

Avoiding Congregational Gangrene

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I. Introduction.

- A. Text: II Timothy 2:14-19.
- B. Paul is addressing the problem of the devil's attacks.
- C. The Christians face persecution from the outside and polarization within.

II. The Christians were struggling with word battles.

- A. Word battles can often be good such as those concerning doctrine.
- B. What becomes wrong is the battles surrounding those words.
- C. Timothy's response.
 - 1. Charge them before the Lord to avoid disputing about words because quarreling does not good.
 - 2. Demonstrate a proper handling of the Scriptures.
 - 3. Avoid godless chatter because its talk will eat like gangrene.
 - 4. If we lose the resurrection, we lose everything. (I Corinthians 15)
 - 5. Error can rapidly spread through the congregation.
- D. We are to remember God's firm foundation.
 - 1. God's church is never going to be altered, attacked or diminished by heresies.
 - 2. God knows who are His, and man can know whose are His when people depart from iniquity. (Numbers 16, I John 2)

Application questions:

1. How can word battles be positive and negative?

2. What kind of a word battle is going on in Timothy's context? How does Paul recommend responding?

3. Why can we take confidence in God's security over the church despite error? Use Scripture to defend your answer.
