γινώσκω). And just as the Good Shepherd protects the members of his flock from wolves, so this seal reminds the church that God is also protecting it and defending it from all attacks.

¹⁵ See also Eph 2:19,20

Elijah didn't know how many in Israel had not yet bowed the knee to Baal. But God knew. The disciples and the apostles didn't know which sheep were in Jesus' fold and which ones were yet to enter. But the Good Shepherd knows his sheep. Paul and Timothy did not know who would turn their backs on the false teaching of Hymenaeus and Philetus. But the Lord knew who were his. And the ones he knows, he loves and cares deeply for.

God knows those who are his, even when we don't. We cannot see into the hearts of man to see if faith is present there. That's not our job. Our job is to handle God's truth faithfully, and therefore turn from wickedness.

καί· ἀποστήτω ἀπὸ ἀδικίας πᾶς ὁ ὀνομάζων τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου

The second part of the seal is talking about the same group of people. Those who “name the name of the Lord” are those who belong to the Lord. *ὀνομάζων* is a present participle, emphasizing that these people continue to acclaim Jesus as Lord. It is not a one-time confession. They are regularly and consistently naming the Lord with the name by which he wants to be called. We don't get to choose. We “name” God according to what he has revealed about himself in his Word.

For those who are doing that, the only thing left to do is to withdraw from unrighteousness. This is the aorist imperative of *ἀφίστημι*, but it requires no arm-twisting. These people are already doing part of it by confessing the truth. The next step is a natural one: dissociate from error.

The word *ἀδικία* means “injustice” or “unrighteousness.” It can refer to a moral violation of God's law—a sin. It is the opposite of *δικαιοσύνη*. But it is also used as the opposite of *ἀλήθεια*.¹⁶ In that case, the unrighteousness that faithful confessors are to turn away from is any attack on the truth. That is what Paul did in Ephesus when the people in the synagogue “refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left (*ἀφίστημι*) them” (Acts 19:9).

Concluding Thoughts

In this section Paul shows Timothy and us that handling the truth and error is central to the work of the ministry. And it is work. But this same thing is true of our work of practicing biblical fellowship. At the center of it is the truth. How do we handle the truth? By reminding ourselves and others of what we have learned. We make every effort (study!) to handle the word properly because it is the Lord's Word we are handling and we are responsible to him. But ultimately we place our proclamation of the truth in God's hands. We commend the results of our work to him, for he alone knows who are his. We simply confess his name.

What about error? What has Paul taught us about handling error? While it is void of any meaningful content or eternal significance, it is dangerous. It produces ungodliness and the error itself spreads. It feeds and spreads until faith has been destroyed. Even denying a single article of faith can overturn faith.

How do we handle the truth? We avoid it and stay away from it—not in the sense that we pretend it doesn't exist—but we take no part in it and give no help or support to those who teach it.

¹⁶ Examples include Jn 7:18; 2 Th. 2:12; 1 Cor 13:6; Ro 1:18 (TDNT, on *ἀδικία*)

I suppose these verses suggest a wide range of applications to our ministry as a whole and to fellowship topics in particular. Those are worth exploring. I suspect that will also be the work of the preceding papers on fellowship topics in conferences to come.

But I am convinced that these verses of 2nd Timothy clearly set forth the actual principles of the doctrine of fellowship. The principles, simply put, are these: Handle the truth correctly by holding to it and teaching it. Then handle error correctly by turning away from it and those who teach it. Maybe that sounds simplistic. We can spend many more hours and many years going so much deeper than that. But when we do that—when we go to the Word of Truth for our principles of faithful ministry—whether we’re studying fellowship or any other doctrine—we’ll be right where we need to be.

Bibliography

- Bauer, Walter, William Arndt, Felix Gingrich, Frederick Danker. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979.
- Blass, F. and A. DeBrunner. *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
- Habeck, Irwin. *2 Timothy: Be Strong*. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997.
- Kittel, Gerhard. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmanns Publishing Company, 1972.
- Lenski, R.C.H. *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle's to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1937.
- Moulton, James, and George Milligan. *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1929.
- Pieper, August. *Paul, A Model of the Certainty of Faith, Especially for All Servants of the Word*. Tr. John Jeske. Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly. NPH, July 1975.
- Schuetze, Armin. *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*. The People's Bible. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1991.