

## Diligently search the scriptures

“You may talk about power; but, if you neglect the one Book that God has given you as the one instrument through which He imparts and exercises His power, you will not have it. You may read many books and go to many conventions and you may have your all-night prayer meetings to pray for the power of the Holy Ghost; but unless you keep in constant and close association with the one Book, the Bible, you will not have power. “And if you ever had power, you will not maintain it except by the daily, earnest, intense study of that Book. Ninety-nine Christians in every hundred are merely playing at Bible study; and therefore ninety-nine Christians in every hundred are mere weaklings, when they might be giants, both in their Christian life and in their service.”—R. A. Torrey

2 Timothy 2: 15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

### 1) Confidence in God's approval

- We don't try to earn God's approval in the sense of earning his favour for salvation.
  - He approves of us – gives us favour – when we repent and believe in Him as our Lord and Saviour.
- That salvation has its outworking in us being transformed by the renewing of our minds and not being conformed to the pattern of this world.
  - This is the aligning of our thinking and behaviour to the Word of God
  - This is what we have to do our best to do.
  - This is what we have to be diligent in. The KJV uses the word “Study to show yourself approved”
  - Romans 8: 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.
- The character of Christ never contradicts His Word. Thus, conforming to the Word of God is the conforming to the character of Christ.
- We need to therefore endeavour to diligently study the scriptures to understand his character, commands and ways.
  - If we read to understand we will find the truth in the scriptures.
  - If we read to criticise the scriptures we will find much to criticise.
  - What we get from the scriptures depends on our attitude when reading them.
- Jesus rebuked the Jewish leaders for their misreading of the scriptures
  - John 5: 39 – 40 You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.
  - A proper study of the scriptures should lead us to a real faith in Jesus, who he is and what he's done for us.
  - A knowledge of the scriptures without true faith that leads to a living relationship with the Saviour is dead knowledge.
  - I worked with a man who quoted the Bible amazingly, but didn't believe a word of it.
  - I know many Muslims who have a thorough knowledge of the Bible, but only to try to refute it.
- The word used for approval also means acceptable or tried
  - When our lives are tried or tested against the scriptures how do that match up?
  - Do they meet with God's approval?
  - Are they acceptable to God?

## 2) A workman without shame

- This isn't talking about the shame that Jesus took on the cross. The shame that comes from sin.
- This shame is in reference to a worker being skilled in using the tools of his trade.
  - Imagine an electrician who doesn't know how to use a current meter.
  - Imagine a welder who doesn't know how to switch on his welding machine.
  - Imagine a surgeon who doesn't know which instruments to use at different times.
  - Such a worker would be put to shame and be considered a fraud
  - However, workers who are proficient in using the tools of their trade and do a good job are honoured and promoted.
- It is the same as the Christian worker
  - The main tool of our trade is the scriptures
  - Do we know how to use them correctly?
- But I'm not a Christian worker you say!
  - Yes, you are!
  - You have been saved to do good works
  - The gifts of the Spirit are given as he chooses to each of us
- We may not all be Christian workers in the sense of being pastors, evangelists, missionaries, etc. but we all have work to do in the kingdom.
  - God only expects of us what he's gifted us to do. Nothing more and nothing less.
  - Whatever he has gifted us to do we need to be a worker who knows the tools of our trade and does not need to be ashamed.
  - Do whatever we do to the glory of God.
- We should never be taken off guard in our faith
  - 2 Timothy 4: 2 Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage —with great patience and careful instruction.

## 3) Correctly using the scriptures

- Paul refers to the scriptures as the word of truth.
  - The definite article "the" is used here indicating that there aren't many words of truth but a singular body of scripture that is the truth.
- In a crime ridden society many people carry guns. It is one thing owning a gun, it's another thing knowing how to use it and use it effectively
  - We have to know how to load the bullets into the magazine, and how to fit the magazine into the gun. We need to know how to cock the gun so that a bullet is loaded into the chamber ready to shoot. We need to know how to put the safety switch off. We need to know how to aim so that we hit the target.
- In the same way we need to not only study the scriptures to know them, but we need to learn how to use them at the appropriate times.
  - When Jesus was tempted by the devil he used the scriptures to refute the devil's lies. The devil used the scriptures out of context.
    - Luke 4: 3 – 8 The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."  
Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"  
The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship me, it will all be yours."  
Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"
- Are we diligent in studying the scriptures so that we live a life approved of God, being unashamed workers in the kingdom, and able to use the scriptures effectively and appropriately at the right times in season and out?