

## VESSELS OF HONOR

(2 Tim 2:19-21)

A. **We make** so many decisions every day that sometimes we fail to distinguish between the important ones & the unimportant ones.

1. It takes a certain degree of maturity & wisdom to give the right priority to our decisions.

B. **The decision** to become a disciple of Jesus Christ is obviously a very important decision.

1. Jesus said that we should “count the cost” before making that decision (Read [Luke 14:25-33](#); [John 14:6](#)).

a. There are worse things in life than being made fun of for running out of money on a construction project, & for making a treaty with the enemy because you lacked the troops to fight his much larger army.

b. Jesus is not saying that when you count the cost of being His disciple, if you find it to be too high, then just forget it – take the ribbing – and go back to what you were doing.

c. No, He is saying that we should know beforehand that we may have to part with relatives, property & even our ambitions if we want to follow Him – *in fact, we will have to part with some of those things.*

3. If you have made the decision to become a disciple of Christ, by obeying the gospel, then God has added you to His House in which Jesus is the Chief Son ([1 Tim 3:15](#); [Heb 3:6](#)). **Read text**

C. **In God’s House**, as in every household, there are many objects of varying uses & values.

1. Some are irreplaceable, while others may be thrown away – *you have things in your home that you know you will eventually just throw out.*

2. God's house is a "great house"; it is full of souls, which have the capability of existing indefinitely.
  - a. Some of those souls "vessels" are useful & thus valuable to God, while others are not.
  - b. By way of illustration, those vessels range from the finest china to the broken flower pot.

[The beauty in our text is that Paul tells us we can choose to be a "vessel of honor" instead of a "vessel of dishonor".

That's what we're interested in doing, so how is it done? The answer is in **2 Timothy 2:21**.

Remember, these are Paul's final words to Timothy; everything Paul wrote in this letter had a sense of urgency.

The same urgency as in Peter's words when he told the Jews to "save yourselves", also applies to a new child of God who is still trying to make up his mind what kind of "vessel" he wants to be.

How can we be a "vessel of honor" in God's House?]

## I. PURGE YOURSELF FROM VESSELS OF DISHONOR

- A. **There are times** when we must protect ourselves from the corrupting influences of those who wear the name "Christian" (**1 Jn 2:19; Acts 15:24**).

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**Acts 15:24** (Apostles sent out a letter warning the Gentile churches) – some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "You must be circumcised & keep the law" — **to whom we gave no such commandment**.

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1. In our text, Paul was admonishing Timothy not to pal around with a "vessel of dishonor".
2. When Paul wrote his prison epistles, there was a man working with him by the name of Demas (**Col 4:14; Philemon 24**).
  - a. Timothy knew Demas well, but Paul informed Timothy that Demas had forsaken him for the love of the world (**2 Tim 4:10**).

- b. Now what might Demas have done to Timothy's mind if Timothy had allowed that relationship to continue?
- c. "Timothy, come to Thessalonica with me. It's better than Disney World. I didn't know it was going to be so hard to work with Paul in preaching. We've got plenty of time to be Christians later." — *Do you have somebody like that in your life?*

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**2 Tim 2:22** – *Flee also youthful lusts*; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

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[It's a hard saying, but sometimes we have to purge ourselves of relationships, even in the House of God.]

How can we be a "vessel of honor"?

## II. BE "SANCTIFIED"

- A. **To be set aside** for God's special use is to be sanctified (it is to be a saint: **1 Cor 1:2**).

- 1. In the OT – there were many things that God wanted sanctified (some living, some non-living).
  - a. An improper use of those things carried the death penalty (**Exo 29; 30, 37; 38; Heb 10:29**).
  - b. Nadab & Abihu misused a little incense, & one man simply went out to pick up sticks one Sabbath day (**Num 10; 15**), & they all died.
  - c. Why? Because the incense was set aside for God's special use; it was not to be brought into contact with any fire but that which God had commanded. The Sabbath was set aside for God's special use; no physical labor was to be done on that day.

- B. **What does this mean** for us? God is serious about what He sanctifies.

- 1. If you are in His House, then you are sanctified for His use alone.

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1 Thess 4:3-7 – For **this is the will of God, your sanctification**: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification & honor, 5 not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 that no one should take advantage of & defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you & testified. 7 For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.

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2. Jesus prayed that the Father would sanctify us by His Word (Jn 17:17), so it follows that the more familiar we are with God's word the more sanctified we can be.
  
3. Peter said that if we will sanctify the Lord God in our hearts, then we will be ready to give an answer to others for our hope (1 Pet 3:15).

[A “vessel of honor” is set apart from all the other vessels in a house (the best china goes into the cabinet for special occasions).

Thirdly, how can we be a “vessel of honor”?]

### III. BE “USEFUL FOR THE MASTER”

A. A “vessel of honor” wants *not only* to be in the House of God, but also to be useful to Him.

1. In the Parable of the Talents we learn that each one of us has some quality that can be useful in the Master's house, but whether we use those talents is entirely up to us (Matt 25:14ff)
  
2. A crystal goblet filled with cooking grease won't be useful until it is emptied.
  - a. So we may need to clear out of our lives many habits, ambitions & goals that are interfering with what our Master wants us to do for Him.

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“Christ has no hands but our hands to do His work today. **What** if our hands are busy with other things than His? He has no feet but our feet to lead men in His way. **What** if our feet are walking where sins allurements is? He has no tongues but our tongues to tell men how He died. **What** if our tongues are speaking of things His life would spurn? How can we hope to help Him & welcome His return?

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[A “vessel of honor” is “useful for the Master” – I'm afraid all the others He will dispose of eventually (cf. Rom 9).

Finally, to be a “vessel of honor”...]

#### IV. BE “PREPARED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK”

A. A “vessel of honor” is one that is at hand, nearby & ready to be used.

1. The mixing bowl you can't find is not only aggravating, it does you no good because it cannot serve its purpose.
2. By the same token, the Christian who hides from the Lord's service has no value or use to Him.

B. Every cook has her or his favorite utensils.

1. They may not be new – they may be well “seasoned” – but they do the job better than anything else you have.

2. One of the lessons for us in this text is that God our Father sees us in the same way.

- a. Each one of us – a vessel in God's House – can do something in the House as well or better than anyone else.
- b. Our Father will gladly bear with us through the process of “seasoning”, because He knows what we are capable of doing.
- c. We start out a little clumsy & unsure of ourselves, but over time we become more useful to Him – *we become better “prepared for every good work”*.

#### CLOSING

A. To be a “vessel of honor” in the house of God, it is imperative that we...

1. *Cleanse ourselves* from defiling influences.
2. *Sanctify our lives* to suit the Lord's purposes.
3. *Strive to be useful* to the Master.
4. *Be prepared* to do all we are capable of doing.

**GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR SALVATION:**

**Hear the gospel of Jesus Christ; read it in your Bible:** Acts 2; 3; 13; 17; Rom 10:17

**Believe Jesus to be Lord and Christ, the Son of God and Savior:** Acts 2:36; John 3:16; 8:24; 20:30-31; Acts 4:12; Titus 1:4

**Repent of your sins:** Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 1 John 3:4

**Confess your faith in Jesus Christ:** Matt 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Rom 10:9-10

**Be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins:** Acts 2:38; Rom 6:3-4; Gal 3:27; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet 3:21

**Be obedient to the Lord, He will be your Judge:** Titus 2:11-12; Heb 5:9; 2 John 9; Rev 2:10; John 12:48