

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, August 30, 2023 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



Using the Bible Properly
2 Timothy 2:14-19

“¹⁴ Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. ¹⁵ Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. ¹⁶ But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. ¹⁷ And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, ¹⁸ who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some. ¹⁹ Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are His,’ and, ‘Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.’” -2 Timothy 2:14-19 (NKJV)

Some Key Date in Paul’s Challenging Life:

- [c. A.D. 52-57]- Paul takes his third mission trip and spends three years in Ephesus
- [c. A.D. 58]—Paul was apparently arrested in Jerusalem
- [c. A.D. 61]—This is the approximate time that Paul arrived in Rome. He had spent these three years in prison, going from one trial to another before different Roman rulers
- [c. A.D. 61–62]—Paul underwent his first Roman imprisonment. We do not have this recorded in the Book of Acts, which breaks off at the very beginning of Paul’s first Roman imprisonment
- [c. A.D. 62–63]—Paul was released from prison, and during this period he covered a great deal of territory. It was during this time that he wrote 1 Timothy and Titus from Macedonia
- [c. A.D. 63-64]—Paul was arrested again. Before his death he wrote 2 Timothy
- [c. A.D. 64-67]—Paul was beheaded in Rome.

For some 2 Timothy may nothing more than a continuation where 1 Timothy leaves off. But as you can see, it is so much more. The book is the Apostle Paul's "Swan Song," his warning shot, his encouragement in the face of great opposition and obstacle. It is so practical and relevant for 21st century Christians and the church... a needed word for what we face in our day.

Fast Facts 2 Timothy

- (1) Author: Paul**
- (2) Recipient: Timothy**
- (3) Date: AD 64-67**
- (4) Place: Written from a prison cell in Rome**
- (5) Destination: Ephesus (*Timothy was pastor of the church at Ephesus*)**
- (6) Incident: Paul's imprisonment and pending death**
- (7) Purpose: To encourage Timothy in the face of persecution and apostasy**

Some Key Characteristics of 2 Timothy:

- (1) 2 Timothy is Paul's last will and testimony** – In our study we are referring to it as Paul's "Swan Song." The deathbed statement of any individual has an importance which is not attached to other remarks. This is what lends significance to 2 Timothy. It is the final communication of Paul. It has a note of sadness which is not detected in his other epistles. Nevertheless, there is the overtone of triumph... *"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith,"* written by Paul as his own epitaph (2 Tim. 4:7). Also, because this was his last letter, Paul was very personal. In these four short chapters, there are approximately twenty-five references to individuals.
- (2) 2 Timothy is Paul's warning of coming times of apostasy** - In this little book of 2 Timothy an ominous dark cloud is seen on the horizon. It is the coming apostasy. Today apostasy has broken like a storm, like a Texas tornado, on the world and in the church. What do we mean by apostasy? Webster defines apostasy as "total desertion of the principles of faith." So apostasy is not due to ignorance; it is a heresy. Apostasy is deliberate error. It is intentional departure from the faith. An apostate is one who knows the truths of the gospel and the doctrines of the faith, but has repudiated them.
- (3) 2 Timothy speaks of the ultimate outcome of gospel preaching** - The final fruition will not be the total conversion of mankind, nor will it usher in the Millennium. On the contrary, some will believe and for some there will come about a great turning away, not unlike what we are seeing today... even a watering down, compromise, and total perversion of the gospel. Don't think that what we see going on today has caught God off guard. God wrote about it and warned us about in 2 Timothy.

People use the Bible in all sorts of weird ways...

You've probably heard the story of the guy who felt he needed some guidance from the Bible, so he opened it at random, closed his eyes and put his finger on a verse, "Judas went out and hanged himself." He thought, "That can't be God's will for me," so he tried again, "Go thou and do likewise." He knew there must be some mistake, so he tried once more, "What thou doest, do quickly!" It can be dangerous to use the Bible in the wrong way!

While we chuckle, it's no laughing matter when people really use the Bible improperly.

HOW (NOT) TO READ YOUR BIBLE: **This list was put out by Doug Ponder, one of the founding pastors of Remnant Church in Richmond, VA.*

Again some people use the Bible in weird ways, and other read the Bible in strange and quirky ways that probable cause more harm than good. The Bible didn't fall from heaven like some kind of magic beans. It is Genuinely God's Word and it can be trusted.

(1) Don't read the Bible like a textbook - The Bible was written to soften our hearts, not just fill our minds (Ps. 19:7-8, 14). In fact, the Scriptures tell us that head knowledge only "puffs up" (1 Cor. 8:1). People who read the Bible like a textbook study it for tidbits of wisdom and new insights about religious information, they are **"always learning yet never able to come to a knowledge of the truth"** (2 Tim. 3:7)

Signs you may be guilty of reading the Bible like a textbook:

- You love reading about the Bible's ancient history and customs, or about Greek and Hebrew lexicography, or about systematic theology, but you are no more like Jesus today than you were a few years ago.
- Your head is full of knowledge *about* Jesus instead of actually *knowing him* at a personal or relational level.
- For you, Jesus is an object to be studied, not a Savior to be worshipped and walked with daily.

(2) Don't read the Bible like a magic book - The Bible was meant to be read like any other book... start to finish, beginning to end, each part building on what you've already read before it. That's because the Bible is a story. It's a story about who God is and what he is doing in the world through Jesus. It's not a mystical reference book, like something that you open up to at random "looking for a sign from God." Nobody in the entire Bible is ever shown to read Scripture in that way. Jesus certainly didn't. In addition to a lot confusion surrounding the basic message of the Bible, you'll also badly misunderstand what God actually wants you to do.

Signs you may be guilty of reading the Bible like a magic book:

- You don't read the books of the Bible from start to finish.
- Instead, you just flip around at will, reading a little bit here and a little bit there.
- You think that God wants you to open your Bible to a random spot to "give you a word for today," but you fail to realize that Jesus himself is the Word of God (John 1:1, 14), and that you ought to be reading the Bible like it's a story about him (because it is).
- You tend to think (maybe even subconsciously) that reading a few verses from the Bible each day will make your life have special blessing in it.

(3) Don't read the Bible like a rule-book - The Bible isn't a rulebook, though it does contain a few rules, principles and standards here and there to live by. The Bible is not a do-it-yourself manual from God. You are not supposed to read the Bible, follow the rules, and clean up your life—because you can't. No one can "clean up their life" by following the rules. Jesus taught this over and over again (Luke 11:39). Instead, the "rules" (a.k.a., laws and commands) in the Bible were given for a different reason. They show us what is good and right (Rom. 7:16), they show us our sin (1 Tim. 1:8-9), and they show us our need for Jesus (Gal. 3:21-26).

Signs you may be guilty of reading the Bible like a rulebook:

- You tend think of the Bible as 'Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth' (B.I.B.L.E.), or you think of the Bible as a "guide to living life." Instead the Bible is a story about how to find life in Jesus.
- You believe that God accepts you and loves you because your obedience to him, instead of realizing that God accepts you and loves you because of what Jesus has done for you.

(4) Don't read the Bible like a Chicken Soup for the Soul book - Over one hundred million copies of "Chicken Soup for the Soul" have been sold to date. These books are collections of true stories meant to be "uplifting and inspirational." Don't read the Bible like that. It isn't a book of cute or sentimental stories meant to inspire you and fill you with warmth. And it not meant to be just another inspirational devotional book. Instead, it offers real hope, real beauty, real power in Jesus, who has conquered sin and death on your behalf. It doesn't stop with cheap inspiration; it's meant to convict you, correct you, encourage you, and spur you on to good works (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Signs you may be guilty of reading the Bible like a Chicken Soup for the Soul book:

- You think of and read the Bible like it is as a collection of inspiring vignettes, like the story of Adam and Eve, Joseph, Ruth, David, Jonah, and so on, instead of seeing the Bible as one story about Jesus. All the other "stories" are part of his story.

- Also, when you read the Bible you hope for warm fuzzies instead of praying for conviction and correction or encourage and exhortation.

(5) Don't read the Bible like a goldmine of random sayings - Some people go mining for quotes, commands, and promises they like, ripping these things out of their original context—often disregarding their purpose and role in redemptive history at less important. The problem is that many of God's promises and commands were given to specific people, in specific places, at specific times, for specific reasons. For example, when God told Israel, *"I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future"* (Jer. 29:11), he was talking about his plans for Israel when they return from exile, as the previous verse makes clear (Jer. 29:10). To take those promises out of their context and to apply them directly to your life is to overlook how God says they will be fulfilled, substituting a different meaning for what God actually meant.

Signs you may be reading the Bible like a goldmine:

- You think that every promise God has made was given directly to you, for you. (Try living the story of Noah's ark and see how well it works out for you.)
- Your favorite verse is Jeremiah 29:11, which you think means that God is going to prosper your future.
- You look for comfort in random promises scattered throughout the Bible, instead of in Jesus himself.

(6) Don't read the Bible like a fairy tale - The Bible is not fiction, but fact. The history it records is real history of real people from real times in real places. Their lives and ours is part of the true story of the whole world. It won't do you any good to have inspiring stories about people and places that didn't actually happen. If God didn't really rescue Israel from Egypt, for example, then the basic pattern for salvation is based on a scam. If Jesus didn't really rise from the dead, then your faith is futile and you're still dead in your sins.

Signs you may be reading the Bible like a fairy tale:

- You have lots and lots of doubts about the truthfulness of miraculous stories in the Bible (e.g., creation, the flood of Noah, the parting of the Red Sea, the fall of Jericho, Jonah and the sea creature).
- You find yourself saying things like, "It doesn't really matter if these things happened. All that matters is what we can learn from these stories."

(7) Don't read the Bible simply in isolation from others - The notion that the Bible should be studied only all by ourselves is the product of Western individualism. You won't find anything like that in the pages of Scripture. The Christian life itself is a community

project, not a solo effort, and the same is true with understanding the Scriptures. When the Bible is read in isolation from the wisdom of church history, the confessions of their faith tradition, and the gifts of teachers in our churches, all sorts of errors abound. Some of these errors may be minor, but others are so major that they lead people away from the faith, destroying whoever is caught up in their wake (2 Pet. 2:1-22).

Signs you may be reading the Bible by yourself all the time:

- When you think of “studying the Scriptures,” you think of a “morning quiet time” or “devotional”... personal or individual study only.
- You are unconcerned with church history, believing that you can understand what you read in the Bible without any help from the wisdom of the past or from gifted teachers in the present (Eph. 4:11-12).

(8) Don't read the Bible only for other people's sake - There's a huge temptation to read the Bible for information that is relevant for someone else. Say you want to find out what the Bible says about sexual immorality, because a friend is living in some sort of sexual sin and you want to challenge them on this point. Reading the Bible for the sake of someone else overlooks your own need for what it contains. This isn't to say that you can't speak the truth in love about some issue that needs addressing; you are commanded to do that (Eph. 4:15). But if you read the Bible only like it's a manual for condemning others, your own flaws and faults will not be corrected. In fact, they will only intensify.

Signs you may be reading the Bible only for other people's sake:

- You are always highlighting or memorizing verses which condemn sins that you never struggle with (you think).
- Whenever you hear a sermon or read a passage of Scripture, you find yourself thinking, “I wish so-and-so would hear/read this!”

(9) Don't read the Bible with a closed mind – No Christian, no matter how long in the faith, has arrived and must always... always remain teachable and learning. Whether you're a committed Christian or a unconvinced skeptic, it would be a serious error to read the Bible without an open mind. For Christians this can lead to pride and arrogance of the worst sort, for you will think that you already have the Scriptures figured out. Your misunderstanding will never be corrected. For skeptics this will lead you to a place of hardheartedness in which you unfairly doubt everything in the Scriptures, without also doubting your own doubts. You will walk away from the Scriptures without having given them a truly fair shot.

Signs you may be reading the Bible with a close mind:

- You approach the Bible without any expectation to learn something, to be challenged in your thinking, or to be confronted in your sin.
- You already think that every idea you hold is right and true, and you're unwilling to rethink certain assumptions.

(10) Don't read the Bible occasionally - The Bible is meant to be read frequently, not just "from time to time." The Christian life is a daily struggle, a "fight of faith," which takes every ounce of Spirit-enabled effort, diligence, and commitment that you can muster. Without the confrontation of the Scriptures, you have no hope for repentance, and without the comfort of the gospel, you have no hope for joy.

Signs you may be reading the Bible occasionally:

- You know if this is true of you or not. If you find it hard to make a habit of reading the Scriptures, try setting up a routine with a friend so that you can hold each other accountable in this way.
- Set an alarm on your phone or your electronic devices so that you remember to do it each day.
- Or get into the habit of starting every morning (and/or finishing every evening) with the discipline of reading the Scriptures.

Because of some of these very things we may not know the Bible as well as we should... perhaps because we only read it "occasionally," or we aren't teachable applying it to our own lives, we don't read it in the Holy Spirit, or we are always reading for someone else. How much do we really know about Bible...

IS THAT IN THE BIBLE

We've all heard someone say, "The Bible says, 'God helps those who help themselves.'" Or does it? There are many "popular sayings" people think are in the Bible. You may be surprised to discover many of these maxims don't come from the Bible at all... and in some cases they may actually contradict what the Bible actually says about that topic. Read each of the following quotations and check [✓] yes if you believe it is in the Bible, and check [✓] no if you believe it is not found in the Bible

Is it in the Bible...

1. "Before God we are equally wise and equally foolish." [] yes [✓] no

Answer: NO "Before God we are equally wise and equally foolish" is not in the Bible.

This is a quote from Albert Einstein, US (German-born) physicist. This particular quote tends to portray all men shall be equal before God. However the Bible teaches that there will be two distinct groups before God on Judgment Day.

Matthew 25:32-34 (NIV) *“32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. 34 “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.’”*

Einstein was not an atheist, but he did not believe in a personal God. "I'm not an atheist and I don't think I can call myself a pantheist. We are in the position of a little child entering a huge library filled with books in many languages. The child knows someone must have written those books. It does not know how. It does not understand the languages in which they are written. The child dimly suspects a mysterious order in the arrangements of the books, but doesn't know what it is. That, it seems to me, is the attitude of even the most intelligent human being toward God."

2. “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” yes no

Answer: YES “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God” is in the Bible. There are the words of Jesus Christ in Matthew 19:24

3. “To thine own self be true.” yes no

Answer: NO “To yourself be true” is not in the Bible. When prompting people to follow their conscience on matters, the oft-touted "To thine own self be true" is occasionally cited as a Biblical recommendation. In truth, this saying originates in the Shakespearean tragedy Hamlet. Polonius, the older counselor of Prince Hamlet's uncle, King Claudius, is in the midst of dispensing advice to the prince when he speaks forth the famous line: "This above all things: to thine own self be true" (Hamlet, 3.1.81). Among his platitudes, he also says, "Neither a borrower nor a lender be" (3.1.78) — another saying occasionally mistaken for Scripture. But really how good is Polonius's advice? Scripturally, we can only trust our conscience to guide us as far as it is being informed by the Spirit of God. Men, of their natural selves, are entirely corrupted; and so, to hold true to themselves would be to choose poorly indeed. Rather, we should seek God in prayer and ask Him to guide us in the paths of righteousness (cf. Psalm 23:3).

4. “Do not throw your pearls to pigs.” yes no

Answer: YES “Do not throw your pearls to pigs” is in the Bible in Matthew 7:6. The verse actually says, *“Do not give dogs what is sacred” do not throw your pearls to pigs, if you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces” (NIV)*

5. “Work hard and become a leader; be lazy and become a slave.” yes no
Answer: YES “Work hard and become a leader; be lazy and become a slave” is found in the Bible in Proverbs 12:24

6. “A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.” yes no
Answer: YES “A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones” is found in the Bible in Proverbs 17:22

7. “Let your conscience be your guide.” yes no
Answer: NO “Let your conscience be your guide” is not in the Bible God gives us our conscience. Our conscience can tell us things. When we do wrong, we feel guilt. When we do what is right, there is a feeling of joy. The Bible shows us that our conscience can become weak (1 Cor. 8:12), evil (Heb. 10:22), or seared (1 Tim. 4:2). On the other hand, our conscience can be cleansed (Heb. 9:14), pure (2 Tim. 1:3), and good (1 Pet. 3:21). Is it safe to let your conscience be your guide? Can you trust your conscience? Our conscience is very much like a watch. A watch is useful and very helpful if two things happen: (1) It Must Be Working... A watch that does not work, is of little value. A conscience that doesn't work is of little good. Jeremiah rebuked his nation for being unable to blush (Jer. 6:15). They were not ashamed of what they were doing. Their conscience was not longer working. (2) It Must Be Set Right... A working watch is good. But if it is not set right then it is not helpful to you. A watch set to London time will not help you keep your appointments when you are living in Indiana. Likewise, our conscience to be useful must be set right. If our conscience is set by whatever you feel like doing, then it is not set right. If it is set to what is popular then it is not set right. Our conscience must be set according to the word of God. The Bible as our compass and standard, our conscience can convict us and remind us of just how we should live. We can well know what hour it is.

8. “This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.” yes no
Answer: YES “This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it” is found in the Bible in Psalms 118:24)

9. “God moves in mysterious ways.” [] yes [✓] no

Answer: NO “God moves in mysterious ways” does not appear in the Bible. Though uncertain in origin, the phrase does not appear in the Bible. The idea may be present in Scripture, but not stated that way. The phrase may originate from William Cowper's hymn "God Moves in a Mysterious Way", that God does work in ways curious and beyond the measure of our limited experience and conception is obvious. Deuteronomy 29:29 reminds us that, “The secret things belong to the Lord our God.” The final chapters of Job present God's reprimand of Job wherein He asks how Job could possibly understand or judge the reasons for God's actions (Job being so far removed from God in power, wisdom, and longevity). And perhaps the biggest mystery is revealed us in **Romans 8:28**, “*28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*” Though we may not understand the purpose of our circumstances in God's plan, we are assured that every detail will work for the benefit of the Redeemed.

10. “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” [✓] yes [] no

Answer: YES “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth” is in the Bible in a couple of place, but maybe not in the way that you may be thinking. It is not given as an encouragement for us to get even or to take vengeance upon our enemies. Rather, it is quite the opposite. In the book of Exodus we find the Mosaic Law as given by God to Moses to be meted out among God’s people as they are leaving their bondage to slavery in Egypt. These laws were given by God in order that they might have governance, civil law and order among the people... laws that please God and were just among the people. **Exodus 21:23-25** we find a law being given regarding a pregnant mother who is injured by another, so that she gives birth prematurely and the baby or mother are injured. In such a case the principle is given, “*23 But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, 24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.*” The punishment matched, but did not exceed, the damage done to the victim. The welfare of a pregnant woman and her unborn child were protected by this law. Significantly for the abortion debate, the fetus was considered a person; thus, someone was held accountable for its death or injury. It was a law for meting out justice and protecting the innocent, not for getting even, or exacting a revenge motive.

Jesus actually taught this as a wrong way of living and behaving toward others, when he said in **Matthew 5:38-42**, *38 “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ 39 But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. 40 If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. 41 And whoever compels you to go*

one mile, go with him two. ⁴² Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.”

11. “When God shuts one door, he opens another.” [] yes [✓] no

Answer: NO “When God shuts one door, he opens another” is not found in the Bible. Unfortunately for us, that set of words doesn’t exist in the Bible. However the concept is possibly found in the Bible. The words themselves seem closest to something from Alexander Graham Bell who once said, “When one door closes, another opens; but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us.” The best biblical example of open and closed doors is found in Acts 16:6-12, “6 Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. 7 When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. 8 So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. 9 During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” 10 After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. 11 From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day on to Neapolis. 12 From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.” Don’t be disappointed with closed doors! Paul followed God and encountered a closed door to Asia Minor. He tried to head north and encountered another closed door. He didn’t get frustrated that doors were closed; he instead kept looking for where the doors were open. Henry Blackaby wrote, “When you begin to follow God and circumstances seem to close doors of opportunity, go back to the Lord and clarify what God has said. He most often is not calling you to a TASK, but to a RELATIONSHIP. Through that relationship He is going to do something through your life.” Don’t let closed doors discourage you, let them send you back to God to renew the relationship and see what God wants to do through your life!

12. “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” [✓] yes [] no

Answer: YES “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” is found in the Bible in Proverbs 15:1

13. “Never put a question mark where God puts a period” [] yes [✓] no

Answer: NO “Never put a question mark where God puts a period” is not found in the Bible. This is a quote that may often be heard in Christian circles, implying

that we shouldn't question God or ever call into question His motives. As a theological principle God is always right, and always truth. So the statement, while not stated in Scripture, is correct. But to imply that we can never ask questions of God, or express our doubts, fears, and struggles with Him is not correct. The Psalmist is often seen expressing his discontent, and struggle with God. And God is not in the least threatened by our questioning of Him.

14. "To err is human; to forgive divine." [] yes [✓] no

Answer: NO "To err is human; to forgive divine" is not found in the Bible. This is actually an Alexander Pope quote (English Poet, 1688-1744) Christian doctrine maintains the distinction that it is an attribute of fallen human nature to err, but Jesus Christ became a true human being and was able to live without sin. He did this for us as a part of accomplishing forgiveness for everyone. Forgiving each other, then, is a reflection of what God has done for us in Christ. As Paul said in **Ephesians 4:32, "32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."**

15. "God won't put more on you than you can handle." [] yes [✓] no

Answer: NO "God won't put more on you than you can handle" is not found in the Bible. This is not a verse in the Bible, though it does seem to be loosely quoted from I Corinthians 10:13. The meaning however is perverted since it appears to be saying that God will never put you in an extreme situation. The actual verse is concerned with temptation specifically and is as follows. **1 Corinthians 10:13 "13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."** What scripture can we turn to in difficult times when our spirits need encouragement? Here are some verses that have offered strength for believers for thousands of years. **Isaiah 26:3 "3 You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you."** **Romans 8:35-39, "35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."** **1 John 4:4, "4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."** **Romans**

8:31, “31 What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?”

16. “God helps those who help themselves.” [] yes [✓] no

Answer: NO “God helps those who help themselves” is not found in the Bible The saying, “God helps those who help themselves,” came to us by way of Benjamin Franklin (1736). Franklin himself was a deist and so he believed that God did not play an active role in men's lives. In his point of view if man was not able to help himself, then man was hopeless. The Bible teaches something entirely different than the above saying, because God makes special provision to help the helpless. **Romans 5:6-8** says, “6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” **And in Proverbs 28:26** we read, “26 He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe.” **Jeremiah 17:5** says, “5 This is what the LORD says: ‘Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD.’”

17. “Do unto others as you would have them do to you.” [✓] yes [] no

Answer: YES “Do unto others as you would have them do to you” is found in the Bible in Luke 6:31. The biblical parallel to “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” is found in the following verse in **Matthew 7:12**, “*Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.*” The phrase, “love thy neighbor as thyself,” also bears a close relation to the saying and is found throughout Scripture (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 5:43; 19:19; 22:39; Mark 12:31; Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8; Luke 10:27). James even refers to “love thy neighbor as thyself” as being “the royal law” because it is the embodiment of all the laws dealing with human relationships.

18. “If you can’t say something good, don’t say anything at all.” [] yes [✓] no

Answer: NO, “If you can’t say something good, don’t say anything at all” is not in the Bible. Though good advice in some instances, it is not stated in the Bible. This is a quote from the Disney movie “Bambi” and was advice given to the rabbit, Thumper, by his mother.

19. “To fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” [✓] yes [] no

Answer: YES, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom is found in the Bible in several places. Psalm 111:10 says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise.” And Proverbs 9:10 says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”

20. “Whatever your hand find to do, do it with all your might” yes no

Answer: YES “Whatever your hand find to do, do it with all you might” is in the Bible in Ecclesiastes 9:10, “¹⁰ Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might...”

21. “Money is the root of all evil.” yes no

Answer: NO “Money is the root of all evil” is not found in the Bible. This expression stems from the biblical phrase found in **1 Timothy 6:10** that says, **“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils”** (1 Timothy 6:10). There is a big difference between the two statements. Money is neutral and can be used either for the good or for the bad. Money of itself is not evil, yet the love of it is the root of all kinds evil.

22. “To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven.” yes no

Answer: YES “To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven” is found in the Bible in Ecclesiastes 3:1

23. “Spare the rod, spoil the child.” yes no

Answer: NO “Spare the rod, spoil the child” is not found in the Bible. Despite popular opinion, the famous saying, “Spare the rod, spoil the child,” cannot be found anywhere in the Bible. The saying, however, should not be considered invalid as there are verses that promote a similar concept such as **Proverbs 13:24, “He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.”**

24. “The truth shall set you free.” yes no

Answer: YES “The truth shall set you free” is found in the Bible in John 8:32.

25. “Cleanliness is next to godliness.” yes no

Answer: NO “Cleanliness is next to godliness” is not found in the Bible. The book of Leviticus frequently deals with the issue of cleanliness and impurity so that the Children of Israel would be clean as a sign of separation from the surrounding nations. Yet in the New Testament, cleanliness finds mention in relation to the cleansing of the

believer's life. 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." And in John 15:3 we read, "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you." 2 Corinthians 7:1 says, "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." And in James 4:8 we read, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded." Ephesians 5:26-27 says, "So that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless."

"¹⁴ Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. ¹⁵ Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. ¹⁶ But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. ¹⁷ And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, ¹⁸ who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some. ¹⁹ Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and, 'Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.'" -2 Timothy 2:14-19 (NKJV)

In 2 Timothy 2:14, Paul tells Timothy to solemnly charge those under his pastoral ministry "before the Lord" that if they misuse the Bible, it will lead to "ruin." We should take this word from Paul seriously (like we do all of Scripture). We get our word "catastrophe" from the Greek word for "ruin." Paul means, ultimate spiritual ruin! He names Hymenaeus and Philetus, who had gone astray from the truth, upsetting the faith of some with their misuse of the Bible! Paul is saying that...

While the misuse of the Bible leads to ungodliness, God's people should use the Bible to grow in godliness.

★ ***The first thing we should note (and it should startle us) is... it is possible to use the Bible to make progress in ungodliness.***

Again, Paul writes in verse 14, "¹⁴ Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers." And in verses 16-18 Paul says, "¹⁶ But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. ¹⁷ And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of

this sort, ¹⁸ who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.”

IT IS POSSIBLE TO USE THE BIBLE TO MAKE PROGRESS IN UNGODLINESS (2 Timothy 2:14, 16-18)

The words in verse 16, *“for they will increase to more ungodliness,”* are literally, *“they will make further progress in ungodliness.”*

- The false teachers claimed that their teaching would help you move ahead in your spiritual life.
- Paul sarcastically says, *“Yes, you will make progress all right—progress in ungodliness!”*
- And notice how Paul piles up words to drive home this frightening point in our passage...
 - V.14 “no profit”
 - V.14 “ruin of the hearers”
 - V.16 “profane and idle babblings”
 - V.16 “more ungodliness”
 - V.17 “spread like cancer”
 - V.18 “strayed concerning the truth”
 - V.18 “overthrow the faith of some”
- The improper use of the Bible is not a harmless activity. It destroys lives!

I think perhaps, that is one reason James warns us in James 3:1, *“My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.”*

That’s why Paul here warns Timothy in verse 14 of our passage, *“¹⁴ Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord...”* *“These things”* probably refers to the hymn just mentioned in verses 11-13 (that we looked at last week). Notice it here...

“¹¹ This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. ¹² If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. ¹³ If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.” -2 Timothy 2:11-13

Not only is it a “faithful saying,” it is faithful hymn our lives should sing. If we endure faithfully, we will reign with Christ, but if we deny Him, He will deny us. Maybe they’ve already heard it, but remind them again! Do it in the presence of God!

Folks, the Bible is no harmless instrument. Remember the words of the writer of Hebrews in Hebrews 4:12, *“¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”* God’s Word is a sharp sword and must be handled with proper care. Paul mentions three improper ways of using the Bible.

3 Improper Ways to Use the Bible:

(1) To use the Bible for knowledge without obedience is to use it improperly (2 Tim. 2:14) – This one goes along with what we said earlier. We are not supposed to read the Bible like it is a “textbook” for simply gaining knowledge. I think that is what Paul had in mind in verse 14... notice it, *“¹⁴ Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers.”* Notice he spoke of *“strive(ing) about words”* (and to no profit). This was a notorious characteristic of the false teachers in Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:6; 2:8; 6:3-5, 20-21). They liked to display their “knowledge” on peripheral matters that did not lead to godliness, but only to pride over “being right.” Paul said in 1 Timothy 1:5, *“⁵ Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith.”*

Listen, any time you use the Bible to grow in knowledge apart from godliness, you’re heading for spiritual trouble. One of the most common sins Satan uses to trip us up is spiritual pride—puffing us up with supposed knowledge (1 Cor. 8:1). To know God truly in His holiness and majesty will humble us. When you study the Bible, always ask, “What does this teach me about God and about myself? How should I apply this to my life?”

We need to be careful not to misinterpret what Paul is saying here. Let’s think for a moment what Paul is not saying here...

What “striving about words” does not mean?:

- 1. Paul does not mean that the precise words of Scripture do not matter** – We would be wrong to conclude that the phrase *“striving about words”* in **verse 14** means that the exact or precise words in Scripture don’t matter. In Galatians 3:16 Paul builds an argument over the fact that the promise given to Abraham uses “seed” (singular) rather than “seeds” (plural). Jesus argued for the resurrection based on the present rather than past tense of the Hebrew verb in Exodus 3:6 (Matt. 22:32). He taught that the smallest letter of the law would not pass away without being fulfilled (Matt. 5:17). It is important to study the precise words of Scripture and to understand the nuance of the original languages so that we interpret it properly.
- 2. Paul is not saying that growing in spiritual knowledge through Scripture is unimportant** - He often mentions the need to grow in spiritual knowledge and understanding (Eph. 1:17-19; Phil. 1:9-10; Col. 1:9-10). As we’ll see in a moment, accuracy in handling God’s truth is crucial. So Paul is not discouraging careful Bible study. Truth matters greatly and error always causes harm.
- 3. Paul is not saying that as Christians we should not be good students of the Bible, able to accurately defend the truth** – We hear him say exactly that in **verse 15** of our passage, *“¹⁵ Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”*

Rather, Paul is here combating those who like to get into intellectual banter over obscure points of doctrine, but who are not seeking to grow in obedience to God. These scholars like to prove their superior intelligence by winning theological debates. But the point of Scriptural knowledge is not to fill our heads but to change our lives. To use the Bible for knowledge without application is to misuse it.

Observation: *Don't think this doesn't go on today. We like to get into great debates about Calvinism verses Free-Will, Reformed Theology, Predestination, Election, and the Foreknowledge of God. We hear great and dogmatic arguments among Christians about Amillennialism, Postmillennialism, and Premillennialism... but it doesn't stop there we argue further about Historical Premillennialism and Dispensational Premillennialism, Post-Trib., Mid-Trib., Pre-Trib.*

(2) **To use the Bible for worldly ends is to use it improperly (2 Tim. 2:16)** – Notice Paul's words in verse 16, *"¹⁶ But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness."* In verse 16, Paul refers to *"profane and idle babblings,"* or some translations have it, *"worldly and empty chatter."*

In 1 Timothy 6:20 Paul used the same phrase... listen to it, *"²⁰ O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—"* He may be talking about a different aspect of "wrangling about words." The word "worldly" means, "permitted to be trod under foot," hence, "profane, unhallowed." It has the nuance of trafficking lightly in the things of God or of using God and the Bible for worldly gain.

➡ This sort of thing is rampant in American Christianity in our day. (See Ministry Watch Report / Lifeway Research) The "health, wealth and prosperity" heresy is perhaps the most blatant form of it in our day... I'm just going to say to you beware of these (Todd White, Benny Hinn, E.W. Kenyon, Oral Roberts, A.A. Allen, Robert Tilton, T.L. Osborn, Joel Osteen, Creflo Dollar, Kenneth Copeland, Reverend Ike, Kenneth Hagin, Joseph Prince, T.D. Jakes, Guillermo Maldonado, Paula White) Also, many "Christian" self-help books approach the Bible from the perspective of how to gain what *you* want in life, rather than reverently coming to it to learn how to please God (Col. 1:10). It is using the Bible for worldly success. Note two things...

2 Warnings to Remember: (even for today)

1. **False teachers are always popular** - "Their talk will spread like gangrene." You don't have to help gangrene to spread! Because they appeal to the flesh, these false teachers never lack a following. Some of the largest churches in America use the Bible to help people succeed in their worldly, selfish goals. But don't judge a church by how big it is, but rather by how sound is the teaching in producing genuine godliness. People who buy into this kind of false teaching often testify of how much they've

been helped, and often, outwardly, it seems true. But any time people are helped out of their troubles without learning to depend more on the living God and submit more fully to His lordship, it is false help.

2. Christians are to avoid such teachers and their teaching - (2:16). Steer clear of them. Don't waste your time watching them on TV or reading their books. What Augustine wrote over 1,500 years ago (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4, ed. by Philip Schaff [Ages software], "Reply to Faustus the Manichaeon," Book 17, p. 432) applies here: "For to believe what you please, and not to believe what you please, is to believe yourselves, and not the gospel." By appealing to the flesh and the lure of the world, these false teachers draw away after them people who are not fully submissive to the lordship of Christ and His gospel of the cross. To use the Bible for worldly ends is to misuse it.

(3) To use the Bible to teach half-truths as truth is to use it improperly (2:18) – In verse 18 Paul speaks of these false teacher... ¹⁸*who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.* These men were not totally wrong...

- They were teaching a half-truth as if it were the whole truth, which is often Satan's method.
- They were teaching that the resurrection already had taken place.
- They had verses from Paul to back up their views.
- He wrote often of the fact that Christ is risen and that we are risen with Him.
- But he also taught that there is a future resurrection of the body, which these men denied.
- They argued that the resurrection was only spiritual and thus was an accomplished fact.
- You may wonder, "What's the big deal? Why was this worth contending about?"
- Paul answers that question in 1 Corinthians 15, where he says that if there is no future, literal, bodily resurrection, then Christ Himself is not even raised and our faith is worthless.

Mark it well... **Heresy always begins as truth out of balance!** There is always an element of truth in the teachings of the cults. That's how they entice people. They even have verses to back up their errors. So they prey on the untaught who are looking for "something more" in their faith. But they lead people away from dependence on the living God. If somebody handed you a three-dollar bill with a picture of Frank Sinatra on it, you wouldn't be fooled. A counterfeit always looks genuine at first glance. That's why we have to examine the popular worldly teachings cleverly cloaked with the Bible that are flooding the church in our day. They promote half-truths as if they were the truth of God.

Before we look at the positive side of how to use the Bible to grow in godliness, here are three tests of sound doctrine that will keep you from being taken in by false teaching...

3 TESTS OF FALSE TEACHING: *(that will keep you from falling prey to false teaching)*

- (1) **Test #1: Does it honor God and exalt Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord?** - Sound doctrine always lifts God up in His majesty and holiness. It exalts Jesus as fully God and fully man, who gave Himself for our sins and was raised bodily from the dead.
- (2) **Test #2: Does it humble proud, fallen sinners?** - Sound doctrine always brings sinners to the foot of the cross where they come to the end of their own pride and self-sufficiency.
- (3) **Test #3 Does it promote holiness?** - Sound teaching always results in obedience to the Word of God and progress in holy living. It leads to genuine love for God and love for others.

The fact that in four out of six verses here Paul presents the negative should alarm us enough to examine ourselves. Using the Bible is not enough! You can use the Bible to your own destruction! Using the Bible for knowledge without obedience, to promote worldly goals, or to teach half-truths as the entire truth will lead to spiritual ruin. We need to be careful to use the Bible to grow to know God and to grow in submission to Him. But two verses focus on the positive:

GOD’S PEOPLE SHOULD USE THE BIBLE TO MAKE PROGRESS IN GODLINESS (2 Timothy 2:15, 19)

¹⁵ Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. ¹⁶ But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. ¹⁷ And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, ¹⁸ who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some. ¹⁹ Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are His,’ and, ‘Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.’”-2 Timothy 2:15-19

The Bible wasn’t given to satisfy our curiosity about the end times or to fill our heads with facts. It was given to help us grow in godliness. Paul gives us four ways to use the Bible properly:

4 Ways to Use the Bible Properly & Grow in Godliness:

- (1) **The proper use of the Bible requires the proper approach** - Verse 15 of our passage says **“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”** **“Be diligent...”** The KJV (“study”) conveys the wrong idea. The word translated as **“be diligent”** there means to be **“diligent or zealous.”** **We are to give constant effort to the task of being approved unto God as unashamed workmen, which means handling God’s Word accurately.** This especially

applies to those who teach the Bible, but it also applies to all believers, who must be able to handle the Word carefully.

So many Christians are haphazard and lazy rather than diligent in their approach to God's Word.

- They don't systematically read, study, or memorize it.
- If they read it at all, they jump from passage to passage, pulling verses out of context.
- They aren't seeking to know God and how He wants them to think, to believe, and to relate to others.
- Their lives and relationships are falling apart, but they don't search diligently to discover what God's Word tells them to do about these problems.

The key to being diligent in God's Word is to be motivated. Motivation is the key to learning. Have you ever been on an airplane and watched the passengers as the stewardess gives the instructions on how to use the emergency breathing apparatus? They're reading their newspapers or impatiently thinking, "Hurry up so we can get going!" They're not motivated to hear her boring instructions. But suppose they're airborne and the pilot comes on the intercom and says, "Ladies and gentlemen, we're experiencing some severe trouble with our engines. We're going to have to de-pressurize the cabin and make an emergency landing. The stewardess is going to explain how to use the emergency breathing apparatus." Do you think he would have to add, "Please give her your full attention"? People would be motivated! So the key to being motivated to be diligent in God's Word is to recognize, "I live in the presence of God! Someday soon I will give an account to Him. His Word alone contains His wisdom on how to live in a way that pleases Him, which is the only way to true happiness for me. So I've got to be diligent to search out what the Scriptures say about knowing God and His wisdom for living."

(2) **The proper use of the Bible requires the proper relationship** – Again, notice **verse 15, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."** Notice those words there... **"Present yourself approved to God."** **"Present"** is used (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:27) to speak of a bride being presented to her bridegroom. It's a very personal, loving act when a young woman gives herself to a young man in marriage. In that culture (pre-women's lib) it meant that she was giving herself completely to him: her devotion, her time, her body, her complete focus was now toward her husband because of his love for her and her love for him.

That's how we should come to the Bible. It's not just a book of principles for how to live. It tells us of Christ's enduring love for His bride. As His bride, we should seek to please Him and be available to do His will. As such, our focus should not be on what others think of us, but on what God thinks.

Too many pastors fall into the trap of pleasing people, rather than pleasing God. While it's nice to be liked, my main focus is to be, "approved to God." Our goal is to please our heavenly Bridegroom who loved us and gave Himself for us.

➡ When **Jim Elliot**, who was later martyred in the jungles of Ecuador, was a student at Wheaton College, he wrote in his diary, "My grades came through this week, and were, as expected, lower than last semester. However, I make no apologies, and admit I've let them drag a bit for study of the Bible, in which I seek the degree A.U.G., 'approved unto God'" (*Shadow of the Almighty* [Zondervan], p. 43). Come to the Bible to deepen your love life with the Lord, to learn how you can please Him more.

(3) **The proper use of the Bible requires the proper skill** – Let's go back to **verse 15** of our passage says "*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" Notice the last half of that verse... "*A worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*"

Here the metaphor is that of a craftsman. You're the carpenter and God's Word is your set of tools. Rather than being sloppy and nailing together a chicken coop that's about to fall down, do a decent job so that you will not be ashamed when God inspects your work. If a carpenter knows that his work will be inspected by a skilled master craftsman, he will not cut corners. He will do his best so that his work will be approved.

The Bible is God's "word of truth." Truth is accurate, objective and knowable, not subjective and fluid. If a carpenter showed up at your house and didn't have a level, square, tape measure or set of plans, you'd be a bit concerned. If you asked him about his methods and he said, "We all have different ways of seeing things and no way is absolutely right. Who's to say that your house has to be plumb and square?"—you'd be even more concerned! You want your house built carefully and accurately according to the plans. **God's Word is not the sort of thing where one person can see it one way and another person can see it another way and it really doesn't matter because no one can know what it means.** Every biblical text has a fixed meaning that is true and never changes. Based on and stemming from that meaning, it may have a different significance or application for different people and at different times for the same person. But we need to use the tools of Bible study and interpretation to discover the meaning of each text in its biblical context. Otherwise, we're being sloppy workmen with God's Word of truth.

The word translated, "*rightly dividing*" or "accurately handling" (KJV, "rightly dividing") means "to cut a path or road in a straight direction, so that the traveler may go directly to his destination" Or, using a farming metaphor, **Chrysostom** said that it means to **plow a straight furrow**. The idea is not to get distracted off course by false teachings

but accurately and straightforwardly to cut through the doctrines of Scripture so that you and your hearers can reach the destination of godliness.

Change doesn't come from people feeling good or liking certain ideas that they think come from Scripture. Change comes when people are confronted with God's truth and they submit their lives to it.

Thus we all, but especially those of us who teach God's Word, must be skillful and accurate so that God's people understand and submit to God's truth in these days of moral relativism. Thus the proper use of the Bible requires the proper approach (diligence); the proper relationship (love); the proper skill (accuracy); finally...

- (4) **The proper use of the Bible requires the proper foundation** – Look at **verse 19**, **“Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: ‘the Lord knows those who are His,’ and ‘Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.’”**

It's kind of scary reading about professing Christian people who have been ruined (2:14), have gone astray from the truth (2:18), and have been upset in their faith (2:18). We may wonder, **“How can I keep on the path? How can I keep from being ruined?”** So, Paul reminds Timothy of the foundation of the Christian life. The foundation refers to the true people of God, the church. Those who truly belong to the Lord are not carried away by false teaching.

The seal on the foundation, or cornerstone, has two statements that reflect two important aspects of our salvation. These two statements come from the story of Korah's rebellion against Moses. Moses said (Num. 16:5), “the Lord will show who is His, and who is holy, and will bring him near to Himself; even the one whom He will choose....” He warned the congregation to depart from the tents of these wicked men before God destroyed them (Num. 16:26).

2 Statements That Reflect Important Aspects of our Salvation: *(the foundation of our life as believers)*

1. **“The Lord knows those who are His”** – Paul says that the first part of the seal is, “The Lord knows those who are His.” Salvation does not begin with man; it begins with God. He planned it and He executed it. “He chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4). “In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth” (James 1:18). We can't know God's truth until God has first laid hold of us and saved us from our sins by His grace alone.
2. **“Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity”** - The second statement is, “Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness.” As Ephesians 1:4 continues, God chose us “that we would be holy and blameless before Him.” We can be assured that we belong to the Lord because we see

Him progressively working His holiness into our daily lives. So the foundation for using the Bible properly is that God knows us as His own and that through our diligent, careful study and application of His Word of truth, we are growing in godliness.

CONCLUSION

A young man once studied violin under a world-renowned master. When his first big recital came, the crowd cheered after each number, but the young performer seemed dissatisfied. Even after the final number, despite the applause, the musician seemed unhappy. As he took his bows, he was watching an elderly man in the balcony. Finally, the elderly one smiled and nodded in approval. Immediately, the young man beamed with joy. He was not looking for the approval of the crowd. He was waiting for the approval of his master.

Christians should be living for God's approval. We will be approved unto Him as we use the Bible to grow in godliness. Are you growing as a craftsman who uses God's Word of truth accurately and skillfully to grow in godliness? The misuse of the Bible will lead you to ruin. The proper use will lead you to godliness.

Application Questions

1. Since Bible scholars often disagree, how can we know that we're interpreting the Bible correctly?
2. How can we guard against spiritual pride—that we have the “right” view of truth? Does humility mean that we can never know that we're right?
3. How do you know when a doctrine is worth fighting for and when you are merely wrangling about words?
4. Is every Christian required to be diligent to study God's Word, or does this only apply to those gifted to teach?