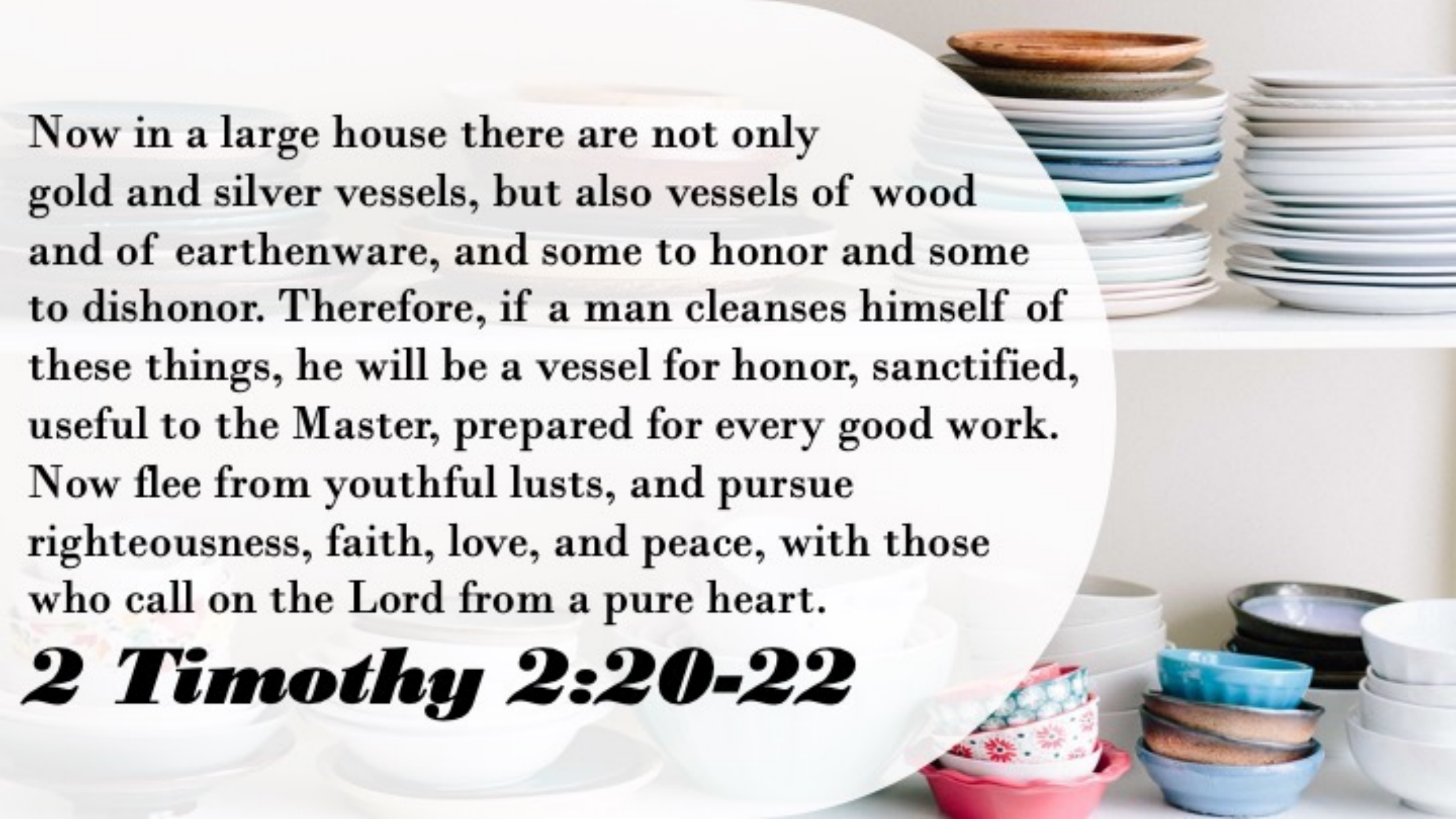




***Vessels
In The
House***



A kitchen scene featuring stacks of dishes. In the upper right, there are stacks of white plates and a stack of colorful plates in shades of blue, green, and pink. In the lower right, there are stacks of bowls in various colors and materials, including a wooden bowl, a blue ceramic bowl, and a white bowl with red floral patterns. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if a man cleanses himself of these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work. Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

2 Timothy 2:20-22



There are different vessels

- The various kinds of vessels represent people in different states of submission to God's will. Some have given themselves fully to Him, and are given honorable duties. Others stubbornly resist, but are nevertheless placed in the household with a purpose.
- Remember Romans 6:12-18 – We are all serving somebody, whether we know it or not!
- God is not fooled by pretty vessels that are full of filth (Matthew 23:25-26). He “knows those who are His.” He is never fooled or perplexed by what He should do with you.

“Useful”

- God will put anybody to use as He fulfills His will (which is always accomplished, by the way). See Isaiah 46:8-13.
- This includes the rebellious, stubborn, or ignorant. One does not need to be a servant of the Lord to serve the Lord's purpose. Pharaoh, for example (Ex. 9:15-16). Judas also served a purpose, and Jesus was not surprised by anything he did (Jn. 6:70-71, 13:12ff). Cyrus was God's “anointed” and Nebuchadnezzar was an instrument of God's judgment (Ezek. 30:10-12).



The point is that God's will is done, and we all can serve a purpose – either willingly or unwillingly. Even a chamber pot has a place in the household!



“Useful”

- But there is one more point that the writer makes along these lines. Paul states that we become “useful to the Master” and “prepared for every good work” (v. 21).
- While characters like Nebuchadnezzar and the Pharaoh of Exodus were useful in their way to God’s will, there is a level of maximum usefulness we reach when we align our will with HIS. When we stop fighting God and start working with HIM, we are prepared for EVERY good work.





“Cleanses Himself”

- “Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things...” In what way do we do this? I thought it was God who cleansed us? See Colossians 2:11-12, Titus 3:3-5.
- Remember that God doesn’t wash away sins that we aren’t first willing to abandon (Acts 2:38, 3:19). So there is a sense of personal responsibility. Notice the language of Colossians 3:7-9, Romans 6:1ff, or Proverbs 28:13.
- Like a smoker who must quit smoking in order for cancer treatment to be most effective, we must cleanse ourselves from sinful behavior for God to cleanse our souls of sin’s stain.

“Cleanse”

A word study reveals that this particular word only appears twice in the NT. It has the idea of “cleaning out.” Whereas the more common Greek word translated “cleanse” (where we get our word “catharsis”) occurs over 30 times, and refers to something being “purified” or “cleaned.” For example, Ephesians 5:26, 1 John 1:7, and Titus 2:14. This kind of cleansing is done by God. But the “cleaning out” of bad behavior starts with us.



Pursuing Honor With Other Vessels Of Honor

“...With those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.” It’s a hard battle we are fighting. The pursuit of righteousness and other Christian virtues is always made easier in the company of others pursuing the same.