

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own under-
standing; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: II Timothy 2:15 “Be diligent to present yourself **approved to God**, a worker who does not need to be **ashamed**, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Quote: “You do not do God a favor by serving Him. He honors you by allowing you to serve Him.” V. Nyquist

Most individuals desire privileges, advancements and opportunities that come only through the approval of the authority figures in their lives. They want people to think of them as mature, professional individuals who have shown themselves trustworthy, responsible and capable of making wise decisions. In order to accomplish this, they must have a good idea of what those over them highly value. Failure to know the expectations of authority figures will limit an individual’s opportunities to gain the greater privileges that may come with gaining their approval. Speaking of gaining approval, wouldn’t you agree that the wisest decision that any person can make is the decision to seek God’s approval? Our personal goal should be to “present” ourselves for God’s inspection in order to gain His “well done” by honoring His expectations. In order to do this, we must learn what He values through the study and application of His Word.

Leading up to our text, Paul admonished Timothy as a young pastor to fulfill his role with the desire to gain God’s approval. He was to educate faithful men who could teach others, to endure the hardships of ministry, to engage himself in the battle for truth, and to endeavor to carry out his ministry according to “the rules.”

The principles that Paul shares are applicable to every Christian. They can also act as a guide in the selection of a local church where the Word of God is carefully, reverently and faithfully expounded.

“*Diligent*” means “to make effort, to be earnest, to labor.” Christians in general, and pastors in particular, must be serious-minded when it comes to handling God’s Word. We dare not be careless or complacent for there is a stricter judgment forthcoming for any who teach the Word of God.¹

The word *approved* refers to one who has been tested and found acceptable. It was used for testing and approving metals. We are to guard and to guide our hearts by the Word of God as the standard by which we will be graded for His approval or disapproval!

The Greek word for “worker” describes “a toiler” or a “laborer.” What we spend our time working on reflects who we are trying to impress and what we really value. How sad that personal study of the Word of The Most High God often gets the “left-over” time of our busy day!

Ashamed gives the sense of not measuring up to a standard or an expectation. We must always be sobered by the truth that our efforts will be judged by the all-knowing Author of the book that we are studying, obeying and sharing. Writing to the Philippians from prison, Paul revealed his passion for God’s approval of his ministry. “According to my *earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed*, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”²

Approved to God!

“*Rightly dividing*” means to “make a straight and accurate cut” like a master craftsman handling highly-valued material. Timothy was to learn the Word carefully and then “walk straight forward according to this line” so that his efforts would not result in failure. This takes the determination, consistency and accuracy associated with a desire for excellence.

Paul sandwiched his instruction on teaching God’s Word between two warnings dealing with “striving about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers” and “profane and idle babblings that will increase to more ungodliness and that spread like a cancer.”³ God forbid that we would ever stray from the truth. May we always handle it accurately and reverently for God’s glory and with a passion for His approval.

¹ James 3:1 ² Phil.1:20-21 ³ II Tim.2:14, 16-17