Say the Hard Thing
Conviction Without Contempt · Week Three
2 Timothy 2:22-26; Colossians 4:5-6

Big Idea: Before Paul tells Timothy to correct his opponents, he deals with Timothy. Correcting someone "with gentleness" starts with a servant whom grace has shaped.

Background: Paul is writing about serious false teaching. Two men, Hymenaeus and Philetus, were saying the resurrection had already happened, and it was upsetting people's faith (2 Timothy 2:17-18). Timothy needed to address it.

1. We Need the Right Path (v. 22)
"So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace" (ESV).

- Before Paul deals with Timothy's conversation, he deals with Timothy's direction.
- "Youthful passions" can include the urge to show off, to win, or to rush in. We don't outgrow these on our birthdays.
- We pursue this "along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart." Ask another Christian to help you prepare.

2. We Need the Right Conversation (v. 23)
"Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels" (ESV).

- Paul looks at what a conversation produces: understanding or more fighting.
- Find out what really happened before you pass on an accusation. Respond to what the person actually said.
- Honest questions deserve care, even hard ones. Sometimes the wisest thing is to pause.

3. We Need the Right Character (v. 24; Colossians 4:5-6)
"And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil" (ESV).

- **Kind to everyone,** including the person who is making this difficult.
- **Able to teach.** Be ready to open the Bible, and be honest about whether you're saying what Scripture says, how you understand it, or what you think we should do.
- **Patient under wrong.** We can set limits without retaliating (see 2 Timothy 4:14-15).
- "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person" (Colossians 4:6, ESV).

4. We Need the Right Motives (vv. 25-26)
"God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil" (ESV).

- Paul wants the person to go free, not to lose.
- Wanting someone humiliated and calling it “defending the truth” is contempt.
- God grants repentance. We speak, keep praying, and trust him with the outcome.

Say the Hard Thing

“…correcting his opponents with gentleness” (2 Timothy 2:25, ESV).

- The “preliminary instructions” are the message. Paul spends the paragraph on the person doing the correcting.
- We start with the grace of Christ (2:1). Jesus told the truth about our sin and moved toward us in love. See how he restored Peter in John 21:15-19.

I want to help you move toward Jesus. That has to shape what I say to you.

This Week, Choose One Response

- Make an apology you’ve been putting off.
- Prepare for a necessary conversation. Write down what you need to say, why you believe it, and the good you hope for the person. Ask another Christian to pray with you.
- Close a thread you’ve kept alive because you enjoy the fight.

For Further Study: 2 Timothy 2:1-26 · 2 Timothy 4:14-15 · Colossians 4:2-6 · John 21:1-19