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How Are We Approved

In **2 Timothy 2.15**, Paul states, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” We usually use this passage to encourage Bible study so that we can grow. The question we might ask is how is that we are approved? On the day of judgment there will not be a test and a number 2 pencil will not be required nor provided. What does this mean for us in a personal application.

The answer lies in what this prepares us for. Christ’s instructions to his disciples placed emphasis on teaching. On one occasion Christ sent out the twelve to prepare his way as he traveled through the land (**Matt 10.1-14**). Later he sent out seventy to do the same (**Luke 10.1-11**). Later, as the persecution began we find that the Christians went everywhere teaching the word (**Acts 8.4**). As we find opportunities to teach we must have the necessary knowledge to tell others what they need to know in order to believe and obey. Where does the approval before God fit in?

It is necessary in our teaching that we give a proper answer to those who might ask why we believe the things that we do. As Christians it is necessary that we give a book chapter and verse for what we teach. There is nothing more embarrassing than stating that we believe something but find that we are not able to back it up. We must have a knowledge of the basics at least in order to do this. There are many convincing teachers of error who are able to manipulate the scriptures and make them say what they want them to. We must not be so.

There are some things that we should be able to do in order to accomplish this. And here are some suggestions that will help us do that.

First of all we need to know where things are at in the Bible. Take time to recite the books of the Bible taking care to note the minor prophets and their order. Say the books to yourself once or twice a week. While image is not everything, we may give an impression of not knowing what we are talking about if we have to continually turn our Bibles to see the thumb tabs or look in the table of contents to see where a particular book is located. Others may think that we lack knowledge if we do not have a good grasp of this.

Secondly we should be able to walk someone through the plan of salvation and explain what true belief and obedience are. Examples of conversion in the book of Acts are a good starting place as most of the work is done for us in the way that the text is presented. We should be able to show how individuals were converted in each case and give supporting scriptures for this. There are many in the world, even those who are religious who are surprised to find that things such as the sinner’s prayer are not found in the Bible. Beyond this we will be able to add to our knowledge of other passages that will bear this out as well.

Gaining confidence in these areas will help put us at ease and will keep us from looking bad, which reflects on God as well. We emphasize that the Bible needs to be practiced as written and it is a good practice to know where it is written. This is a good starting point for having the approval of God as well therefore becoming good workmen.

Third, we need to know and be able to show the difference between the Old and New Testaments. There are many who are confused on this point and again it comes as a surprise to many that we are no longer under the Law. By doing these things we will be able to teach others and lead them closer to making the proper decision to serve God and obey him in truth.

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