

STUDY TO...

The apostle Paul told Timothy to, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). The first word of this verse is a verb. Study is something we must **do**. It is interesting that Timothy, a man who has sat under the feet of the apostle Paul, traveled and worked with the apostle Paul and had hands laid on him by the apostle Paul was told to "study" and multitudes of Christians today think they do not need to. There are three basic benefits of study presented in this verse.

First, by studying God's word one receives God's approval. It would seem that this alone would be motivation enough to cause anyone who wanted a home in heaven to dig in as often, for as long and as deep as they could. All of our efforts in life should be toward being found approved of God in the day of judgment.

Secondly, by studying one can prepare himself/herself as a workman who has no need to be ashamed. The Hebrew writer wrote of some who had been Christians long enough they ought to be teaching others, but needed to be taught again themselves (Heb. 5:12-14). I don't know about you, but if that was said of me by an inspired man of God, I would be ashamed of myself. Would you not be ashamed of yourself if someone asked you for guidance concerning how to get to heaven and you didn't know how to answer them? You ought to be. Studying God's word will alleviate this kind of shame.

Thirdly, by studying God's word one will be able to rightly divide it. The American Standard version of 1901 says, "handling aright" the word of truth. Study provides the knowledge to know what scriptures, commands and practices apply to us and those that would apply to someone in the past. Most pretty well understand that when God said, "build thee an ark of gopher wood" (Gen. 6:14) He was not talking to us. Yet, many of those same people will apply the Lord's promise to send the Holy Spirit on the apostles to bring all things to their remembrance and teach them all truth (John 14:26; 16:13) to themselves. Only someone who has never honestly studied the word of God could offer up as an argument against the necessity of baptism in order to be save, the thief on the cross. Honest study of God's word will cure this deficiency. Pardon me for saying it, but it appears that you really do need to do some studying of God's word! *Tillis*

THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD

The apostle Paul told the Ephesians that the "sword of the spirit" is the word of God (Eph. 6:17). This sword was and is the weapon of choice for Christians, both then and now. And, Paul said of the Christian's weapon, "...the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds..." (II Cor. 10:4). The Hebrew writer said of that sword of the spirit, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). All indications are that the word of God is powerful. Just how powerful is it?

When wielded by God Himself, it was powerful enough to create the heavens and the earth and all that is therein. David wrote, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth...For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalm 33:6, 9). For instance, "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen. 1:3).

The inspired apostle tells us that the word of God is powerful enough to provide salvation. He wrote, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). He also told the Corinthians, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (I Cor. 1:18). Many stand in pulpits every week and try using some speech other than God's word with which to save souls, but none other word has the power to do so; God's word only. Others try methods to save souls other than preaching. Friendship evangelism, catering to the felt needs of the people and other such efforts are used. Paul said, "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Cor. 1:21). Salvation by use of the power of preaching the gospel is the God ordained way, and plenty powerful to accomplish the task. God said through the prophet Isaiah, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:11). The word of God will do the job if we do our job and use it.

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