

2 Timothy 2:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

Analysis

If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Paul applies the household metaphor. "If a man therefore purge himself from these" (ean oun tis ekkathārē heauton apo toutōn, ἐὰν οὖν τις ἐκκαθάρῃ ἐαυτὸν ἀπὸ τούτων). The verb ekkathairō (ἐκκαθαίρω) means cleanse thoroughly, purge completely—from ek (out) and kathairō (clean). "From these" likely refers to false teachers (Hymenaeus, Philetus) and their errors, or possibly to dishonorable uses.

The promise involves three descriptions. First: "he shall be a vessel unto honour" (estai skeuos eis timēn, ἔσται σκεῦος εἰς τιμήν)—designated for honored use, not menial tasks. Second: "sanctified" (hēgiasmenon, ἡγιασμένον) —set apart, made holy, consecrated to sacred purposes. Perfect passive participle indicates completed action with ongoing state—God has sanctified and continues maintaining that status. Third: "meet for the master's use" (euchrēston tō despotē, εὔχρηστον τῷ δεσπότῃ)—useful, serviceable, fit for purpose. Despotēs (δεσπότης) means master, owner, lord—emphasizing Christ's absolute authority over His servants.

Finally: "prepared unto every good work" (eis pan ergon agathon hētoimasmenon, εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἡτοιμασμένον). Perfect passive participle again—God has prepared and continues maintaining readiness. Purified believers are always ready

for whatever service the Master assigns. This describes Christian maturity: holy, useful, prepared.

Historical Context

Ancient households required vessels ready for immediate use. Gold plates had to be polished, silver cups cleaned, containers maintained in good condition. A vessel that was dirty, cracked, or contaminated with filth couldn't serve honored guests—it would be relegated to dishonorable uses or discarded. Similarly, believers must maintain spiritual cleanliness through ongoing repentance, separation from sin, and pursuit of holiness. The imagery resonated in cultures where ceremonial purity was important—defiled vessels couldn't be used in temple service until ritually cleansed.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. From what specific sins, false teachings, or unholy associations do you need to purge yourself to become a vessel unto honor?
2. How are you actively pursuing sanctification—being set apart for God's purposes rather than conformed to worldly patterns?
3. In what ways does your life demonstrate readiness and usefulness for whatever good work the Master assigns?

Interlinear Text

ἐὰν	οὖν	τις	ἐκκαθάρῃ	ἐαυτὸν	ἀπὸ	τούτων	ἔσται
If	therefore	a man	purge	himself	from	these	he shall be
G1437	G3767	G5100	G1571	G1438	G575	G5130	G2071
σκεῦος	εἰς	τιμήν	ἡγιασμένον	καὶ	εὐχρηστον	τῷ	
a vessel	unto	honour	sanctified	and	meet		G3588
G4632	G1519	G5092	G37	G2532	G2173		
δεσπότῃ	εἰς	πᾶν	ἔργον	ἀγαθὸν	ἡτοιμασμένον		
for the master's use	unto	every	work	good	and prepared		
G1203	G1519	G3956	G2041	G18	G2090		

Additional Cross-References

2 Timothy 3:17 (Good): That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

Ephesians 2:10 (Good): For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Psalms 119:9 (Parallel theme): Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

2 Corinthians 7:1 (Holy): Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

1 Peter 1:22 (Parallel theme): Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

1 John 3:3 (Parallel theme): And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Isaiah 52:11 (Parallel theme): Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.

2 Timothy 2:20 (Parallel theme): But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

Acts 9:15 (Parallel theme): But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

Jeremiah 15:19 (Parallel theme): Therefore thus saith the LORD, If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them.