

2 Timothy 2:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

Analysis

Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. Paul transitions from doctrinal foundation to practical application. "Of these things put them in remembrance" (tauta hypomimnēske, ταῦτα ὑπομίμνησκε) commands Timothy to continually remind the church of gospel truths just stated (vv. 8-13). Present imperative indicates ongoing responsibility. Churches need constant reminders of foundational doctrines, not merely novel teachings.

"Charging them before the Lord" (diamartyromenos enōpion tou theou, διαμαρτυρόμενος ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ) intensifies the command. The verb diamartyromai (διαμαρτύρομαι) means solemnly testify, warn earnestly. "Before the Lord" invokes divine witness—Timothy speaks with God's authority, and hearers will answer to God. The warning: "that they strive not about words to no profit" (mē logomachein ep' ouden chrēsimon, μὴ λογομαχεῖν ἐπ' οὐδὲν χρήσιμον). The compound logomacheō (λογομαχέω) combines logos (word) and machomai (fight)—quarreling about words, engaging in semantic battles.

Such disputes are "to no profit" (ep' ouden chrēsimon, ἐπ' οὐδὲν χρήσιμον)—useless, accomplishing nothing beneficial. Worse, they result in "the subverting of the hearers" (epi katastrophē tōn akouontōn, ἐπὶ καταστροφῇ τῶν ἀκουόντων).

The noun katastrophē (καταστροφή) means ruin, destruction—from which we get "catastrophe." Theological hairsplitting destroys rather than edifies listeners.

Historical Context

First-century churches battled verbal disputes over non-essential matters. Jewish Christians argued about food laws, circumcision, feast days. Greek converts brought philosophical speculation and love of debate. The Ephesian church specifically faced false teachers promoting "endless genealogies" and "vain jangling" (1 Timothy 1:4, 6). Such disputes consumed energy better spent on gospel proclamation and Christian living. They also confused new believers and provided fodder for pagan critics who viewed Christians as contentious and divided.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What theological debates or controversies are you engaging in that produce more heat than light, more division than edification?
2. How can you distinguish between essential doctrines worth defending and peripheral matters where Christians can disagree charitably?
3. In what ways might your words be 'subverting hearers' rather than building them up in faith, love, and holiness?

Interlinear Text

Ταῦτα	ὑπομίμνησκε	διαμαρτυρόμενος	ἐνώπιον
Of these things	put them in remembrance	charging	them before
G5023	G5279	G1263	G1799
τοῦ Κυρίοῦ	μὴ λογομαχεῖν	εἰς οὐδὲν	χρήσιμον
G3588 the Lord	G3361 not	G3054 about words	G1519 to
G2962		G3762 no	G5539 profit
			G1909 but to
καταστροφῆ	τῶν ἀκουόντων		
the subverting	of the hearers		
G2692	G3588	G191	

Additional Cross-References

2 Timothy 2:23 (Parallel theme): But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

Romans 14:1 (Parallel theme): Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.

2 Timothy 4:1 (References Lord): I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

1 Timothy 5:21 (References Lord): I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

Hebrews 13:9 (Parallel theme): Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

1 Timothy 6:13 (Parallel theme): I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;

Acts 15:24 (Word): Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment:

2 Peter 1:13 (Parallel theme): Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;

Jeremiah 7:8 (Word): Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit.

Matthew 16:26 (Parallel theme): For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

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