**Be Diligent**

*2 Timothy 2:15*

**Introduction**

1. Paul called Timothy to diligence – **2 Timothy 2:15** – ***“study” (KJV)*** is included, but must not be reduced to this simply:
   1. Chapter 1 – share in sufferings for the gospel’s sake, hold fast the pattern.
   2. Chapter 2 – (**vv. 1-7** – be strong in grace (note various illustrations), **(vv. 11-13** – describes faithfulness to Christ), **(v. 14** – remind them of this), **(v. 21** – vessel of honor useful for master, good work).
   3. Aren’t we called to everything Timothy was? Aren’t we called to everything Paul was? – There are no “B” team, “JV” Christians.
   4. But how did they and all others do it? **– cf. 1 Corinthians 15:10** – by the grace of God.
      1. **Titus 2:11** – appeared to all men.
      2. What is the problem then?
2. There are no secrets, no cheats, no supplements, but just supplied effort – diligence:
   1. “‘Diligence’ is the panacea for all diseases of the Christian life. It is the homely virtue that leads to all success. It is a great thing to be convinced of this, that there are no mysteries about the conditions of healthy Christian living, but that precisely the same qualities which lead to victory in any career to which a man sets himself do so in this; that, on the one hand, we shall never fail if in earnest and saving the crumbs of moments, we give ourselves to the work of Christian growth; and that on the other hand, no fine emotions, no select moments of rapture and communion will ever avail to take the place of the dogged perseverance and prosaic hard work which wins in all other fields; and wins, and is the only thing that does win, in this one too. If you want to be a strong Christian—that is to say, a happy man—you must bend your back to the work and ‘give all diligence.’ Nobody goes to heaven in his sleep. No man becomes a vigorous Christian by any other course than ‘giving all diligence.’ It is a very lowly virtue. It is like some of the old wives’ recipes for curing diseases with some familiar herb that grows at every cottage door. People will not have that, but if you bring them some medicine from far away, very rare and costly, and suggest to them some course out of the beaten rut of ordinary, honest living, they will jump at that. Quackery always deals in mysteries and rare things. The great physician cures diseases with simples that grow everywhere. A pennyworth of some familiar root will cure an illness that nothing else will touch. It is a homely virtue, but if in its homeliness we practised it, this Church and our own souls would wear a different face from what it and they do to-day.” (Alexander MacLaren)
3. If we are ever going to be what we are called to be, we must be ***“giving all diligence” (2 Peter 1:5)***.
4. Diligence
5. Defined
   1. *spoudē* (n) – earnest commitment in discharge of an obligation or experience of a relationship, eagerness, earnestness, diligence, willingness, zeal (BDAG)
   2. *spoudazō* (v) – to be especially conscientious in discharging an obligation, be zealous/eager, take pains, make every effort, be conscientious (BDAG)
6. Translations in contexts:
   1. (n) Eagerly going to Elizabeth after the angel’s announcement about Jesus – ***“Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah” (Luke 1:39).***
   2. (n) Concerning Titus’ similar feelings for Corinth as Paul – ***“But thanks be to God who puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus.” (2 Corinthians 8:16)***
   3. (v) The desire for Paul and Barnabas by the Jerusalem “pillars” – ***“They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.” (Galatians 2:10)***
   4. (v) Concerning the walk we are called to walk worthy of – ***“endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:3)***
   5. (v) Paul in closing to Timothy – ***“Do your utmost to come before winter.” (2 Timothy 4:21)***
   6. (v) Peter in equipping saints to combat false doctrine – ***“Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.” (2 Peter 1:15)***
7. Regarding our obligation to follow Christ are we doing so with HASTE, and EARNEST CARE? Are we BEING EAGER, ENDEAVORING, DOING OUR UTMOST, and BEING CAREFUL to fulfill this obligation daily?
   1. These are not descriptions of a special gift some have, but others don’t.
   2. Diligence is a “homely virtue” – it is lowly, unsophisticated, and readily accessible.
8. Be Diligent
9. Reflected in Daily Attitude
   1. Almost a parent of diligence is SINCERE CONVICTION AND DESIRE.
      1. Diligence is not an end itself, but the means to an end.
      2. Diligence is the vehicle to get us where we want/need to go.
      3. If we don’t have the proper attitude about something, we won’t be diligent in it and toward it.
   2. Having intentions, and developing schedules and plans to execute are important, but rendered ineffective if there is not the desire to act on them.
   3. **Psalm 1:2** – the meditation was preceded by delight.
   4. **Psalm 122:1** – the going in was preceded by gladness to do so.
   5. Christians have to gain the proper spiritual perspective in order to have the attitude which precedes diligence:
      1. Cross before the crown – however, desire for the cross – **Galatians 6:14** (boast in cross); **1 Corinthians 1:18** (power of God for salvation); **Philippians 3:7, 10-11** (sacrifice all – seemingly good – to partake in suffering)
      2. Our attitude toward the sacrificial call of Christ should be positive.
         1. But how do we get on board like that?
         2. How can we be eager to make sacrifices, and choose to go ALL IN on a way that will bring difficulties?
         3. Eyes of faith – **2 Corinthians 4:16-18; 5:7**
         4. Have conviction in what you can’t see – **2 Corinthians 6:3-4, 8-10** (Paradoxes)
   6. Proper attitudes about:
      1. Sacrificing free-time to study/pray.
      2. Sacrificing overtime at work to worship.
      3. Sacrificing a relationship with someone you love to maintain the relationship with Christ.
      4. Sacrificing honor from the world to receive honor from God **(cf. John 15:18)** (could include family and friends – change of dress, language, routine, involvement in recreational activities).
      5. ETC. – WE NEED TO HAVE THE PROPER ATTITUDES ABOUT THE WALK WITH CHRIST.
   7. This is God’s will – **1 John 5:3; Matthew 11:30** – His commands and His yoke we assume when following Him are not burdensome – rejoice in them and pursue them.
10. Reflected in Use of Time
    1. *spoudē* – swiftness of movement or action, haste, speed (BDAG)
       1. Opposite – slow, delay, lingering, procrastination, etc.
       2. “‘To-morrow and to-morrow’ is the opiate with which sluggards and cowards set conscience asleep, and as each to-morrow becomes to-day it proves as empty of effort as its predecessors, and, when it has become yesterday, it adds one more to the solemn company of wasted opportunities which wait for a man at the bar of God.” (Alexander MacLaren)
    2. James’ rebuke is telling – **James 4:13-17** – placing God’s will on the backburner to pursue other, temporal matters, thinking you have more time – LEADS TO NEGLECT.
       1. How many of us are guilty of this poor and ungodly use of time?
       2. Family/personal bible study – after things settle down (sports, arts, etc.).
       3. Devotion to God – **cf. Acts 24:25** – more convenient time?
       4. Resolving a spiritual question, doubt, issue – i.e. not solid on a matter of importance, but putting off finding answers.
          1. “I need to study that out further…”
       5. Etc.
    3. We must not take time for granted but be diligent with it – I WILL HASTEN TO HIM.
    4. **Ephesians 5:15-16** – need to redeem the time.
       1. Understanding Paul’s use of “time” is imperative.
       2. ***“time”*** – *Kairos*
          1. Another word for time – *chronos*
          2. “[chronos] is time, contemplated simply as such; the succession of moments…[Kairos]…is time as it brings forth its several births…[chronos], it will thus appear, embraces all possible [Kairos], and, being the larger, more inclusive term, may be often used where [Kairos] would have been equally suitable, though not the converse.” (R.C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament)
          3. Distinction used by Jesus – **Acts 1:6-7** – ***“times or seasons”***
             1. “times” – *chronos*
             2. “seasons” – *Kairos*
             3. “‘the times’ (chronos) are…contemplated merely under the aspect of their duration…but ‘the seasons’ (kairos) are the joints or articulations in these times.” (Ibid.)
       3. ***Chronos* – the span of time that each day offers.**
       4. ***Kairos* – the fit time, i.e. opportune time – opportunities within chronos (cf. Galatians 6:10 – *“opportunity,”* Kairos).**
       5. REDEEM THE [*Kairos*] OPPORTUNITIES!
       6. Requires looking for them – **(v. 15)** – ***“circumspectly”***
          1. *akribōs* – exactly (Strong)
          2. “Lit., look how exactly ye walk…So Rev., look carefully how ye walk. Circumspectly is better rendered carefully. It means exactly, accurately.” (Vincent’s Word Studies)
          3. Translation of ***“circumspectly”*** brings a visual – “from Latin circumspectus, from circumspicere ‘look around’, from circum ‘around, about’ + specere ‘look’.” (New Oxford American Dictionary)
             1. LOOKING ALL AROUND YOU AT ALL TIMES.
             2. So as to not miss an opportunity.
    5. **DILIGENT USE OF TIME KNOWS THE EXCUSE, “THERE JUST ISN’T ENOUGH TIME,” OR, “I DON’T HAVE ENOUGH TIME,” IS A LIE.**
       1. ***“because the days are evil”*** – i.e. if you don’t use the opportunities presented to you, they will not merely be wasted, but replaced with evil through surrounding influences.
       2. How much TV do we watch?
       3. How much time do we spend on our phones?
       4. How much time do we spend paralyzed in anxiety?
       5. Etc.
       6. “Time is something that cannot be bought; it cannot be wagered with God, and it is not in endless supply; Time is simply how you live your life.” – Craig Sager
    6. ***“I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.” (John 9:4)*** – This is what we exist to do, this is what our time is for.
11. Reflected in Use of Energy
    1. Energy is the essence of diligence.
       1. The very presence of diligence implies the exertion of energy.
    2. **Ecclesiastes 9:10** – do it with your might – CONSIDER IN CONTEXT:
       1. **(vv. 1-3)** – none have control, but all will die alike – no matter your ways of living (good or bad).
       2. **(vv. 4-6)** – hope for the living under the sun – namely, to direct the opportunity of their lives toward something. (EX**: v. 6** – love, hate, envy, etc.)
       3. **(vv. 7-9)** – ***“GO”*** – while you live take advantage of it.
          1. Contentment **(v. 7).**
          2. Comfort **(v. 8).**
          3. Companionship **(v. 9).**
       4. **(v. 10)** – in anything, give your might to it.
          1. **(vv. 11-12)** – for nothing is guaranteed.
          2. So while you have the opportunity, don’t waste any part of it through complete neglect, or doing it halfway.
       5. CONSIDER IN LIGHT OF CONTEXT OF ENTIRE BOOK – **Ecclesiastes 12:13-14** – FEAR GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT.
    3. Shema – **Deuteronomy 6:4-5** – ***“all”*** – nothing is left out (strength).
       1. **(v. 4)** – statement of fact – ONENESS emphasized.
       2. **(v. 5)** – logical response – undivided focus/energy/commitment to Him who is one – ONE FOCAL POINT, NO ROOM FOR OTHERS.
          1. **(vv. 12-15)** – in a land full of gods, your entirety should only be directed to one. (NOTE: He is jealous, **v. 15**).
          2. **Cf. Colossians 3:5** – no wonder Paul describes covetousness as idolatry.
       3. **(vv. 6-9)** – encompasses every aspect of life – constant.
    4. Divided energy is dissipated energy, and thus insufficient – **cf. Matthew 6:24**
       1. NOTE: Consider this understanding in employment – Most employers don’t want their employees working two full-time jobs – one will eventually suffer, if not both.
       2. WE CANNOT EXPECT TO BE THE CHRISTIAN GOD CALLS US TO BE WITH DIVIDED ENERGY – ALL OUR ENERGY IS TO BE DIRECTED TOWARD HIM!
       3. Does not mean you can’t be a devoted employee, student, husband, wife, parent, etc. – **Colossians 3:18-4:1** – always goes to the standard – as to the Lord.
    5. Practically, this means nothing comes at the expense of discipleship:
       1. Taking energy away from serving God, or undermining a relationship with Him for work, school, recreation, relationships, etc.
       2. **Sometimes we wonder why we aren’t growing, and why we feel that something is missing – perhaps we have too many irons in the fire, and our energy is divided.**

**Conclusion**

1. There isn’t a thing that can help you enough to become the Christian you need to be if diligence is absent.
2. We must be diligent if we are to be approved of God (**cf. 2 Timothy 2:15).**
3. Nothing can replace earnest effort.