



**Gaining A Strategic Grasp of Scripture**

# How To Rightly Divide

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Grace Life Bible Church

Grand Rapids, MI

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# The Meaning Of The Word “Study”

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

# The Meaning of the Word “Study”

- 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.”

# The Meaning Of The Word “Study”

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

i. To strive or aim.

1.1. † *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

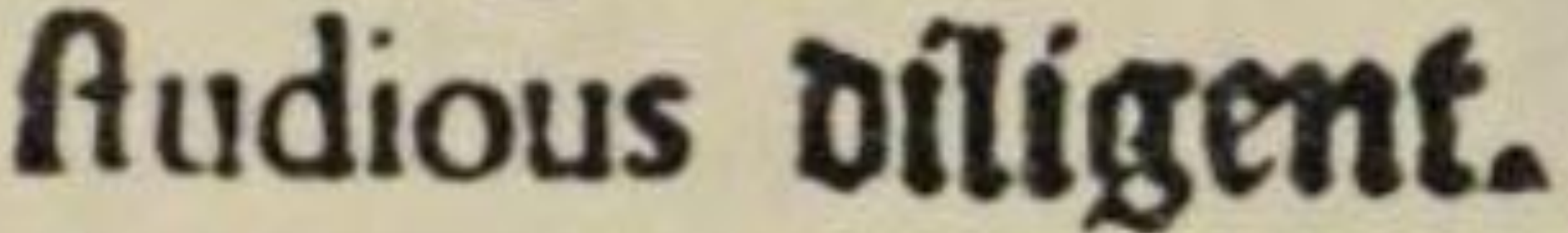
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# 2 Timothy 2:15

1526

Tyndale<sup>(i)</sup> 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.

# The Meaning Of The Word “Study”

- 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.”
- Hebrews 4:11—“labour” comes from the same word rendered “study” in II Tim. 2:15.
- II Timothy 2:3-6—Paul gives 3 examples of laboring in the context of II Tim.
  - Soldier
  - Athlete
  - Husbandman/Farmer
- All 3 of these require diligent attention to a specific type of work to be successful.

# What Does “Study” Look Like For A Workman?

- I Timothy 4:14—Timothy possessed a specific gifting.
- II Timothy 2:1-2—I believe that Timothy received specific instruction from Paul regarding how to rightly divide the word of truth.
- II Timothy 2:15—so what does “study” i.e., diligently endeavoring to set oneself to the work (i.e., workman) of showing themselves “approved unto God,” look like?
  - I Tim. 4:13; Eph. 3:4—give attendance to reading.
  - I Cor. 14:37—acknowledging the things Paul wrote are the commandments of the Lord.
  - I Cor. 2:13—compare scripture with scripture
  - Grammatical-Historical Interpretation—Literal Hermeneutics
  - Context & Exegesis
- I Timothy 5:17



# What Does “Study” Look Like For A Workman?

- II Timothy 2:15—the main application of Paul’s command to “study” is to do the work of rightly divide the word of truth.
- Functionally/practically this will require “study” in the sense of our common understanding of the word.
- 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.**

# How To Rightly Divide

- II Who wrote II Timothy 2:15? The apostle Paul wrote the verse.
- So, if Paul instructs us to rightly divide the word of truth, it makes sense that Paul would tell us how to do so.
- In Ephesians chapter 2 Paul lays out a threefold division of time by which the Scripture can be rightly divided.
- Ephesians 2:11-12 speaks of a time that Paul calls “time past”.
- Ephesians 2:13 speaks of a time that Paul calls “but now”.
- Ephesians 2:7 speaks of a time that Paul called the “ages to come”.
- According to the Apostle Paul, the Bible can be divided into the way God worked in the past, the way He is working in the present, and the way He will work in the future.