

Handling God's Word Correctly and Accurately

The Scriptures are a sacred trust to us from God. He looks with approval upon our handling His word correctly, accurately, and with integrity. Come see how.

2 Timothy 2:15. KJV Study to shew thyself **approved unto God**, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth**.

NASB: Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, **accurately handling the word of truth**.

NIV: ...a worker...who **correctly handles** the word of truth.

To be a workman **approved** in God's sight, we are told to do two things:

1) "**Study**" (KJV), according to most translations, has the meaning of "Be **diligent** ... make **every effort**." An approved workman in God's eyes is diligent in God's word. He or she makes every effort to excel in the word of God.

2) The one approved of God **accurately, correctly handles** the word of truth. Greek expert W.E. Vine says about "*rightly dividing*" the word (as the KJV translates it) that the Greek word means literally to "cut straight." Vine says that the word passed to the more general sense of *rightly dealing with* a thing and, in this verse's context, teaching **Scripture accurately**. How then can we rightly handle the word of God and thereby incur God's approval? Let's look at some Scriptures.

Psalms 119:18 **Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.**

- **Pray** before you open your Bible. Ask God to open your eyes to the truths you will read in His word. Since I discovered this Scripture many years ago, I begin with a brief prayer from this verse each time I read or study God's word. By doing this, I am acknowledging my own inability to properly understand God's word and am **asking Him to reveal** its contents and truths to me.

Deuteronomy 17:18-19 When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll **a copy of this law**, taken from that of the Levitical priests. It is to be with him, and he is to **read it all the days of his life** so that he may learn to revere the Lord his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees.

- We will *accurately handle* the word of truth better if we **know** the word of truth! Like Israel's kings, we should develop a habit of reading God's word *daily*. And read it as the next verse teaches us.

2 Peter 1:20-21 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy **of Scripture** came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in

*the human will, but prophets, though human, **spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.***

- The Bible was written by inspired men who were “...carried along by the Holy Spirit.” That’s the same way we should **read** it — primarily by the **Holy Spirit’s illumination**, not by our intellectualizing it. As you read the word, allow yourself to be “carried along” by the Spirit of God as He gives you insight into the things of God.

*John 5:39 You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very **Scriptures that testify about me.***

- Look for **revelation of Jesus** in the Scriptures. He said that the Scriptures testify about Him. Why would that be important? The Bible tells us why — “The **Son** is the radiance of God’s glory and the **exact representation** of his being...”(Hebrews 1:3).
- God wants us to know Him, and the only way to the Father is through the Son (John 14:6 “No one comes to the Father except through me [Jesus]”). It is the **Son** of God who **exactly represents God the Father**, so that Jesus could rightly say to Philip, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).

So in sum, **pray** for God to open your eyes as you prepare to read the Bible ... **read** His word often, daily if possible ... submit yourself entirely to the **Holy Spirit’s illuminating** the Bible’s truths to you ... and look for a **revelation of Jesus Christ**, and through Him a revelation of God the Father. Having done that, you will now be a workman well prepared to **share** God’s word with others.

*1 Peter 1:15-16 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for **it is written**: “Be holy, because I [God] am holy” [Peter **quotes** from Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7].*

*1 Peter 5:5 In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble” [Peter **quotes** from Proverbs 3:34].*

- Peter (and the other Bible authors) understood the safeguarding principle that **Scripture will confirm Scripture**. Making a point about holiness, Peter quoted God’s holiness commands from several places in *Leviticus*. Other Bible authors — and Jesus Himself! — frequently **quoted other Bible verses in support and confirmation** of things they were writing, preaching, or teaching. The point, worth repeating, is that there is a strong safeguard in building all our beliefs upon clear confirmation from the word of God.

*Titus 2:7-8 ...In your teaching show **integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech** that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.*

- The Christian who “correctly/accurately handles” God’s word will honor these three apostolic exhortations:

1) In your teaching show **integrity**. Be sure that your *motives* are pure. Be certain that you are not just trying to convince someone of a “pet doctrine” that you have not carefully established on the bedrock of Scripture. Guard your heart against ministering the word to gain honor or reputation for yourself, rather than for God’s glory. And God forbid, resolve never to “**peddle** the word of God **for profit**” (2 Corinthians 2:17) in the ungodly sense of “making merchandise” of your hearers (2 Peter 2:3).

2) In your teaching show **seriousness**. Sharing God’s word with others is a sacred trust. Do it graciously, with appropriate dignity, honor, and respect for the God whose holy word you are sharing.

3) In your teaching show **soundness** of speech. A few verses earlier (Titus 2:1) the apostle Paul had charged Titus to teach “sound doctrine” to the believers. Soundness of speech will reflect beliefs based upon the solid foundation of Scripture, not upon the whims, fancies, and personal preferences of the speaker.

Much more could be said. For example, the entire *119th Psalm* (the Bible’s longest chapter) contains a wealth of insight about God’s word and how it applies to our lives. And many more sermons could and should be preached on rightly dividing the word of truth. But we have looked at some very simple, but vitally important, principles:

- As you open your Bibles, **pray** that God will **open your eyes** to its truths.
- Develop a habit of spending **daily time** in His word.
- As you do that, remain fully open to the **Holy Spirit’s illumination**.
- Keep always in mind that the Scriptures **testify of Jesus**.
- As you learn God’s word and begin to share it with others, be sure that you allow **Scripture to interpret Scripture**. Most Bible themes are revealed in multiple places in the Bible. In your reading and study, you will learn and develop a *growing, interconnected web of Scriptures* to give you a sound and increasing knowledge of God’s truths.
- In your sharing of God’s word with others, do it with **unblemished integrity**; pure motives; a **respectful** manner; and always based upon **sound doctrine**, which will be reflected in a **soundness of speech** that will have a godly and beneficial impact upon your hearers.