

## “YOUR WORD IS... To Be Correctly Handled”

The Word of God is an incredible treasure! We are so blessed to be able to possess it. But here’s a question worth asking: *what are we supposed to do with the Bible?* There’s a great answer given in 2 Timothy 2:15: “*Study to show yourself approved unto God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*” So, what are we supposed to do with the Word of Truth? Answer: 1) Study it, and 2) Correctly handle it. We’re going to look at some tools today that will help us to do just that.

Those who desire to be “*approved unto God*” must be careful how we handle the Word of God. We must “*rightly divide it,*” which means, *making a straight path.* When we share the truth of God’s Word with others we must make sure we’re laying out a path that is accurately in line with God’s Word. We must not use the Word of God to support a pet theory, or our own ideas or opinions. Instead, we must follow the true teaching of the Word of God and make it the straight pattern for life. This command in 2 Timothy 2:15 is for every believer.

We should never take for granted the freedom we have to pick up a copy of the Bible and read it in our own language. Great cost and sacrifice has been paid by many individuals to make the Bible available to common people in their own language. We should be thankful that we can study the Bible for ourselves, but we must be very careful to interpret it correctly, so we don’t come up with all kinds of strange ideas that leads ourselves and others astray. We should always examine the Scriptures for ourselves, to see if what is being taught is in line with God’s Word. Not disrespectfully, but nobly. We also need to make sure we have a responsive heart every time the true Word of God is taught. Don’t just let it go in one ear and out the other – make sure your heart says “yes” and “amen” to the teachings you receive from the Holy Scriptures.

Since we are commanded to study the Bible, let’s consider some simple tools that we can bring with us to the wonderful task of studying the Bible to make sure we’re handling it correctly. **First** of all, in order to “*study to show ourselves approved unto God,*” we need the tool of **observation**. What we’re trying to get at here, is what does the text of Scripture actually say? Explore the Bible, don’t just randomly skim the highlights. Go deep. Ask questions of the text. Read the Bible in context, consider what has come before the particular passage under study, and what comes after. **Secondly**, in order to “*study to show ourselves approved unto God,*” we need the tool of **meditation** and **memorization**. What we’re trying to get at here, is what does it taste like? How can I fully taste the sweetness of God’s Word? Meditation is the practice of chewing on the marvelous truths in the Bible, over and over again; it’s sucking all the wonderful juices out of the Bible.

*Did you know that a cow has one stomach with four compartments? To completely digest their food, cows repeatedly regurgitate the food, and re-chew it as “cud.” The cud is then re-swallowed and further digested in the next compartment. This process continues through all four compartments of a cow’s stomach until all the nutrients in that food have been absorbed. I don’t mean to be gross, but meditating on God’s Word is regurgitating the truths we have read, and re-chewing them, to get all the nutrients possible out of the Bible. When we meditate on the Scriptures, we fill our minds with the good stuff of God’s Word and keep repeating and replaying*

those truths in our minds. Part of the process of meditation is memorization. This is the practice of taking portions of the Bible and committing them to memory. Even if you don't think you are able to memorize portions of the Bible (don't sell yourself short), the very act of *trying* to memorize Scripture will yield wonderful results. As you go over those truths and words again and again, its message will begin to be burned into your heart. Psalm 119:11 says, "*Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.*" Remember: "*A Bible which is falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn't!*" (Charles Spurgeon) And, "*The Bible will either keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Bible.*" (D.L. Moody)

## **Discussion Guide/Action Steps**

1. Make sure you pray each time before reading or studying the Bible. Invite the Holy Spirit (the Author of Scripture) to speak to you through the Word of God and reveal it to you. Ask Him to help you understand what you read and guide you as you apply it to your life.

2. Here's a good declaration to recite before receiving Bible teaching: "*This is my Bible: I am what it says I am; I have what it says I have; I can do what it says I can do. Today, I will be taught the Word of God. I'll boldly confess: my mind is alert; my heart is receptive; I will never be the same. I am about to receive the incorruptible, indestructible, ever-living Seed of the Word of God. I'll never be the same—never, never, never! I'll never be the same, in Jesus' Name.*"

3. Here's a good declaration to make in response to today's teaching: "*I will love the Word, and study the Word of God. I will treasure the copies of God's Word that I possess—not as an archive in a museum, but as the source of living Truth to be explored. I will study it to ascertain its meaning with the Spirit's help, and then apply those ageless truths into my life. I will study the Word of God in context, and I will go over it and over it and over it in my mind. I will fill my mind with the truth of God's Word and receive all the benefits that it will bring into my life. I will obey the Word and put it into practice. I commit myself anew to the study of God's Word.*"