

2 Timothy 2:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. This verse contrasts with v. 14's word-wranglers. "Study" (spoudason, σπούδασον) means be diligent, make every effort, give earnest attention. The verb implies urgent, concentrated effort. "To shew thyself approved unto God" (seauton dokimon parastēsai tō theō, σεαυτὸν δόκιμον παραστῆσαι τῷ θεῷ) presents the goal: divine approval, not human applause. Dokimos (δόκιμος) means tested and approved, genuine—like metal passing fire-testing. Ministers must seek God's approval, not popularity.

Timothy must be "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed" (ergatēn anepais chynton, ἐργάτην ἀνεπαίσχυντον). Ergatēs (ἐργάτης) denotes laborer, worker—one who toils. Ministry is work requiring diligence. "Needeth not to be ashamed" (anep aischynton, ἀνεπαίσχυντον) means never needing to feel shame, having no cause for disgrace. At Christ's return, faithful workers will receive commendation; unfaithful workers will face shame (1 John 2:28).

The method: "rightly dividing the word of truth" (orthotomountatonton logon tēs alētheias, ὄρθοτομοῦντα τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας). The verb orthotoméō (ὄρθοτομέω) means cut straight, handle accurately—from orthos (straight) and temnō (cut). The image may be cutting a straight road, plowing a straight furrow, or cutting stone accurately. Applied to Scripture, it means interpreting accurately, teaching correctly, applying rightly. God's word is "truth"—ministers must handle it with precision and integrity.

Historical Context

First-century teachers faced temptation to distort Scripture for personal gain, popularity, or to avoid persecution. False teachers twisted Paul's writings (2 Peter 3:16). Judaizers misused Old Testament to impose law on Gentiles. Gnostics allegorized Scripture beyond recognition. Against this, Paul demands accurate, honest handling of God's word. The metaphor of cutting straight resonated with original readers familiar with road-building, carpentry, stone-cutting—crafts requiring precision. Crooked roads, warped beams, uneven stones were useless. Similarly, twisted Scripture destroys rather than edifies.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How diligently are you studying Scripture to understand and teach it accurately, or do you rely on second-hand summaries and popular opinions?
2. Do you primarily seek God's approval in your teaching and ministry, or are you more concerned with human popularity and avoiding controversy?
3. In what ways might you be 'crookedly cutting' Scripture—twisting it to fit your preferences, traditions, or cultural assumptions rather than submitting to its clear meaning?

Interlinear Text

σπούδασον	σεαυτὸν	δόκιμον	παραστῆσαι	τῷ	θεῷ
Study	thyself	approved	to shew	G3588	unto God
G4704	G4572	G1384	G3936		G2316
ἐργάτην	ἀνεπαίσχυντον		όρθοτομοῦντα	τὸν	λόγον
a workman	that needeth not to be ashamed		rightly dividing	G3588	the word
G2040	G422		G3718		G3056
τῆς ἀληθείας					
G3588	of truth				
	G225				

Additional Cross-References

1 Thessalonians 2:4 (References God): But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

1 Timothy 4:6 (Word): If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.

2 Peter 1:10 (Parallel theme): Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

2 Corinthians 5:9 (Parallel theme): Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

2 Corinthians 10:18 (Parallel theme): For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

2 Corinthians 4:2 (Word): But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commanding ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

2 Peter 3:14 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

Galatians 1:10 (References God): For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

2 Peter 1:15 (Parallel theme): Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

Ephesians 1:13 (Word): In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

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