

**April 14**

**Scriptures:** Read 2 Timothy 2

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

## **Overview**

Let us remember the context here: Paul is writing to one of his spiritual “sons” who is having a tough time in his first pastorate. All of us who read the letter can benefit from it as well — but the prior recipient was Timothy, a young and inexperienced preacher, teacher, and pastor.

I like the way the NIV puts it, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.” There should be no misunderstanding here: Paul would be the first to say we are “justified by faith”, that is, our standing in God’s eyes is dependent on our faith in the work of Christ on Calvary. However, in the context,

Timothy’s “justification” is a given — Paul simply wants Timothy to act as an “approved” believer should act. He wants Timothy’s life, and especially his work, to reflect his faith. A vital part of Timothy’s work was the correct handling of “the word of truth”. God’s word is to be treated with respect and taken seriously (see 3:16). This means, among other things, avoiding the temptation of what theologians call “isogesis” — which simply means reading “into” the text (as contrasted to “exegesis”: reading “out of” the text). From time to time, all of us would like to make Scripture say what we want it to say. This can easily be done if we isolate the text from its context.

That is why context is so important. Before reading a doctrine into the text, we must weigh it against what we know to be true from the broader doctrines of the entire Bible. Our subjective view must be tempered by the objective truth of the “whole counsel of God”. Without this, we do what so many historically have done — mishandle the Word and fall into error.

## **Prayer**

Thank You, Father, for Your precious, life-giving Word, which enlightens, corrects, instructs, and guides us daily. We delight in the assurance that You are indeed faithful to give us our daily bread.