

Leaving the Garbage Behind - Cleansing from Your Past

A Bible Study for Step 4 - II Timothy 2:15 & 19-26

Verses 15 & 19 "Be diligent (study) to present yourself approved unto God, a worker who **does not need to be ashamed**, rightly dividing the word of truth." "Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and, 'Let everyone who names the name of Christ **depart from iniquity**.'"

This message from Second Timothy was written to Christians - "those who are His," and "who name the name of Christ." If **we belong to Jesus Christ**, there are some instructions here for our complete healing from the wreckage of the past. Most of us have SHAME issues, and some of us have spent most of our lives **looking for APPROVAL or LOVE** from someone, whether parents, teachers, husband or wife, "significant others" or whoever, and never finding it. The idea of being "**APPROVED unto God, a worker who does NOT need to be ASHAMED**" is almost more than we can understand or receive! But it is possible; it just takes some diligence on our part in two areas: 1.) Studying God's word, in order to rightly (correctly) understand it; and 2.) Departing from (leaving behind) iniquities (sins) and getting rid of the entanglements of the past.

What does it mean to "**depart from Iniquity**"? Iniquity is "**any violation of God's order or laws**." If you have personally violated some of God's laws, you must repent (depart, turn away from them), but you may also need **DELIVERANCE and CLEANSING from the EFFECTS or consequences** of having broken His laws. When God's laws are violated over a long period of time, **it produces BONDAGE or STRONGHOLDS in your life**. Maybe you were an innocent VICTIM, and someone else BROKE GOD'S LAWS and sinned against YOU in some way in your upbringing and childhood, or at any time in your past. If that is the case, you must **DEPART from the iniquity done TO you by FORGIVING the offender**, and giving them up to God. This is the only way to **NOT keep dragging all that old pain and garbage** with you through the rest of your Christian life here on earth. The iniquity done to you could be any number of things: physical or sexual abuse, verbal abuse (harsh words, condemnation), a parent you were never able to please, rejection or ridicule, or just lack of love. The resentment, bitterness and low self esteem resulting from these actions against you can and will **hold you back from being all that God wants you to be**, until you deal with them, and once and for all DEPART from them.

Verses 20-21 "But in a great house there are vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore **if anyone CLEANSSES HIMSELF** from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, **SANCTIFIED and USEFUL for the Master, prepared for every good work**."

Verse 20 starts out with the picture of a "great house" or mansion which is a picture of all of us Christians as members of God's household. We are the ones who CHOOSE what position we will have in God's household: a vessel of honor, or a vessel of dishonor, meaning a container for HONORABLE USE or for DISHONORABLE USE. If our lives are **still FULL of pollution and garbage**, God can't use us for anything honorable - **He can't FILL us with His Holy Spirit**. And if we are not FILLED with the Holy Spirit, the things we do for the Lord are being done with mixed motives and in the power of the flesh. It becomes the difference between "gold, silver and precious jewels" and "wood, hay and stubble" (see I Corinthians 3:11-15). You will be able to serve God out of the PUREST of MOTIVES when you get rid of all the co-dependent,

self-seeking behavior patterns in your life. Notice how it says **"if anyone CLEANSSES HIMSELF"** from the latter (latter means the old stuff, the iniquity from the past). This is NOT talking about salvation and being born again. God CLEANSED you from the PENALTY of sin when you accepted Jesus Christ, and the blood of Jesus continually cleanses you. This is talking about getting rid of hindrances and **things that GET in the WAY of your walk with the Lord** AFTER you are already saved. It is not God who cleanses you from these things, but you must do it yourself. God bought you (the "house"), paid for you with the blood of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit has moved in, but **you've got to have a "garage sale"** and get rid of a lot of JUNK, and stuff that is taking up space, and some things that are downright detrimental to **the NEW OWNER!** (I Corinthians 6:19-20)

Definition: "SANCTIFIED" - Being HOLY, PURE, and **SET APART for God's use.** The word "SAINT" comes from the same word as "sanctified" in the Greek. There is both a PROCESS and a ONE-TIME experience: you were sanctified, or MADE HOLY in God's sight when you accepted Jesus Christ as Savior, and now you are going through the CLEANSING and GROWING PROCESS by which **you are becoming MORE LIKE CHRIST and USEFUL for the Master,** as you YIELD more and more of YOURSELF to the control of the Holy Spirit.

- **II Corinthians 7:1** "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, **let us CLEANSE OURSELVES** from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, **perfecting HOLINESS** (sanctification) in the FEAR of GOD."
- **I Peter 1:13-16** ".....Gird up the loins of your MIND, be SOBER, and rest your hope fully upon the GRACE that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as OBEDIENT children, NOT conforming yourselves to **the FORMER LUSTS**, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, **you also be HOLY in all your CONDUCT** (sanctification), because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy.'"

Verses 22-23 "Flee also **youthful lusts**; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife."

Definition: "YOUTHFUL" - Not all sins begin to manifest in childhood or adolescence, so you may THINK that certain problems in your life are not "youthful" lusts. It may SEEM that certain habits appeared in adulthood, but if we examine our lives honestly and thoroughly (the 4th Step) we will see that most, if not all, of our destructive habits and modes of behavior had their SEEDS planted in our youth. For instance, **fear of rejection** and peer pressure in adolescence, or **lack of love and approval** from parents in our childhood, may have caused us to search for answers and "look for love in all the wrong places." Experimenting with sexuality in childhood or adolescence may bring problems later in adulthood, as it may then erupt as a pornography addiction or dissatisfaction with a marriage, and seeking sexual relationships outside of marriage.

Definition: "LUSTS" - Lusts means issues, probably originating in childhood, that are controlling your life. A lust is the need to have something "under your control," and yet that need seems to **never be satisfied.** We tend to think of "lusts" as sexual desires, or possibly as ALL fleshly, bodily desires, but the word can mean ANY DRIVING FORCE in your life. "Youthful lusts" would then be **driving forces or hungers** caused by circumstances that influenced you in your childhood or adolescence. These could be any number of things: lust for food, because food represents comfort or happy memories from your childhood; lust for position, power or wealth (hoarding material possessions) because you never had these things, or your parents influenced you TO WANT these things in childhood. Lust for LOVE and AFFECTION can interfere with your ability to form real friendships or have a good marriage, as you CLING to the other person with a death grip (co-dependency), because you did not get enough love, affection or attention as a child. Lust for success, because you did not get the recognition you wanted or needed growing up; or

lust for recognition and popularity, because you did not fit in, or were an "outcast" in your childhood. The list could go on and on, but the main thing to be aware of is HOW and WHEN these desires were forged in your life, and to recognize that they are deceptive and false desires. Ephesians 4:22 calls them "deceitful lusts." They are DECEITFUL because we THINK indulging them will make us happy, but in reality it DOESN'T. These desires and lusts belong to the "old man" - who you were before you were BORN AGAIN and BORN ANEW into God's family. "But pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace" - it is NOW time to follow after and PURSUE the family traits and characteristics of your NEW FAMILY, the FAMILY of GOD!

- **Ephesians 4:22-24** "That you PUT OFF, concerning your former conduct, the OLD MAN, which is **CORRUPT** according to **its DECEITFUL desires and LUSTS**. And be RENEWED in the spirit of your MIND; and that **YOU put on the NEW MAN**, which was **CREATED according to God**, in righteousness and true holiness."
- **Colossians 3:10** "And have **PUT ON the NEW MAN** who is renewed in knowledge **according to the IMAGE of Him** who created him."

Verses 24-26 "And a servant of the lord must not quarrel, but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility **correcting those who OPPOSE THEMSELVES**, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and **escape the snare of the DEVIL, having been taken CAPTIVE** by him to do his will."

Definition: "Those who OPPOSE THEMSELVES" - Have you ever felt like you were your own worst enemy? That is what it means to OPPOSE YOURSELF - you end up doing things that are ruining and destroying your life, and you don't understand why you are doing them, or you just don't know how to stop. God's word here in Second Timothy says **REPENTANCE and a KNOWLEDGE of the TRUTH (rightly dividing the word of truth)** are the **KEYS** to ESCAPING the SNARE of the DEVIL!

Definition: "That they may COME to their SENSES" - The Prodigal Son in Jesus' parable came to his senses, or "**came to himself**." For the Gadarene demoniac (Mark 5:15), it says he was "**in his right mind**." However you say it, it means the person was OUT OF THEIR MIND or INSANE before coming BACK to their senses or right mind. What do we do when we practice our addictions? "**Step 2**" says it is **INSANITY**, and the A.A. definition of insanity is "doing the same thing over and over, and expecting different results."

- **Luke 15:17-19** "But **when he came to HIMSELF**, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.'" And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck (hugged him) and kissed him."

NOTE: We see how the prodigal son's thinking was not all the way clear yet, because he thought his father would only receive him back as a slave, and not as a son. The father in this parable represents God the Father, so **we have the word of Jesus Himself** that our Heavenly Father wants to receive us back from whatever "far country" we have wandered to, whenever we come to our senses. **You may not have had a good earthly father**, but your Heavenly Father wants to hug you and kiss you and welcome you back into His house as soon as you are ready. I John 1:9 tells us how to return to the Lord after we have sinned.

- **I John 1:9** "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Definition: "ESCAPE the SNARE of the DEVIL" - Hearing and studying the WORD of TRUTH certainly brings deliverance and freedom (John 8:32), but there are times when you may need another Christian to **SPEAK the WORD of God with AUTHORITY** against any demons that may have you bound (captive). No person can deliver you - **Jesus Christ is the DELIVERER**. However, a more mature Christian may MINISTER Christ's deliverance to you by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Especially in areas of fear, doubt, lying, and some sexual sins, there may be a "spirit of fear" or a "spirit of doubt" or a "lying spirit" or an "unclean spirit" that needs to be dealt with. In some cases, there may be a "spirit of grief" from something that happened in childhood, or loss of a loved one, that is **causing depression** in adulthood. This doesn't mean you are demon-possessed, but only that demonic influence or strongholds have built up in your life. When God's laws are violated and "deceitful lusts" are indulged or practiced over a long period of time, **it produces BONDAGE or STRONGHOLDS in your life**, and demonic oppression may be involved (see Mark 9:21-22). We will study more on deliverance and demonic oppression in other lessons.

- **Luke 4:18** "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor, He has sent Me to HEAL the BROKENHEARTED, to preach **DELIVERANCE to the CAPTIVES**, and recovering of sight to the blind; to **SET AT LIBERTY those who are OPPRESSED**."

Finally, **doing a thorough 4th Step is a major part of "fleeing" your youthful lusts**, and "departing from the iniquity" of your past, in order that you may PURSUE righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you have been born again, and **God has GIVEN you a PURE HEART!** He has already forgiven you of all the sins of your past. The 4th Step inventory is simply a cleansing that you need to go through, to process a lot of the garbage that has happened to you in the past. God has completely cleansed you and made you a NEW CREATION in your spirit (inner man), but your SOUL and BODY still carry residue from the past. Your soul (mind, will and emotions) needs to be RENEWED (re-programmed) with the word of God, and your BODY must be brought under submission to the Holy Spirit. We will study more on mind, will and emotions, renewing the mind, and presenting our bodies to God in other lessons. But for now, think of "renewing your mind" with the word of God as STUDYING and LEARNING about the family traits and characteristics of your new family - the FAMILY of GOD! In Galatians 5:22-23, the FRUIT of the Spirit are actually **CHARACTERISTICS of God's own nature**. God is now your Heavenly Father, and His Spirit will empower you to BECOME LIKE HIM and CHANGE you into the image of your NEW FATHER. The Holy Spirit will give you the power to change (YOU cannot change your nature yourself), but you do have the responsibility to RENEW your mind by reading God's word, and to SURRENDER your entire life (mind, will, emotions and body) to God, asking Him to do the changing.

- **Galatians 5:22-23** "But the **FRUIT of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, longsuffering (PATIENCE), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."
- **Romans 12:2** "And **be not conformed to this world**, but **be transformed by the RENEWING of your MIND** that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Definition: "RENEWED" and "TRANSFORMED" - To be CHANGED and MADE NEW. If we want to see positive changes in our lives, we must renew our minds by **constantly reading and studying the WORD of God** (see John 8:31). Otherwise, we will think, act and talk just like we always did, according to our old ways. As our **minds** are changed (our way of thinking), we will begin to see things as God sees them, and our outward behavior will change. This brings us right back to II Timothy 2:15, "Be diligent (study) to present yourself approved unto God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the WORD of truth**."