



Gaining A Strategic Grasp of Scripture

The Importance Of Right Division

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Grace Life Bible Church

Grand Rapids, MI

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Review: Three Important Terms

- Hermeneutics— Grammatical-Historical Interpretation/Normal Interpretation
- Exegesis—(to draw out) interpretation of a specific Biblical text based upon the component parts of the given text.
- Eisegesis—(to draw in) interpreting a text by reading one's own ideas, agendas, or biases into it, rather than the meaning of the text itself. It's also known as "reading into the text."

Review: Three Principles of Bible Study

- Literal Interpretation—the words on the page say what they mean and mean what they say. Reasons For Rejecting the Allegorical Method.
 - Destroys the issue of inspiration (every word is inspired by God).
 - Questions the integrity of God. Did God really mean what He said?
 - Leaves us at the mercy of theologian's imagination.
- Comparative Principle—the Bible must be studied by comparing scripture with scripture.
- Dispensational Method—the Bible can only be properly understood through dispensational Bible study.

Dispensational Method

- The dispensational method seeks to answer the following questions:
 - 1) Who wrote it?
 - 2) When did they write?
 - 3) To whom was it written?
- “A distinguishable economy in the out working of God’s plan.” (Ryrie, 29)
- Our English word dispensation comes from the Greek word *oikonomia* which means house management.
- God has managed his house differently with different people during different times.
- A dispensation is not a period of time, but the act of dealing out or that which is dealt out.

“Dispensation” Is A Bible Word

- Ephesians 3:2—Dispensation of Grace
- Ephesians 1:10—Dispensation of the Fullness of Time.
- Colossians 1:24-26—Dispensation of God committed to Paul.
- I Corinthians 9:17—Dispensation of the Gospel committed to Paul.
- Dispensational theology seeks to recognize how and where God’s dealings with man have changed throughout history.
- This approach to Bible study is essential to ensure we are following God’s instructions for today.
- Paul is the only Biblical writer to name specific dispensations.



The Importance Of Right Division

- II Timothy 2:15— commands us to “study.” What does study mean?

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- The word translated “study” occurs 11 times in 11 verses in NT.
- It is elsewhere rendered as “endeavoring” & “diligent” by the King James translators.
 - Endeavor—Eph. 4:3; I Thess. 2:17; II Peter 1:15
 - Diligent—II Tim. 4:9, 21; Titus 3:12; II Peter 1:10, 3:14
- According to Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language* “endeavoring” means, “making an effort or efforts; striving; essaying; attempting.”
- Likewise, “diligent” means, “Steady in application to business; constant in effort or exertion to accomplish what is undertaken; assiduous; attentive; industrious; not idle or negligent; applied to persons.”

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- The *Oxford English Dictionary* records an *obsolete* meaning of the word “study” that we need to consider.

i. To strive or aim.

i.1. † *intransitive*. With *to, for, after, †umbe*, etc.: to strive towards, direct one's efforts to, set one's mind on, devote oneself to. *Obsolete*.

late Old English–1816

1. (a) To strive (to do sth.), endeavor, try; direct one's efforts or thoughts (toward doing sth.); take pains (to do sth.); (b) ~ **abouten (after, in, to, umbe)**, to strive toward (sth.); devote oneself to (sth.), cultivate (a virtue, vice, etc.); -- also refl. [quot. 1340]; concern oneself with (sth.), concentrate on; **studiinge after**, zealously seeking (sth.); (c) to devote oneself to (a virtue), cultivate; also, put forth (an effort to do sth.).

OED

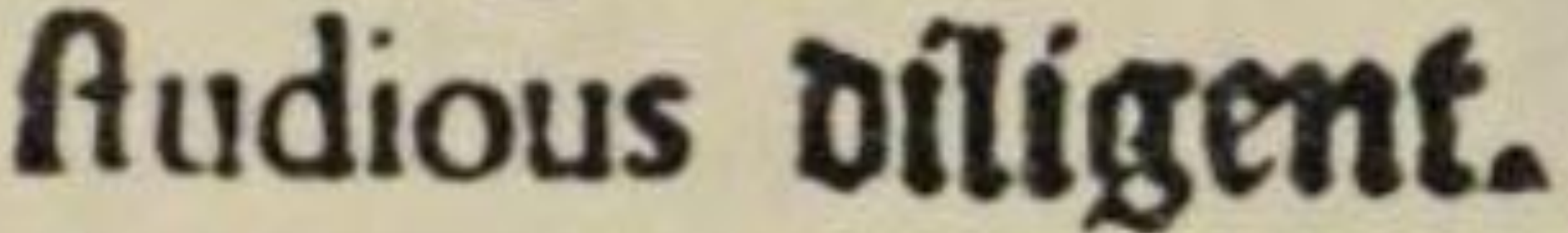
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2 Timothy 2:15

1526

Tyndale⁽ⁱ⁾ 15 Study to shewe thy silfe laudable vnto god a workman yt nedeth not to be a shamed dividynge the worde of trueth iustly

1597



Audious diligent.

1604

studius , dilligent , desirous of leat-
ning.

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- II Timothy 2:15—is not talking about sitting with a stack of books and studying in the sense of cramming for a test.
- Rather its talking about diligently endeavoring to set oneself to the work (i.e., workman) of showing themselves “approved unto God.”
- Those who show themselves approved and therefore need not to be ashamed are those who rightly divide the word of truth.
- The verb translated “rightly dividing” is the Greek word *orthotomeō* and it literally means “to cut straight: i.e., to make a straight cut, i.e. (figuratively) to dissect (expound) correctly (the divine message). (BLB)
 - NIV’s— “correctly handles” fails to capture the sense of verb. One cannot correctly handle unless they “rightly divide.”
- **The approved of God study to show themselves approved by rightly dividing the word of truth.**

The Bible's Most Important Division

- Tradition maintains that the division between the Old and New Testaments is the most important division found in the Bible.
- The Old Testament does not begin in Genesis 1. Rather the Covenant of the Law was given to the nation Israel through Moses and went into effect in Exodus 24.
 - John 1:17; Gal. 3:19
- This means that the Book of Genesis and the first 20+ chapters of Exodus are not technically in the “Old Testament.”
- Likewise, the New Testament does not begin with Matthew 1.
 - Hebrews 9:17
- The most important distinction or division found in the Bible is the distinction between Prophecy and Mystery.

The Bible's Most Important Division

- **Prophecy** deals with that which was spoken since the world began.
- The prophetic program is synonymous with Israel's earthly program.
 - Luke 1:67-73—"since the world began"
 - Matthew 25:34—"from the foundation of the world"
 - Acts 3:19-23—Peter tells Israel that if they will repent for their part in the death of the Messiah, God will send Jesus Christ back to them in fulfillment of all the prophets had spoken about since the world began.

The Bible's Most Important Division

- The Mystery deals with that which was kept secret since the world began.
 - Romans 16:25-26—there was some secret information about Christ that was not revealed until God revealed it to the Apostle Paul.
 - Ephesians 3:1-8—the formation of the Body of Christ during the dispensation of grace was the subject of the mystery that was not revealed in previous ages.
 - Colossians 1:25-27—in time past the Gentiles were without hope and without God.
 - I Corinthians 2:7-8—this was God's plan since before the foundation of the world, but He did not reveal this information to mankind until after the salvation of Paul.