

## The Model of the Servant

### 2 Timothy 2:24-26

2 Timothy 2:24-26: *“And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,<sup>25</sup> in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,<sup>26</sup> 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.”*

#### Background Notes

In this chapter Paul gave several models of the faithful Christian. We’ve already looked at six of them. Paul gave these seven models to Timothy, to encourage him and exhort him to be a faithful and steadfast Christian. But remember - this is not just Paul’s exhortation to Timothy in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. This is the Word of God for us today! This is God’s exhortation to us. Let’s follow the seven models of the faithful Christian.

The seventh and final model is the model of the servant (v24-26). In each of the models there is a key thought or key idea. I believe more than one model was given because one model alone would not be sufficient to convey the complete picture of the faithful and steadfast Christian.

In the model of the teacher (v2), the key thought is **communication**. In the model of the soldier (v3-4), the key thought is **sacrifice**. In the model of the athlete (v5), the key idea is **discipline**. In the model of the farmer (v6), the key thought is **labor**. In the model of the workman (v15), the key idea is **skill**. In the model of the vessel (v20-21), the key idea is **availability**.

What’s the key idea in the model of the servant? That’s easy – it’s **service**! A servant serves. The main thought in reference to the Lord’s servant is “loving service.” Normally, we think of obedient service, and that’s certainly true, but I think the emphasis in verses 24-26 is on **loving service**. Love for the Lord and love for His people - even when the circumstances and the people are such that it’s not easy to serve lovingly.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. *Like a servant, the faithful Christian serves in spite of trying circumstances.*

Verse 24: “*And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient.*” Notice how the idea of serving with love is brought out here. “*Be gentle to all*” is certainly more than just ordinary service. It is *loving* service! Galatians 5:13 says, “*Through love serve one another.*” Loving service toward fellow believers is particularly in view here.

But loving service is not always easy. Sometimes there will be trying circumstances. Some fellow believers may get on your nerves. It’s hard not to quarrel with them. But winning an argument is not the goal of loving service.

Verse 24 says, “*able to teach.*” In the context of this chapter, the idea is to *teach with love and patience*. As a teacher of Christian students, I can assure you that loving and patient service is not always easy! First semester exams are two weeks away at Emmaus Bible College. When the final grades come in, I can almost guarantee that, in the courses I teach, there will be what I call a “camelback” curve. It’s not a typical “bell-shaped” curve – it will be a “camelback- shaped” curve. What do I mean by that?

The first hump of the camel will be the “As” and your “Bs” - the motivated students. In between the humps are the “C” grades. Then there’s the other hump - the “Ds” and “Es.” As “Dr. Grace” (that’s what they call me), I will do everything I can to get the “Es” up to at least the “D” part of the curve.

Unfortunately, some of the students who end up (for whatever reason) in that second part of the curve are difficult to serve in love. These students can grumble and complain and create trying circumstances. To serve them in love and patience is not easy. Sometimes, for some of those students, I’ll have to use “tough love.” But still, the faithful Christian serves - in spite of trying circumstances.

The last word of verse 24 is translated “*patient.*” There are a number of Greek words that are translated “*patient,*” but this particular one means “*patient when wronged*” In other words, not resentful. Several years ago I was invited to speak at a summer camp. I taught morning and evening for over a week, but at the end of the week I received no honorarium, nor were my significant travel costs covered! Everyone said that they enjoyed the ministry and shook my hand - but no honorarium. I delayed leaving. I drove around the camp waving goodbye - but no honorarium. I felt I had been wronged. After all, the Lord taught that “*the worker deserves his wages*” (Luke 10:7)

How do we handle a situation like this? We must remember that ***we’re serving the Lord!*** HE knows our situation, so we should patiently serve, regardless of circumstances. We’re the Lord’s bondservants, and we serve in love.

Remember, like a servant, a faithful Christian serves in spite of trying circumstances.

## 2. Like a servant, the faithful Christian serves in spite of testy opposition.

Verses 25-26: *“In humility correcting those who are in opposition, 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.”*

It seems that “those who were in opposition” were believers - but they were believers who were affected by false teaching. In fact, they had been so greatly affected that Paul said they were caught in “the snare of the devil.” Believe me, these folks can often become very testy in their opposition! (You all know that “testy” means ornery - or even downright nasty.)

A number of years ago I spoke at a conference about the sinful nature of man. After the session was over, a Christian man began to argue with me. I found out later that this man was a sociology teacher. He took a position that was very close to humanism - that man is basically good, and only sins because of unfortunate circumstances.

Sociology teaches that man is basically good and that we only sin because of our environment and circumstances. That's not what the Bible teaches! The Bible teaches that we sin because we're sinners. That man was a Christian, but he was entrapped in the snare of the devil. The idea that man is basically good is Satan's lie! So that man was basically teaching Satan's lie to his sociology students. Teaching humanism is doing “Satan's will,” in line with what verse 26 teaches.

As a servant, my responsibility was to gently and lovingly correct this blinded Christian, opening his eyes to his error - even though his opposition became testy at times. In this situation, however, there was a happy ending. This Christian sociology teacher saw the error of his thinking. He came to his senses. He came to know the truth (v26). God granted him repentance, and he “escaped the snare of the devil.” No longer was he doing Satan's will!

Not all situations have such a happy ending, but still we serve in love and patience. Like a servant, a faithful Christian serves in spite of testy opposition.

### Practical Applications

#### 1. Be like a father - not like a First Sergeant!

An Army “First Sergeant” instructs his troops by barking out orders – but a good father instructs his children with love. If we follow the model of the servant and serve in love, we should be like a father - not like a sergeant!

I'm very thankful for the “godly Christian fathers” in my life. I'm very thankful that back in my teenage years, older Christian men related to me and instructed me in God's Word lovingly and patiently, like fathers - not like sergeants! Be like a father - not like a First Sergeant!

**2. Let's examine ourselves for error.**

We've been discussing how we should be servants who lovingly correct other Christians who are in opposition to the truth. Is it possible that there are some areas where **we** are the opposition, because **we** are in error?

Remember, in this context it is particularly believers who are in view – believers who are in opposition because they have been sucked into an area of false teaching and ensnared by the enemy to do Satan's will. Could this be said of us? Is it possible that there are some areas in which we are actually the opposition, because we're in error?

For years, I was convinced that the way God had brought man into existence was through some kind of evolution over a long period of time. I was convinced, because of my scientific training, that the only way science and faith could be harmonized was by fitting theistic evolution into the Bible. I wanted the Bible to teach that God created everything through the process of evolution. God did it – He just used the process of evolution to create.

I was a Christian - but I was in error. I was brainwashed and blinded! I was actually caught in the snare of Satan. When I would get into discussion with people about origins, and I shared this garbage, I was actually doing Satan's will (v26). Evolution is Satan's lie! (By the way, all this took place many years ago – and long before teaching at Emmaus!) But by the means of the loving service of other Christians, God granted me repentance. I came to my senses, believed the truth of God's Word, and escaped out of the snare of the devil!

Is it possible that any of you have blind spots in certain areas – and thus you have actually become part of the opposition? Are you actually caught in the snare of the enemy, and doing his will?

Let's examine ourselves for error!