

AS DILIGENT AS TIMOTHY

2 Tim 2:15 (Paul to Timothy an evangelist) – Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing [accurately handling] the word of truth. (AMP) – Study & be eager & do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing & accurately dividing [rightly handling & skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth.

{Much of this lesson is from Heath Rogers: <http://ykc.com/cofc/>}

Darrell E. Clark, Jr. pastor: First Pentecostal Church in Edna, TX (Jackson County Herald-Tribune, 11/03/04) – *“It is not the responsibility of the average person that they should be ‘rightly dividing the word of truth.’ This responsibility was given to the ministry, & it was & is designed by God that His people should be taught, & they to follow those God has chosen to lead them.”*

A. According to this man, only certain people have been chosen by God to study & teach His word.

1. Furthermore, those who are taught should not study for themselves; they should simply follow those who are teaching them.
2. This fallacy is based on a misapplication of the very “word of truth” this man claims to understand & to teach accurately.

B. In NT times, God equipped the local church with leaders who were responsible for teaching others (Eph 4:11-12; 1 Tim 4:16).

1. But Paul was not suggesting that *other* Christians should not devote themselves to studying the Scriptures.
 - a. That would be like saying, only the teachers in medical schools should study medicine.
2. In the past, God dealt with mankind through (fathers, priests, prophets), but in the gospel age He deals with us individually (Heb 1:1-2).
3. YOUR salvation depends on YOU, & MY salvation depends on ME continuing in the word of Christ & knowing the truth (Jn 8:31-32).

[Let’s consider what a serious matter it is for each of us to do what Paul commanded Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:15.]

I. GOD EXPECTS US TO UNDERSTAND HIS WRITTEN WILL (SCRIPTURE)

A. Paul commanded each Christian to take personal responsibility for knowing God's will (Eph 5:8-17).

1. If you were asked the question today, "What is the mystery of Christ?" – could you answer?

2. Did you know that if we were taking personal responsibility for knowing God's will, then we would know the answer to that question?

a. Because the "mystery of Christ" may be understood by "reading" (Eph 3:1-6).

B. Peter told us that some of Paul's writings are "hard to understand" (2 Pet 3:15-16).

1. It will take time & mental energy to understand the "wisdom" given to him – *it's not impossible*

2. If we do not try, we will become like those who are "untaught & unstable", who "twist to their own destruction...the Scriptures."

C. Jesus expected His fellow Jews to have studied the Scriptures (Matt 21:42; 22:29; Lk 10:26; 18:20).

[The Christian is expected to understand the Scriptures. To do so we must "study" & "be diligent" in the matter.]

II. GOD EXPECTS US TO BE COMPLETE & EQUIPPED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK

A. Scripture contains all we need to know to serve God, to stand justified at His judgment & to go to heaven (2 Tim 3:16-17).

1. All Scripture is All The Teaching we need to understand God's will – Doctrine.

2. It tells us when something is sinful or wrong – Reproof.
3. It tells us how to correct what is wrong – Correction.
4. It guides us towards spiritual maturity – Instruction in righteousness.

B. **David** sheds some light on the personal responsibility we have to know God's word (**Psa 1:1-3**).

1. A tree that is always near the source of its life will be strong & fruitful.
2. The child of God who is complete & equipped for every good work, is one who is near God's word at all times.
3. His delight is in the Law of the Lord, & in His law he meditates day & night."

[**Bible** study is little like physical exercise, i.e., you don't benefit from someone else's exercise.

You are likely to forget the subject of this lesson in just a few days.

However, if God's word moves you to do more personal Bible study, then you will begin to see that you are becoming complete & thoroughly equipped for God's service.

And that work will be done mostly on your own.]

III. GOD EXPECTS US TO WORK OUT OUR OWN SALVATION IN FEAR & TREMBLING

A. **Paul** told the Philippians that they had a personal responsibility in their own salvation (**Phil 2:12**).

1. Should we leave something as important as our eternal destiny up to someone else?

2. The Bereans searched the Scriptures daily to make sure Paul was being truthful (**Acts 17:11**).
3. Paul commanded the Corinthians to examine & prove (test) themselves (**2 Cor 13:5**).

[**These** Christians were not seeking to justify themselves; they truly wanted to know the truth so they could obey God & work out their salvation in fear & trembling.]

IV. THE CONSEQUENCES IF WE DO NOT STUDY GOD'S WORD

- A. **Trusting** others to teach us the truth will make us easy prey for false teachers (**2 Tim 3:6; Ti 1:10-11**).

Jude 3-4 – Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, ***I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith*** which was once for all [**once for all times, once & for all – How many times is the mail delivered each day?**] delivered to the saints. 4 FOR CERTAIN MEN HAVE CREPT IN UNNOTICED, WHO LONG AGO WERE MARKED OUT FOR THIS CONDEMNATION, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness & deny the only Lord God & our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. The best tactic of a false teacher is to convince others not to do their own study.
2. This attitude of trusting others to explain God's word is what kept His word out of the reach of people for centuries.
3. The Catholic Church executed people who attempted to translate the Scripture & give it to the common people.
4. Today, many are kept in the same darkness of ignorance by trusting someone to tell them everything they need to know.

- B. **Hosea** foretold the doom of the Israelite nation being rejected by God & the reason for it.

Hosea 4:6 – ***My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.*** Because ***you have rejected knowledge,*** I ALSO WILL REJECT YOU FROM BEING PRIEST FOR ME; because ***you have forgotten the law of your God,*** I ALSO WILL FORGET YOUR CHILDREN.

1. These Jews were listening to someone; they were just not listening to the law of God.

2. The point is, when we depend on others for our knowledge of God's will we can easily be led away from God.
 - a. Sincere people can teach error.
 - b. They can be negligent in their study.
 - c. They can be followers of other men.
 - d. They may teach some truth, but they may fail or refuse to teach the whole counsel of God.

CLOSING

- A. **Remember** Paul's command to Timothy (2 Tim 2:15), & never forget that this command applies to you & how you respond to it will influence your eternal destiny (heaven or hell).

John 12:48 – He who rejects Me, & does not receive My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.

Matt 7:21 – Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

1. It is just common sense to do everything in our power to prepare us for eternity.

2. When we stand before the Lord, we will not think that we wasted any time that was spent in deep study & mediation of God's word.

3. The 30 minutes we spend together on Sunday morning will accomplish very little in regard to your eternal salvation. These lessons, at best, can only direct you down a course that you yourself must take.

A man was seated on a park bench when a little boy of five sat down beside him & started winding what appeared to be a most prized possession—a watch. "My, what a pretty watch," remarked the man. "Does it tell you the time?" "No sir," replied the boy; "you gotta look at it."

God's Truth is everywhere, but you must look for it & at it to see it.
