



## river west church

Staying on Course with Christ  
2 Timothy 2:14-19  
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### **Digressions, Diversions, and Distractions**

If you want to stay on course with Christ, you've got to keep the "main thing" the main thing. Keep the focus on Christ. Keep the key truths of the Gospel out front. That's why Paul wrote what he did in 2 Timothy 2:8:

"Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David,  
as preached in my gospel."

I can guarantee you that this was not new information for Timothy! But Paul is essentially telling Timothy to put this at the center of his thinking. Paul wanted Timothy to keep his focus in the right place. If you are going to build your Christian life and ministry on something, it had better be the very center of Gospel truth!

This is also a word of guidance for Timothy as he leads others, because unfortunately, there were others in the church who were getting severely off course in their Christian life. They were allowing secondary things to become primary. Even worse, they were becoming hyper-focused on things that were of no real consequence. They were majoring in the minors. It's a pattern that can lead down a path of digressions, diversions, and distractions. In the end it leads to a shipwreck for individuals and for churches.

### **Rightly Handling the Word of Truth**

Paul gives Timothy two guidelines to help with this situation. First, on the positive side, Paul tells Timothy to do the hard work of getting into God's Word and studying it correctly. Yes... there IS a correct way to study the Word of God. That's what Paul is telling Timothy to do.

I like the way the King James Version translates verse 15: "rightly dividing the word of truth." This translation captures the meaning of the original, which implies cutting a straight line or a straight course. By contrast, in verse 18, Paul speaks of those who have "swerved from the truth." That's what happens when you twist God's Word and you get off course. This morning we will look at some of the important ways that we can make sure we are staying on course in our study of God's Word. It really does matter!

### **When Error Must Be Confronted**

But there's something else Paul tells Timothy to do. It's not enough just for Timothy to correctly study God's Word personally. He also must confront those who are distorting God's Word. Paul teaches Timothy that there are times when error must be boldly confronted.

Paul names names: Hymenaeus and Philetus. That sounds pretty brutal, doesn't it? So what does this mean? Do we all have to run around like doctrine police confronting people every time we think they've got something wrong? Of course not!

The point is that these men, Hymenaeus and Philetus, had set themselves up as teachers in the church. They weren't just quietly holding personal views that were off base. They were influencers of

others. They had an agenda. They were distorting the truth of the faith and pulling others into their error. And THAT is when it is imperative for error to be boldly confronted! This is one of the important roles of Christian leadership; for the health of the Christian community.

### **Speaking the Truth in Love**

A great cross reference for this whole subject is found in Ephesians 4:11-16. That passage is also about staying on course. It talks about being tossed around by every wind of doctrine and human cunning. So what's the solution? Every member of the Body of Christ must be engaged in speaking the truth in love. That means that every individual believer needs to be equipped to speak the truth. Each one needs to be strong in the core truths of the Christian faith and able to speak from those truths into one another's lives. That way, every member of the Body of Christ can help to keep the whole body "on course." This is our goal at River West Church. So dig deep in God's Word! Stay focused on Christ! That way, together, we will move forward in God's will to become the strong, loving, effective church God is calling us to be!