

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Why Are You Studying?

(Jerry Fite)

PAul writes, “*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*” (2 Timothy 2:15 KJV). Many have become familiar with this passage through the King James Version. Therefore, the exhortation to “study” is emphasized in our minds. “Rightly dividing the word of truth” is the goal of our study. But is this point of the passage?

The word translated “study” is the Greek word, “spoudazo” which denotes giving “diligence” to accomplish a goal. For example, we are to “spoudazo” or give “diligence” to keep the unity of the spirit (Ephesians 4:3). We are to “spoudazo” or give “diligence” to make our calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10). Great care and earnestness is to be expended for a definite purpose according to this word.

The goal you are to hasten toward is to “*show thyself approved unto God.*” Seeking God’s approval is the focus of this passage which we might initially overlook if we are thinking about

“studying”. Studying the Scriptures and rightly dividing it is what we usually come away with when we read this passage. In reality Paul is emphasizing an attitude we should manifest. We should exert great diligence to have God’s approval.

To be an unashamed workman, we must rightly divide “the word of truth”. “*Rightly dividing*” translates the Greek word, “ORTHOTOMEO”. It literally means to “*cut straight*”. It is not so much being able to divide Scripture properly, like knowing how to divide the New Testament Gospel from the Old Testament Law, but applying properly what Scripture teaches. As a skilful carpenter sawing right on the marked line, we should carefully apply the word of truth as written.

Approaching the word with the earnest desire to have God’s approval, and then following thru with properly applying the revealed truth is what this passage is teaching. Yes, it will involve time consuming study, but the goal is God’s approval, not acquiring knowledge. Yes, it will

involve acquiring knowledge, but the goal is accurate teaching, not merely spending time with what is written.

This passage implies that the word of truth is distinctive. How can one apply a straight cut with no distinctive message? Jesus asked a lawyer “how” he “read the law”. When the lawyer said, “*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself;*” Jesus did not indicate what was revealed was open to different interpretations. Revealed truth is distinctive. Jesus says, “*Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live*” (Luke 10:26-28). The right answer was stating what the law actually said. All that was left to do was apply it to one’s life. Apply it as it is written.

Let us cut this passage accurately in our life. May we always approach the word of truth by giving diligence to be approved of God. We will then more likely apply His word accurately as an unashamed workman.