

Diligent Study

In the familiar text in II Timothy 2:15, the apostle writes words many of us have memorized:

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needs not be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth."

The New King James renders it in this fashion:

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth."

The apparent differences in the translations are with regard to the word *study*. The New King James demonstrates a superior rendering here in its translation of this word because *diligence* implies more than simply reading, something we often confuse with studying the Bible.

While Bible reading is an essential start in study, there is a distinct difference between studying the Bible and simply reading the Bible.

Paul is admonishing Timothy by giving him the responsibility to do his best, to give diligence. Paul wanted Timothy to do what God wanted him to do so he would stand approved of God. In his encouragement of Timothy, Paul adds the inseparable skill of rightly dividing (or handling rightly) the word of truth.

As long as I can remember, I have heard gospel preachers preach on this text. I commend those ministers, because it needs to be preached regularly. This text establishes the fact that the worker, the man of God, must be conversant with the word of God, that each of us must handle properly the word of God.

Therefore, it is necessary that we come to a study of the word of God with the intelligence God has given us and use it in a proper fashion as we learn some basic principles relative to rightly dividing the word of truth. I would encourage each of us to invest time in study of God's word. Do not consider this a goal only for the upcoming year, rather a goal for the rest of our lives.

For the elders,
Tony Williams