

# Study to show

2 Timothy 2:15

**“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”**

**Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”**

- **2Timothy 2: 14–19 emphasize Timothy's role as a worker.**
- **In 2 Timothy 2:14 the Christian worker is warned not to become preoccupied with side issues, and Timothy is to charge his flock not to strive “about words to no profit as this would ruin or subvert his hearers.**
- **Life is too brief and too busy to waste the brain on a lot of insignificant issues.**
- **Questions like “How many angels can stand on the head of a pin?” or “Was Jesus born on December 25?”—are a waste of time and cause people to become “theological cranks.”**
- **God has not seen fit to fully answer these questions, and when God is silent about an issue, we do well not to trouble ourselves concerning it!**
- **Rather than striving about words to no profit, and dwelling on sideline issues, Timothy and his followers were to study to show themselves “approved unto God, as workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15)**
- **God approves the person who works hard at the study of the Bible.**
- **If verse 14 was about Timothy’s (and our )public ministry, then verse 15 is about his (and our ) private life.**
- **This involves diligent study of the word of God, BECAUSE IN ORDER TO SERVE PUBLICALLY EFFICIENTLY, WE MUST PREPARE WITH PRAYER AND PROPER DILIGENTLY STUDY.**

- Text
- **2 Timothy 2:15 is one of those wonderful Bible verses which we all ought to memorize.**
- **Let us now explore this verse more fully.**
- **“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”**
- **Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.  
(2 Timothy 2:15 RSV)**

- The context
- **2 Timothy 2:15 was given to Timothy as the antidote to wrangling over words as described in 2 Timothy 2:14.**
- **The apostle Paul's suggestion as to how to handle the incipient quarrel at Ephesus is, demonstrate a proper and accurate handling of the Scriptures. Paul says to Timothy, "Show them yourself how to do this."**
- **There is "handling the Word of Truth," and there is "rightly handling the Word of Truth." The difference between these two concepts is as vital as life and death.**
- **Mishandling the Word of Truth jeopardises both those who hear and those who are doing the handling.**
- **Tragically, mishandling the Word of Truth may be more common in the pulpits of this day than we might otherwise imagine. The concept of "rightly handling the Word of Truth" has entered the lexicon of the Faith.**
- **Whatever else we think the concept means, this emphasis demonstrates the reality that the "faith" is a word-based entity.**
- **In other words, right doctrine is essential if we will please God.**
- **What is believed, and thus, what is taught to those who seek to understand the will of God, is communicated through the Word.**
- **Timothy was thus to keep focused; pay attention to his own life and ministry, and be diligent to present himself approved to God, as a worker who did not need to be ashamed, since he was rightly dividing the word of truth.**

- After commenting about false teachers in the previous verse, Paul urges Timothy that in contrast with the false teachers who argued over words, he had learned the Scriptures from his youth and was to handle it accurately if he viewed himself as a worker seeking to please God.
- So, after telling Timothy what to warn the faithful men about, he tells him to **study to show himself approved to God** (v.15).
- This was because the solution and antidote to **wrangling over words** was and is **rightly dividing or accurately handling the word of truth."**
- The distinction presented here is important. In the prior verse, Paul condemned pointless bickering in v.14.
- Here, v.15 he commends deep study. Putting these two ideas together gives us an accurate picture of what Christian discernment is meant to look like.
- We need to study diligently, not only to defend the faith, but to know the difference between something worth battling over, and something which is just a distracting argument.
- Observe then, the solemn charge given to Timothy, as to the matter, manner, and method of his preaching; that the matter of it be the word of truth, the pure word of God, that it be divided rightly, to every one his portion, to every hearer his due, methodizing and distributing truth, as God would have it; terror to whom terror is due, comfort to whom comfort belongs.
- Paul often had to exhort Timothy to courage and action. Earlier in the chapter (verses 3-5), Paul encouraged him to hard work and endurance for the service of the Lord.
- Now he urges him to **STUDY**.

**“STUDY”**

**or Be diligent to show or prove**

- Exegesis
- **“Study” . Or Be diligent:** “Study” (2:15) can mean to “do your best,” as the context shows it does in I Thessalonians 4:11.
- But the context in Ecclesiastes 12:12 shows that study” *there* means to study *books*, as it does in II Timothy 2:15.
- If you don’t study the Word, you’ll think it is all written to you. Only those who study it notice the dispensational differences and so know to rightly divide it.
- You can’t be “approved” of God if you think you are still under the law (cf. Lamentations 3:36).
- Hence learn, that although curious and unprofitable trifling with words in a pulpit is vain and sinful, yet it is the part of a skillful teacher, to order, methodize, and distribute truth in its proper place, and give every hearer his part and portion.
- To do this effectively, then, Timothy is to work hard at understanding the usage of the words of Scripture; that is what Paul means here.
- Timothy is to be a workman, a laborer, somebody who needs not be ashamed because he has done his homework adequately; he has investigated throughout the whole of the Scriptures what the words in question mean.
- **To “study”** the Bible requires some good tools—a Bible *handbook* which summarizes each chapter; a Bible *dictionary* which has a wealth of information about people, places, and things; and a Bible *concordance* which enables the user to find a verse when only a part of it is known.
- The student will develop the habit of carrying a Bible with him—reading it during the lunch break at work, studying it for a brief time each morning, and memorizing portions while traveling in an automobile, train, or plane.

- **I have found that it takes a minimum of ten to twelve hours to prepare a message for a Sunday morning service.**
- **One has to look at how the words in the passage under study are used elsewhere in the Old Testament and the New Testament.**
- **Because one is working with languages other than English, one has to go back to the original Greek or Hebrew text and see what the words mean in their original verbiage.**
- **Then one has to set the passage in the customs of the first, or earlier, centuries. That takes a lot of work.**
- **One of the reasons much of doctrine is misunderstood today is because church leaders, have not done their homework. Paul urges Timothy to be "a workman who has no need to be ashamed," because he has put in the requisite work at discovering what the words of Scripture really mean**
- **(adapted from Ray Stedman)**



# **TO SHOW(OR PRESENT)YOURSELF**

The following words and phrases all develop this idea of usefulness for service

- In 2 Timothy 2:15 Paul urges Timothy to show or present himself, amidst the false teachers, as a real teacher of the truth. The word he uses for "to present" is paristemi which characteristically means to present oneself for service.
- **To show (paristemi)** literally means to stand beside or near, to present and includes idea of yielding, to place at the disposal of another and so to lay oneself out for the use of another
- It is a standing alongside of or before God, of presenting oneself for inspection, as it were, in order to be approved by Him.
- Paristemi was used as a technical term for priest's placing offering on altar. This word conveys the general idea of surrendering or yielding up
- The aorist tense here indicates a decisive, wholehearted act, which in this case is one requiring the diligence of repetition.
- It means to "Prove" as in Romans 14:10....**For we shall all stand before (paristemi) the judgment seat of God."**

- **Timothy was to present himself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed. So should we.**
- **This passage clearly highlights the importance of diligent study.**
- **Such diligence continues the theme of Paul's other analogies in this passage in verses 3-7.**
- **Just as soldiers, athletes and farmers were hard working and very focused on their tasks, for a church leader, it is crucial to work hard and focus to have a well-trained understanding of the Word and will of God.**

- In essence Paul is saying, **“make every effort”** or do your part. We see this throughout scripture, where we are to trust God to do something and yet, at the same time, we are to do something as well, have faith in this and also do this or don't do that.
- This is true of sanctification. Sanctification is the process whereby God, through the Holy Spirit indwelling in us, cleans us up and makes us more like Jesus. It is by grace through faith and yet, we play a part.
- We are not to be idle in this process but active participants. Paul says in Philippians 2:12, that we are **“to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”** Note it is NOT to work for salvation, that is impossible, but to work it out.
- What he's referring to is sanctification, **the part we can work on to be and look more like Jesus and he's saying to have a persistence and a zeal for it.**

- Timothy's goal was not to present himself approved to *people*, but to God. He wasn't to regard the job of being a pastor as a popularity contest but instead as a call to faithfulness to God.
- Timothy wasn't to worry so much about presenting other people approved to God (though there was a place for this in his pastoral ministry). His first concern had to be to present *himself* approved to God.
- Timothy wasn't to seek the applause of men, but for the approbation of God.
- Like Timothy, we are to study not for the applause of men, but for the approbation of God, as becometh a good workman, who needeth not to be ashamed of his work, whoever looks upon it.
- We are to study so that our teaching or preaching and living is strait and conformable to the gospel, and thus shew ourselves approved of God"

- **Steven Cole points out that...**
- **Present or Show** is used (as in 2 Corinthians 11:2 & Ephesians 5:27) to speak of a bride being presented to her bridegroom.
- It's a very personal, loving act when a young woman gives herself to a young man in marriage. In that culture (pre-women's lib) it meant that she was giving herself completely to him: her devotion, her time, her body, her complete focus was now toward her husband because of his love for her and her love for him.
- That's how we should come to the Bible. It's not just a book of principles for how to live. It tells us of Christ's enduring love for His bride.
- As His bride, we should seek to please Him and be available to do His will. As such, our focus should not be on what others think of us, but on what God thinks.
- Too many pastors fall into the trap of pleasing people, rather than pleasing God. While it's nice to be liked, our main focus is to be, **"approved to God."** Our goal is to please our heavenly Bridegroom who loved us and gave Himself for us.

**APPROVED UNTO GOD**

**"dokimos" or "approved"**

- A good way to do proper justice to the concept of being approved by God is to do a word study of “dokimos” the greek word translated “approved” .
- Dokimos (approved) refers to acceptance after careful examination, as when a jeweler carefully inspects a gem under a magnifying glass to determine its genuineness and value.
- When we serve Christ selflessly, we prove ourselves “to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world” (c.f Philippians 2 :15).
- Dokimos means trustworthy, reliable, tested, recognized, pronounced good, established by trial in contrast to adokimos, untested, not respected; rejected.
- It is used as a technical term for genuine, current coinage, but also applied to persons enjoying general esteem, as used in Romans 16:11 thus Greet Apelles, the approved in Christ .



- Vine writes that **dokimos** signifies **"that which is approved by being proved, that which stands the test"**
- Wuest writes that **dokimos** means to "put to the test for the purpose of being approved, and having met specifications, having the stamp of approval placed upon one.
- A **dokimos** man or **dokimos** character is like metal which has been cleansed of all alloy and impurity.
- **Approved describes anything tested and fit for service. As alluded to above, this term was used of gold and silver which has been purified by fire of all alloy.**
- **Barclay asserts**
- The Greek for **one who has stood the test** is **dokimos**, which describes anything which has been tested and is fit for service.
- For instance, it describes gold or silver which has been purified of all alloy in the fire. It is therefore the word for money which is genuine, or, as we would say, sterling.
- **It is the word used for a stone which is fit to be fitted into its place in a building. A stone with a flaw in it was marked with a capital A, standing for adokimastos, which means tested and found wanting.**
- **Timothy was to be tested that he might be a fit weapon for the work of Christ, and therefore a workman who had no need to be ashamed. So must we.**

- In James 1:12 it is used in connection with the **blessed man who perseveres under trial** (the test is not designed to destroy us but to display the genuineness of our faith); **for once he has been approved (dokimos - in the context he has passed the test and his faith is intact)**, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.
- **The weaknesses of such a person have been eradicated by testing or trial and he emerged strong and pure, trustworthy and genuine.**
- **He is thus shown to be dokimos or "approved"**
- **The principle is simple and clear that perseverance brings God's approval, and His approval brings the crown of life.**
- **Richards** writes that **dokimos** "is used in the NT in the sense of **recognition, of being officially approved and accepted.**
- **Therefore this verse is saying that our ambition, is to come to the Bible to deepen our love life with the Lord, to learn how we can be pleasing to Him and to please Him more.**
- **Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him (2 Corinthians 5:9)**

- **Dokimos** is the word describing money which is genuine or as we would say sterling (silver) [sterling = conforming to the highest standard]. In other words, a persons must first be "proved" before being "approved". One so approved is assayed by the One Who has eyes like flames of fire ([Rev 1:14-](#)) yet passes this scrutiny and is counted as worthy.
- **Dokimos** is a word which motivates one to have a "God consciousness" - before the face of God!), a consciousness of His presence and of living and acting in His sight, so as to please Him in all things.
- Sometimes it is helpful to get a sense of the meaning of a word by observing uses of its antonym and here [Isaiah 1:22](#) presents us with a clear picture, where God is speaking to faithless Israel declaring "Your silver has become **dross** (**Hebrew** = **siyg** = literally that which is turned away or skimmed off in the refining process, the waste or impurity, the refuse after smelting precious metal and figuratively that which is base or worthless), Your drink diluted with water. (**Comment:** The [Septuagint -LXX](#) translates siyg with the Greek word [adokimos](#))

- **Donald Barnhouse** has the following interesting explanation of **dokimos** writing that
- In the ancient world there was no banking system as we know it today, and no paper money.
- All money was made from metal, heated until liquid, poured into moulds and allowed to cool. When the coins were cooled, it was necessary to smooth off the uneven edges.
- The coins were comparatively soft and of course many people shaved them closely.
- In one century, more than eighty laws were passed in Athens, to stop the practice of shaving down the coins then in circulation.
- **But some money changers were men of integrity, who would accept no counterfeit money. They were men of honour who put only genuine full weighted money into circulation. Such men were called "dokimos" or "approved"**

- Paul lists two characteristics of an approved worker
- The **first characteristic** Paul lists is, “a worker who **has no need to be ashamed.**” In order for a worker to not be ashamed of his work it must measure up to the standards of God, it must be worthy of His approval.
- The **second characteristic** is tied to the first, in order for Timothy to not be ashamed, **he must handle the word of God accurately.**
- This means that he must be correctly communicating God’s truth and not deviating from it even the slightest bit and at the same time, living this truth out. Timothy can’t be a preacher who says, “do as I say and not as I do”, but rather “follow me as I follow Christ.” Timothy must accurately preach the truth and confidently live the truth.
- **Wuest** writes that "A workman **approved** is a workman who has been put to the test, and meeting the specifications, has won the approval of the one who has subjected him to the test.

- Paul suggested that Timothy **"seek the approval of God, not men."**
- Many a church quarrel is carried on because people are so conscious of what some group within the congregation thinks of them.
- Many church leaders succumb to that: They join one side or the other because of the pressure of some group upon them.
- Here the apostle urges Timothy to lift himself above that, and to think only of God's approval.
- He was to be concerned about : "What does God think of what you are saying and what stance you take?" Timothy can tell that by the Word of God and by the presence of the Spirit of God
- **To repeat the approval that we are seeking is God's and not mans.**
- **So many believers are persistent in the pursuit of man's approval at the expense of gaining God's.**

- Any worker or servant should desire to satisfy the expectations of his or her boss. Timothy was to view his work for God in the same way. He was not serving to please other people, but to please the Lord.
- Paul knew well the many ways the world can distract a Christian's focus. These worldly forces would seek to draw Timothy's attention to making people happy, rather than viewing the Lord as the one to please.

During times of suffering, Paul felt the need to emphasize boldness in faith to those tempted to avoid hardship and persecution. His boldness also involved "rightly handling the word of truth."

- **Steven Cole** illustrates the approval every workman should strive for
- "A young man once studied violin under a world-renowned master.
- When his first big recital came, the crowd cheered after each number, but the young performer seemed dissatisfied.
- Even after the final number, despite the applause, the musician seemed unhappy. As he took his bows, he was watching an elderly man in the balcony.
- Finally, the elderly one smiled and nodded in approval. Immediately, the young man beamed with joy. He was not looking for the approval of the crowd.
- He was waiting for the approval of his master. Christians should be living for God's approval.
- We will be approved unto Him as we use the Bible to grow in godliness.
- We will be approved unto Him as we grow as a craftsman who uses God's Word of truth accurately and skillfully to grow in godliness.
- The misuse of the Bible will lead us to ruin. The proper use will lead us to godliness.



- I want among the victor throng  
Someday to have my name confessed;  
And hear my Master say at last,  
"You stand approved, you did your best!"  
—Simpson

- FRIENDS I HAVE DISOBEYED MY HERMENEUTICS & HOMOLETICS TEACHER FROM 1970 FROM BOB JONES U, AND THOUGH I HAVE NOT GIVEN YOU A WHOOP AND A HOLLER.....
- I HAVE GIVEN A SHORT STORY AND A POEM...LOL

**A WORKMAN**

- Our English word Workman is translated from the Greek word Ergates, which is used 15 times in the NT and is rendered in the NAS as laborer(2), laborers(6), worker(1), workers(4), workman(1), workmen(1).
- Workman means to engage in an activity involving considerable expenditure of effort. It is the root of English words like ergs, ergonomics, etc) literally describes a worker (workman) or laborer, someone who is engaged in labor ([Mt 10:10](#), [Mt 20:1-2](#), [8](#), etc).
- A Workman is one who effects something or brings about an effect through exertion of effort, whether mental or physical.
- A “workman” is one who does more than casually read the Scriptures. To “study” requires time, concentration, research, seeking practical applications, and comparing scripture with scripture.
- We have to *work* as a “workman” to be approved of God (2:15 cf. Phil.4:9). And the work we should be involved in is building up the Body of Christ (Eph.4:12).
- In the spiritual realm in the NT, some of the workers are good (believers - [Mt 9:37](#), [38](#), [1Ti 5:18](#), [2Ti 2:15](#)) and some are evil (unbelievers = deceitful workers in [2Cor 11:13](#), evil workers - [Php 3:2](#), workers of evil literally in [Lk 13:27](#))

- It is easy for preachers to become paid loafers and social parasites, wasting their days in pleasure, recreation, and bumming around with open palms and an expectant look.
- Sadly, the religious hucksters and hirelings of the world have earned their reputation. Let no gospel preacher do so! The pastor has no boss within sight. He is not required to keep regular office hours.
- And no one checks up on him, to be sure he is working. That is as it should be. Yet, the very fact that a church treats her pastor as she should, makes it possible for the pastor to abuse his office, neglect his work, give himself to idleness, or to providing luxuries for himself and his family; when he should give himself relentlessly to study, and prayer, and preaching.
- Let us then follow Paul's advice in 1 timothy 4:15-16, and devote time and energy to...**"Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely."**

- It is noteworthy that the word “workman” is used in the Bible only of persons who either built the tabernacle (Ex.35:35) or idols (Isa.40:20).

**THAT NEEDETH NOT TO BE ASHAMED**

- Timothy's challenge is not only to be approved, but to be a worker "who has no need to be ashamed." Paul had already spoken of not being ashamed on three occasions in the previous chapter (2 Timothy 1:8, 12, 16). who does not need to be ashamed:
- Not...ashamed ([anepaischuntos](#) from a = without + epaischúnomai = be ashamed) describes the absence of a painful emotion caused by consciousness of guilt, shortcoming, or impropriety.
- The diligent workman who handles the Word rightly is irreprehensible (blameless)
- "It is better explained as *a workman who has no cause for shame when his work is being inspected.*" (White)
- The diligent workman has no cause for shame and is not liable to be put to shame when his work is inspected.
- Diligence in handling the Word now prevents one from one day having to stand before God and experience the painful feeling arising from the consciousness of having done something dishonorable with the Word of Truth
- It is embarrassing to do a job poorly and then to have your work examined. The Bible warns us that the work of each Christian will be examined at the judgment seat of Christ ([2 Corinthians 5:10](#)). Therefore, we have another motivation to work diligently for the Lord, so we will not be ashamed when our work is examined.
- THOUGHT - Application: Could I challenge you to consider measuring all your thoughts, words and deeds by the phrase..."A workman who does not need to be ashamed."



- This was Paul's warp and woof, to be God's man, **God's workman** who expressed his earnest expectation and hope this way "**that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.** (Philippians 1:20)
- We should each seek to be imitators of Paul, just as he was of Christ.



- **A FEW INTERESTING QUOTES**

- **Life is too short for us to do everything we want to do; but it is long enough for us to do everything God wants us to do.** - Anon.
- **Spend your time in nothing which you know must be repented of; in nothing on which you might not pray for the blessing of God; in nothing which you could not review with a quiet conscience on your dying bed; in nothing which you might not safely and properly be found doing if death should surprise you in the act.** - Richard Baxter

- Time should not be spent, it should be invested in the kingdom of God Time is not yours to dispose of as you please; it is a glorious talent that men must be accountable for as well as any other talent. - Thomas Brooks
- There is nothing puts a more serious frame into a man's spirit than to know the worth of his time. -
- We are to redeem the time because we ourselves are redeemed.-Richard Chester
- Half our life is spent trying to find something to do with the time we have rushed through life to save. -Will Rogers

- Too busy for all that is holy on earth beneath the sky,  
Too busy to serve the Master, but—not too busy to die!—  
Anon.
- **ETERNITY** will be appreciated only in the measure that we  
have rightly handled **TIME!**-F. King
- **Adoniram Judson** alluded to making the most of your  
opportunities when he wrote that...
- Only one life  
Twill soon pass  
Only what's done for (in) Christ will last
- So teach us to number our days,  
That we may present to Thee a heart of wisdom.  
-- Moses - Psalm 90: 12

**RIGHTLY DIVIDING  
or HANDLING ACCURATELY**

- Timothy is urged in the famous phrase to **rightly to divide the word of truth**.
- To **“divide”** the Scriptures is to analyze the parts in light of the message of the whole book. To **“rightly”** divide the Scriptures is to avoid distorting and perverting the message.
- The Greek word translated to divide rightly is *orthotomein*, which literally means to cut rightly.
- It has many pictures in it. Calvin connected it with a father dividing out the food at a meal and cutting it up so that each member of the family received the right portion.
- Beza connected it with the cutting up of sacrificial victims so that each part was correctly apportioned to the altar or to the priest.
- The Greeks themselves used the word in three different connections. They used it for driving a straight road across country, for ploughing a straight furrow across a field, and for the work of a mason in cutting and squaring a stone so that it fitted into its correct place in the structure of the building.
- So the man who rightly divides the word of truth, drives a straight road through the truth and refuses to be lured down pleasant but irrelevant by-paths; he ploughs a straight furrow across the field of truth; he takes each section of the truth, and fits it into its correct position, as a mason does a stone, allowing no part to usurp an undue place and so knock the whole structure out of balance.

- **Rightly dividing the word of truth was to be a focus of Timothy's hard work. He was to work hard so he could rightly divide the word of God.**
- **Timothy, as a faithful pastor, was to be rightly dividing God's Word. That is, he had to know what it said and didn't say, and how it was to be understood and how it was not to be understood.**
- **It wasn't enough for Timothy to know some Bible stories and verses and sprinkle them through his sermons as illustrations. His teaching was to be a "right dividing" of the Word of God, correctly teaching his congregation.**
- **Rightly dividing has several ideas associated with the ancient term.**
- ***Rightly handle* the Word of God, as one would rightly handle a sword.**
- ***Plow straight* with the Word of God, properly presenting the essential doctrines.**
- ***Properly dissect and arrange* the Word of God, as a priest would dissect and arrange an animal for sacrifice.**
- ***Allot to each their portion*, as someone distributing food at a table**
- **"Swords are meant to cut and hack, and wound, and kill with, and the word of truth is for pricking men in the heart and killing their sins. The word of God is not committed to God's ministers to amuse men with its glitter, nor to charm them with the jewels in its hilt, but to conquer their souls for Jesus." (Spurgeon)**



- **Handling accurately** is **orthotomeo** from **orthós** = right, standing upright, continuing in a straight direction, figuratively = right, true, of ethically correct behavior + **témno** = cut or divide) means to make a straight cut, cut straight (of a craftsman cutting a straight line, farmer plowing a straight furrow, mason setting a straight line of bricks, workmen building a straight road).
- Metaphorically as used here it speaks of carefully performing a task.

- **orthotomeo** is found elsewhere independently of the NT only at Proverbs 3:6, where it is used with hodos and plainly means ‘cut a path in a straight direction’ or ‘cut a road across country (that is forested or otherwise difficult to pass through) in a straight direction’, so that the traveler may go directly to his destination
- At Proverbs 3:6 we read *In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.*
- In Proverbs 11:5 we read in the *Righteousness traces out blameless paths: but ungodliness encounters unjust dealing.* Here **orthotomeo** is used in connexion with (hodos = way, path) cutting a path in a straight direction.
- It is connected with temno, cut. The idea is that of cutting a path through a forest or difficult terrain so that the traveller may go directly to his destination .
- The meaning here is to guide the word of truth along a straight path, like a road that goes straight to its goal.
- Other interpretations are to teach the word aright, expound it soundly, shape rightly, and preach fearlessly

- Some think that the original word rendered rightly to divide, is a sacrificial word, alluding to the right dividing of the sacrifice; which was laid upon the altar, separating the precious from the vile, and severing the parts which were not to be offered from them that were, and cutting out the sacrifice in such a manner as all had their share in them
- **What is very clear is that every Christian, but pastors especially, must *work hard* to be rightly dividing the word of truth. Though *perfection* in understanding God's word is impossible, and should never be assumed, we should still work hard at it.**

- **The use of the present tense calls for us to continually rightly divide the Word of Truth.**
- We are to take no short cuts or vacations when it comes to handling God's Word in a trustworthy manner.
- Every time you teach or preach God's Word of truth you must seek by the Spirit's illumination and the enabling grace of Christ to cut the Word of Truth straight.
- In marked contrast are the false teachers who twist the Scriptures to their temporal benefit and their and their hearers eternal detriment!
- Where teachers and learners are lax in their study of the Scriptures, Bible classes are often filled with godless chatter and vain babblings. Instead of becoming mature in the faith, members and teachers become ungodly.
- Yet they claim success because their teaching becomes so popular, spreading "like gangrene."

- The careful exegete and expositor of God's word of truth must be meticulous in the way he interprets and pieces together the many individual truths found in Scripture.
- The first and most important principle is that of basing doctrine and standards of living on Scripture alone (**Sola Scriptura**), a key watchword of the Protestant Reformation.
- The image of **orthotomeo** is that of laying out a road. The teacher is to lay out a clearly marked pathway for others to walk. This effort requires study.
- Teachers are those who have been gifted by the Spirit and have devoted their minds to God so that they might impart His wisdom to His people. The Word of God however can be abused as well as used.
- It is always in danger of being distorted by teachers who handle it casually. The only effective way to prevent distortion of the Word of truth is diligent preparation at the study desk.

- **Ray Stedman asserts ..... Timothy is to "rightly handle the word of truth." That has been widely misunderstood in our day. I grew up on the Scofield Reference Bible, which uses the King James text, to "rightly divide the word of truth." I was told that meant that as one read through the New Testament or the Old Testament, one was to divide it up according to which part was addressed to the Jews, which part to the Gentiles, and which part to the Christians; or, one was to divide it according to that which dealt with the church versus that which dealt with the kingdom; whether it addressed itself to those who are under the Law or those who are under grace.**
- **That gave rise to what is frequently called, Dispensationalism, where one had to be very careful to understand exactly who God was speaking to when he said something.**

- I have had to learn that this text is not talking about dividing the word of truth. The word is more properly translated, "rightly handling the word of truth." Actually, the word used here is a very interesting one. It is a single word which means "to cut straight" -- "cut straight the word of truth," Paul says. Commentators have struggled as to what Paul is referring to in that metaphor.
- Some have thought he meant a plowman, who sets his eye on an object, a tree or a stake, at the end of a field, and he plows a straight course right to that object. According to that view, Paul was suggesting that as Timothy reads the Scriptures he is to get hold of the final truth and not deviate from that; he is to plow a straight course through the word of truth. Other commentators have thought Paul was referring to the way a stonemason builds a wall: he drops a plumb line, then he is careful to cut the stone so it is straight according to the plumb line.
- I think, however, that Paul is probably referring to his own experience as a tentmaker. Timothy traveled with Paul, so he must have worked many nights with him, cutting and sewing material together to make tents. That is what Paul is referring to; a figure that Timothy would well understand.

- You ladies who have made garments from patterns know how important it is to cut the material straight.
- If you cut it on a line away from what the pattern says you will end up with a piece that is either too small or too large.
- When you try to fit it with other pieces it will either droop and sag because it is too large, or it will pull and pinch because it is too small. That is what Paul is talking about.  
**When you handle the Scriptures, he says to Timothy, be sure to cut a straight line.**
- **That is, understand the words that are used as they relate to other Scriptures that deal with the subject, so that when the whole thing is put together you will not have to pull or stretch or try to fit something in that does not quite belong; you have clearly understood what each section means, and it will all fit together naturally.**



- **John MacArthur** explains that "Because Paul is a tentmaker, he may have been using an expression that tied in with his trade.
- When Paul made tents, he used certain patterns. In those days tents were made from the skins of animals in a patchwork sort of design.
- Every piece would have to be cut and fit together properly. Paul was simply saying, "If one doesn't cut the pieces right, the whole won't fit together properly."
- It's the same thing with Scripture. If one doesn't interpret correctly the different parts, the whole message won't come through correctly.
- In Bible study and interpretation the Christian should cut it straight. He should be precise... and accurate.

- **Paul is dealing here with a very important principle in understanding the truth of Scripture -- all Scripture must be understood in the light of the rest of Scripture.**
- **We really have not ever understood any single passage until we have carefully tried to fit it with all that the Scriptures say about it.**
- **One of the most frequent ways in which error begins is when one group takes a single passage, or a single book, of Scripture and zeros in on a single text, or a few chosen texts, and builds its entire doctrine on that one passage.**

- **Spurgeon** commenting on "**handling accurately**" writes "“Rightly dividing, or Straight Cutting. A ploughman stands here with his plough, and he ploughs right along from this end of the field to the other, making a straight furrow.
- And so Paul would have Timothy make a straight furrow right through the word of truth. I believe there is no preaching that God will ever accept but that which goes decidedly through the whole line of truth from end to end, and is always thorough, honest, and downright.
- As truth is a straight line, so must our handling of the truth be straightforward and honest, without shifts or tricks.
- 
- There are two or three furrows which I have labored hard to plough. One is the furrow of free grace. “Salvation is of the Lord,” — he begins it, he carries it on, he completes it.
- Salvation is not of man, neither by man, but of grace alone. Grace in election, grace in redemption, grace in effectual calling, grace in final perseverance, grace in conferring the perfection of glory; it is all grace from beginning to end.
- If we say at any time anything which is really contrary to this distinct testimony that salvation is of grace, believe us not. This furrow must be ploughed fairly, plainly, and beyond all mistake.
- Sinner, you cannot be saved by any merit, penance, preparation, or feeling of your own. The Lord alone must save you as a work of gratis mercy, not because you deserve it, but because he wills to do it to magnify his abundant love. That is the straight furrow of the Word. ([click full sermon "Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth"](#))

- Some groups take a passage like, "**And they all spake with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance,**" (Acts 2:4 KJV).
- Building on that, they insist that every Christian must speak with tongues in order to be filled with the Spirit.
- But that is ignoring all the rest that Scripture says about tongues.
- It is very important that the whole passage be understood and that it fits without difficulty the rest of Scripture.

- “All Scripture is...profitable” (2 Timothy 3:16), **but only if it is rightly divided!**
- **Some say rightly dividing isn’t important, but the word of truth of the gospel must be rightly divided!**
- **Rightly dividing suggests that** there is also such a thing as *wrongly dividing*, and **that** not everyone cuts it straight.
- We must understand that Biblical truth is not just an issue left up to everyone’s interpretation. There is a right way and a wrong way to understand the Bible, and a pastor especially must work hard to master the right interpretation.
- For example, many people love to say when the Bible is quoted, “Well, that’s just your interpretation.” Their idea is, “You interpret the Bible your way, I interpret it my way, and another person interprets it their way. We can never really know what it means, so don’t judge me with your Bible verse.”
- When someone tells me, “That’s just your interpretation,” I think in response: “It’s true that it is *my* interpretation, but it isn’t *just* my interpretation, it is the *correct* interpretation, and we need to pay attention to what the Bible says correctly interpreted.”
- This is an important point: The Bible *does not* mean just what anyone wants it to mean. There may be many people trying to twist the Scriptures to their own ends, but they are *wrongly dividing the word of truth*.
- We can’t just pick the interpretation that seems most comfortable to us and claim it as true – it must be **rightly dividing the word of truth**, and it must be consistent with what the Bible says in the specific passage and with the entire message of the Scriptures.

- For example, a *correct* interpretation of [Matthew 7:1](#) (*Judge not, that you be not judged*) is not the idea of “You have no right to judge my behavior or anyone else’s behavior.”
- If this were the case, then Jesus *repeatedly* broke His own commandment because He often told people their behavior was wrong in the sight of God. The correct understanding of [Matthew 7:1](#) is easily seen by reading [Matthew 7:2](#): *For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the same measure you use, it will be measured back to you.*
- Jesus was saying “Don’t judge anyone by a standard you are not willing to be judged by. God will hold you to the same standard you hold others to.”
- This *clearly* does not forbid judging someone else’s life, but it does prohibit doing it unfairly or hypocritically, or living with a judgmental attitude.
- The point is clear: There is a *right* way and a *wrong* way to divide the [Matthew 7:1](#), which is one verse in the word of truth.

- **We must correctly handle God's Word, and give careful thought and prayer to what the Author said, or we will be misled.**
- **A text out of context is often a dangerous pretext.**

**THE WORD OF TRUTH**



- The phrase **“the word of truth”** is used for *the very gospel of salvation itself* (James 2:18; Eph.1:12,13).
- The Word of Truth is the workman’s tool for building, measuring, and repairing God’s people. Carriers of the truth of God are to represent that truth and the God of truth well enough that we need never apologize for ourselves. God wants His people to be well prepared in the interpretation of God's truth. The messenger who interprets God's truth for others is an agent of His revelation.
- It is clear from both the OT and NT, as well as from church history and our own time, that many of the worst false teachers claim to be servants of God ([2Co 11:13](#)).
- The majority of scribes, Pharisees, and other Jewish leaders of Jesus’ day considered themselves to be the godliest of the godly, as well as the only reliable interpreters of Scripture. Jesus called these men "blind guides of the blind" ([Mt 15:14](#), [Mt 23:16](#), [24](#))

- **THE WORD OF GOD IS THE WORD OF TRUTH**
- **Word of Truth - What a beautiful name for the Bible, especially in a world which is becoming more and more the opposite, where men's words are no longer binding. How we need to remember that Satan is a liar, the father of lies and has no truth in him, which emphasizes our great need to be totally dependent on the Word of Truth to counter his evil but very deceptive lies!**
- **Take a moment and ponder each of the 5 Biblical uses of this great phrase Word of Truth ([Ps. 119:43](#); [2Co. 6:7](#); [Col. 1:5](#); [2Ti 2:15](#); [Jas 1:18](#))**
- **Think of God's Word of Truth as the "sun" (Son) and then consider how the planets function in such order as they rotate around the sun. In a similar way believers should live their entire Christian life within the orbit of God's Word of Truth, ultimately manifest in the Logos, His precious Son, Our Lord and King. Amen.**

# WORD

- **Word** ([3056](#)) (**logos** from **légō** = to speak with words; English = logic, logical) means something said and describes a communication whereby the mind finds expression in words. Although **Lógos** is most often translated **word** which Webster defines as "something that is said, a statement, an utterance", the Greek understanding of **lógos** is somewhat more complex.
- **Cremer** explains that **lógos** is used of the living, spoken word,
- the word not in its outward form, but with reference to the thought connected with the form,... in short, not the word of language, but of conversation, of discourse; not the word as a part of speech, but the word as part of what is uttered.
- **Barclay** adds that
- the Greek term for word is **lógos**; but **lógos** does not only mean word; it also means reason. For John, and for all the great thinkers who made use of this idea, these two meanings were always closely intertwined. Whenever they used **lógos** the twin ideas of the Word of God and the Reason of God were in their minds. ([Barclay, W: The Daily Study Bible Series. The Westminster Press](#))
- In the Greek mind and as used by secular and philosophical Greek writers, **lógos** did not mean merely the name of an object but was an expression of the thought behind that object's name. Let me illustrate this somewhat subtle nuance in the meaning of **lógos** with an example from the [Septuagint \(LXX\)](#) (Greek of the Hebrew OT) in which **lógos** is used in the well known phrase **the Ten Commandments**.
- The [Septuagint](#) translates this phrase using the word **lógos** as "the ten (**deka**) words (**logoi**)" ([Ex 34:28](#)), this phrase giving us the familiar term **Decalogue**. Clearly each of the "Ten Commandments" is not just words but words which express a thought or concept behind those words.
- That which corresponds to or adequately expresses what is real (Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics and Philosophy of Religion).
- This then is the essence of the meaning of **lógos** and so it should not be surprising that depending on the context **lógos** is translated with words such as "saying, instruction, message, news, preaching, question, statement, teaching, etc". This understanding of **lógos** also helps understand John's repeated usage of this Greek word as a synonym for the second Person of the Godhead, the Lord Jesus Christ.

- **TRUTH: ALETHEIA**
- **Truth** ([225](#)) ([aletheia](#) from **a** = indicates following word has the opposite meaning ~ without + **lanthano** = to be hidden or concealed, to escape notice, cp our English "*latent*" from Latin = to lie hidden) has the literal sense of that which contains nothing hidden.
- **Aletheia** is that which is not concealed. **Aletheia** is that which that is seen or expressed as it really is (this idea is discussed more below).
- The basic understanding of **aletheia** is that it is the **manifestation** of a **hidden** reality (eg, [click](#) discussion of Jesus as "the Truth").
- For example, when you are a witness in a trial, the court attendant says "Raise your right hand. Do you swear that you will tell the truth and nothing but the truth so help you God?" And you say, "I do" and you sit down.
- The question the court attendant is asking is "Are you willing to come into this courtroom and **manifest** something that is **hidden** to us that only you know so that you will bear evidence to that?"
- Therefore when you speak the **truth**, you are manifesting a "**hidden reality**". Does that make sense?
- An parallel example in Scripture is the case of the woman in the crowd who had touched Jesus (Read context = [Mk 5:24-25](#), [26-27](#), [28-29](#), [30](#), [31-32](#)), but when she became "aware of what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him, and told Him the whole **truth** " ([Mk 5:33](#)) and nothing but the truth. She did not lie. She spoke no falsehoods.

- **Truth** then is the correspondence between a **reality** and a declaration which professes to set forth or describe the **reality**. To say it another way, **words spoken or written** are **true** when they correspond with **objective reality**.
- Persons and things are **true** when they correspond with their profession (which we describe with words like integrity, sincerity, non-hypocritical, etc). In other words, "what you see is what you get".
- Hence a truth is a declaration which has corresponding reality, or a reality which is correctly set forth.
- Since God is Himself the great reality, that which correctly sets forth His nature is pre-eminently the Truth of Creation (Natural Revelation) and the Truth of Scripture (Special Revelation).
- Thus it is not surprising that rebellious, sinful men actively hold down or suppress the Truth of Creation (and the glorious Creator) ([Ro 1:18](#)) and even exchange this clearly manifested (and objective) reality (Creation) for a lie ([Ro 1:25](#)).

- **Gilbrant on aletheia** - One of the principal terms for expressing the concept of “truth” in the Greek language is **alētheia**.
- Originally the word denoted something which was not hidden or a disclosure of something which was hidden.
- In Greek philosophy the word often carries the sense of that which really exists, “the reality behind all apparent reality.” Therefore, it has been customary to conclude from this that there is a marked contrast between the Greek and Hebrew view of the nature of “truth.”
- According to this view, in classical Greek **alētheia** stands in opposition to that which is only apparent or perceived to be real. The Hebrew notion of truth points to that which is sure and reliable as the “truth.” No doubt this is substantially correct. But it would be erroneous to assume that **alētheia** should solely or principally imply a philosophic concept of reality.
- Obviously Greeks as well as Hebrews needed a word which decisively expressed truth as over against falsehood and deceit. Such a concrete sense can also be discovered in the Greek **alētheia** just as it can in the Hebrew *’ēmeth*.
- Both of these terms have distinct shades of meaning which are worthwhile to investigate.
- **Alētheia** functions in various contexts. To the philosophers it expressed “being” in the absolute sense of the word, i.e., “existence.”
- Historians used the term to signify real events as distinct from myths. In forensic language (legal) the term characterizes an accurate assessment of a fact, in contrast to an incorrect observation or assertion.
- **Alētheia** not only stands for irrefutable facts, but it also expresses the truth itself, that which is unattainable to the human mind and which can only be perceived in ecstasy or through divine revelation. (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

- **Lewis Sperry Chafer** writes that "**Truth**" is "the character of God is in view when He is called the God of Truth. He not only advances and confirms that which is true, but in faithfulness abides by His promise, and executes every threat or warning He has made.
- Apart from the element of truth in God there would be no certainty whatsoever in this life, and men would wander on in comfortless perplexity not knowing whence they came or whither they are going.
- Without truth in God, a revelation is only a mockery. On the contrary, as asserted in the Bible, "Let God be true, but every man a liar" ([Ro3:4](#)).
- Though men deceive, the veracity of God can never be questioned to the slightest degree. Truth in God is surety that what He has disclosed is according to the nature of things and that His disclosures may be depended upon with plenary certainty.
- This certainty characterizes alike every revelation from God by whatever means."([Biblical Theism Pt 3/4 The Attributes of God - Bibliotheca Sacra: Vol. 96, Page 14-16, 1939](#))

- **Aletheia** speaks of veracity, reality, sincerity, accuracy, integrity ("what you see is what you get").
- **Vine - Aletheia**, truth "expresses that which is consistent with reality."
- **Aletheia** is the opposite of fictitious, feigned, false.
- **Charles Simeon** wrote that "truth is a conformity of our feelings and actions to our professions and this God requires of us in the whole of our spirit and conduct.
- **Noah Webster** defined **truth** as "Conformity to fact or reality; exact accordance with that which is, or has been, or shall be. (1828 Dictionary)
- **Nelson's New Illustrated Dictionary** says truth is "conformity to fact or actuality; faithfulness to an original or to a standard. In the Old and New Testaments, truth is a fundamental moral and personal quality of God. ([Ex 34:6](#), [Dt 32:4](#), [Ps 25:10](#))



- **Aletheia** is a reality which is firm, solid, binding.
- When aletheia is used of individuals, it characterizes their action, their words or their thoughts and conveys the general sense of integrity (integer = one)
- **Truth** is the correspondence between a reality and a declaration which professes to set it forth. Words are **true** when they correspond with objective reality:
- Persons and things are true when they correspond with their profession.
- Hence a **truth** is a declaration which has corresponding reality, or a reality which is correctly set forth.
- **Since God is Himself the great reality, that which correctly sets forth His nature is pre-eminently the Truth. Ultimately Jesus is "the Truth" and He is "the Word".**

- **Friberg** gives one of the best summaries of **aletheia** (the following is modified slightly) and includes the Greek word that is the antonym...
- (1) **Truth** speaks of what has certainty and validity ([Ep 4.21](#)), The opposite = [plane \[word study\]](#) = going astray from the path of truth, thus error
- (2) **Truth** describes the real state of affairs, especially as divinely disclosed truth ([Ro 1.18](#)). The opposite = [muthos \[word study\]](#) = fiction, myth
- (3) **Truth** speaks of the concept of the Gospel message as being absolute truth ([2Th 2.12](#))
- (4) **Truth** can describe the true-to-fact statements ([Lk 4.25](#)). The opposite = [pseudos \[word study\]](#) (lie, falsehood); (See devotional related to lying - [Which Tire Was It - Our Daily Bread](#))
- (5) **Truth** speak of what is characterized by love of truth (truthfulness, uprightness, fidelity - in one's words or conduct = thus equates with sincerity, veracity) ([1Co 5.8](#); [13.6](#)). The opposite = [adikia \[word study\]](#) = wrong, evil
- (6) **Truth** describes reality as opposed to pretense or mere appearance ([Phil 1.18](#)). The opposite = [prophasis \[word study\]](#) =pretext, excuse.

## • **Discussion Questions**

- Since Bible scholars often disagree, how can we know that we're interpreting the Bible correctly?
- How can we guard against spiritual pride—that we have the “right” view of truth? Does humility mean that we can never know that we're right?
- How do you know when a doctrine is worth fighting for and when you are merely wrangling about words?
- Is every Christian required to be diligent to study God's Word, or does this only apply to those gifted to teach?

- **Be Diligent!**
- Be Diligent! - God has hidden every precious thing in such a way that it is a reward to the diligent, a prize to the earnest, but a disappointment to the slothful soul.
- 1. The pearl is buried beneath the ocean waves;
- 2. The gold is imprisoned in the rocky heart of the mountains;
- 3. The gem is found only after you crush the rock which encloses it;
- 4. The soil gives its harvest as a reward to the laboring farmer.
- 5. The nut is hidden in its hard case;
- So truth and God must be earnestly sought. - The most beneficial study of God's Word requires diligence and perseverance, but the results are worth the effort.
- What is the best tasting nut in the world? (macadamia nut for sure!)
- The Macadamia is the hardest nut in the world to crack, requiring 300 pound per square inch of pressure to break the shell!
- One nut cracker machine...shoots the nut with a speed of 400 mph against an anvil. This action knocks the kernel off but does not yet break the shell. A thousand of a second later a piston breaks open the shell.
- We are to be Macadamia Nut Ministers!
- Be Approved by God! - Obtain Gods approval.
- Be a Workman! - With no reason to be ashamed.
- Be Accurate! - In developing the truth.
- **Adapted from A. B. Simpson; from Streams in the Desert.**

- The Bible is no harmless instrument. It's a sharp sword and must be handled with proper care. **Paul mentions three improper ways of using the Bible:**

- **2. God's people should use the Bible to make progress in godliness (2:15, 19).**
- **The Bible wasn't given to satisfy our curiosity about the end times or to fill our heads with facts. It was given to help us grow in godliness. Paul gives us four ways to use the Bible properly:**
- **A. THE PROPER USE OF THE BIBLE REQUIRES THE PROPER APPROACH.**
- **"Be diligent..." The KJV ("study") conveys the wrong idea. The word means to be diligent or zealous. We are to give constant effort to the task of being approved unto God as unashamed workmen, which means handling God's Word accurately. This especially applies to those who teach the Bible, but it also applies to all believers, who must be able to handle the Word carefully.**
- So many Christians are haphazard and lazy rather than diligent in their approach to God's Word. They don't systematically read, study, or memorize it. If they read it at all, they jump from passage to passage, pulling verses out of context. They aren't seeking to know God and how He wants them to think, to believe, and to relate to others. Their lives and relationships are falling apart, but they don't search diligently to discover what God's Word tells them to do about these problems.

- **The key to being diligent in God's Word is to be motivated. Motivation is the key to learning**
- **So the key to being motivated to be diligent in God's Word is to recognize, "I live in the presence of God! Someday soon I will give an account to Him. His Word alone contains His wisdom on how to live in a way that pleases Him, which is the only way to true happiness for me. So I've got to be diligent to search out what the Scriptures say about knowing God and His wisdom for living."**

- B. THE PROPER USE OF THE BIBLE REQUIRES THE PROPER RELATIONSHIP.
- **“Present yourself approved to God.”** “Present” is used (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:27) to speak of a bride being presented to her bridegroom. It’s a very personal, loving act when a young woman gives herself to a young man in marriage. In that culture (pre-women’s lib) it meant that she was giving herself completely to him: her devotion, her time, her body, her complete focus was now toward her husband because of his love for her and her love for him.
- **That’s how we should come to the Bible. It’s not just a book of principles for how to live. It tells us of Christ’s enduring love for His bride. As His bride, we should seek to please Him and be available to do His will. As such, our focus should not be on what others think of us, but on what God thinks. Too many pastors fall into the trap of pleasing people, rather than pleasing God. While it’s nice to be liked, my main focus is to be, “approved to God.” Our goal is to please our heavenly Bridegroom who loved us and gave Himself for us.**
- When Jim Elliot, who was later martyred in the jungles of Ecuador, was a student at Wheaton College, he wrote in his diary, “My grades came through this week, and were, as expected, lower than last semester. However, I make no apologies, and admit I’ve let them drag a bit for study of the Bible, in which I seek the degree A.U.G., ‘approved unto God’” (*Shadow of the Almighty* [Zondervan], p. 43). **Come to the Bible to deepen your love life with the Lord, to learn how you can please Him more.**



- C. THE PROPER USE OF THE BIBLE REQUIRES THE PROPER SKILL.
- **“A workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.”** Here the metaphor is that of a craftsman. You’re the carpenter and God’s Word is your set of tools. Rather than being sloppy and nailing together a chicken coop that’s about to fall down, do a decent job so that you will not be ashamed when God inspects your work. If a carpenter knows that his work will be inspected by a skilled master craftsman, he will not cut corners. He will do his best so that his work will be approved.
- **The Bible is God’s “word of truth.” Truth is accurate, objective and knowable, not subjective and fluid.** If a carpenter showed up at your house and didn’t have a level, square, tape measure or set of plans, you’d be a bit concerned. If you asked him about his methods and he said, “We all have different ways of seeing things and no way is absolutely right. Who’s to say that your house has to be plumb and square?” —you’d be even more concerned! You want your house built carefully and accurately according to the plans.
- **God’s Word is not the sort of thing where one person can see it one way and another person can see it another way and it really doesn’t matter because no one can know what it means. Every biblical text has a fixed meaning that is true and never changes. Based on and stemming from that meaning, it may have a different significance or application for different people and at different times for the same person. But we need to use the tools of Bible study and interpretation to discover the meaning of each text in its biblical context. Otherwise, we’re being sloppy workmen with God’s Word of truth.**

- The word translated, “accurately handling” (KJV, “rightly dividing”) means “to cut a path or road in a straight direction, so that the traveler may go directly to his destination” (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* [The University of Chicago Press, second edition, 1958], by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, p. 580). **Or, using a farming metaphor, Chrysostom said that it means to plow a straight furrow. The idea is not to get distracted off course by false teachings but accurately and straightforwardly to cut through the doctrines of Scripture so that you and your hearers can reach the destination of godliness.**
- Change doesn’t come from people feeling good or liking certain ideas that they think come from Scripture. **Change comes when people are confronted with God’s truth and they submit their lives to it. Thus we all, but especially those of us who teach God’s Word, must be skillful and accurate so that God’s people understand and submit to God’s truth in these days of moral relativism.**
- Thus the **proper use of the Bible requires the proper approach (diligence); the proper relationship (love); the proper skill (accuracy); finally,**

- **D. THE PROPER USE OF THE BIBLE REQUIRES THE PROPER FOUNDATION.**
- “Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, ‘The Lord knows those who are His,’ and, ‘Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness’” (2:19). It’s kind of scary reading about professing Christian people who have been ruined (2:14), have gone astray from the truth (2:18), and have been upset in their faith (2:18). We may wonder, “How can I keep on the path? How can I keep from being ruined?”
- **So Paul reminds Timothy of the foundation of the Christian life. The foundation refers to the true people of God, the church. Those who truly belong to the Lord are not carried away by false teaching. The seal on the foundation, or cornerstone, has two statements that reflect two important aspects of our salvation.** These two statements come from the story of Korah’s rebellion against Moses. Moses said (Num. 16:5), “the Lord will show who is His, and who is holy, and will bring him near to Himself; even the one whom He will choose...” He warned the congregation to depart from the tents of these wicked men before God destroyed them (Num. 16:26).
- Paul says that the first part of the seal is, “The Lord knows those who are His.” Salvation does not begin with man; it begins with God. He planned it and He executed it. “He chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4). “In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth” (James 1:18). We can’t know God’s truth until God has first laid hold of us and saved us from our sins by His grace alone.
- The second statement is, “Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness.” As Ephesians 1:4 continues, God chose us **“that we would be holy and blameless before Him.”** We can be assured that we belong to the Lord because we see Him progressively working His holiness into our daily lives. So **the foundation for using the Bible properly is that God knows us as His own and that through our diligent, careful study and application of His Word of truth, we are growing in godliness.**

- **Amplified:** Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth.  
([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))
- **Darby:** Strive diligently to present thyself approved to God, a workman that has not to be ashamed, cutting in a straight line the word of truth.
- **Wuest:** Bend your every effort to present yourself to God, approved, a workman unashamed, expounding soundly the word of the truth.  
(Eerdmans)
- **Young's Literal:** be diligent to present thyself approved to God--a workman irreproachable, rightly dividing the word of the truth;