

Show Thyself Approved – 2 Timothy 2:14-17, Proverbs 3

This morning we are turning our attention to one of the most critical components of our faith. Many Christians view Christian education as something that comes naturally over time. In fact, when pressed on the subject, most Christians are content to only gain Biblical and Theological knowledge by attending one or two church services each week. Biblical illiteracy and lack of Spiritual maturity in the faith is becoming more alarming as each day goes by. Many people treat the pursuit of knowledge in the same manner they consider political and social issues. Instead of digging in and doing their own research, it's much easier to sit back and allow someone else and their opinions to guide them in their thinking and subsequently in their decision making. No longer in our society is it the norm to teach everything from a Biblical worldview. Nor is it the norm in our society to view God's Word as the standard and authoritative source for truth. Society teaches that pursuing absolute truth is something unattainable and is scoffed at by the supposed scholars of our day. This movement, which has been going on longer than we wish to admit, stands in direct opposition to what God has to say about truth. He makes it abundantly clear in His Word that truth is knowable and that absolute truth can only come directly from the source; God Himself!

Paul often taught with the future in mind. His teachings frequently gave instructions concerning the pursuit of knowledge as well as offering significant evidence that every believer must diligently pursue God's instructions. Turn with me this morning to the first of our focal passages in 2 Timothy 2:14-17. **Read 2 Timothy 2:14-17.**

God, since the moment He granted Adam dominion over the earth has always encouraged His children to pursue knowledge. In our text this morning, Paul encourages young Timothy to do his best, to be intentional, or to be diligent as he studies the Word of God. He even goes as far as saying that he shouldn't be ashamed of having a desire to study. And then he gives him the reason why self-study of God's Word is important. It is to be shared so that others cannot be led astray, and it must be shared as God's absolute truth for our lives.

But what does it mean that the "*worker should rightly handle the word of truth*"? Well, first, the worker is understood here to be a teacher. Common sense tells us that if one is a teacher, then that same one must also be a student of the Word. The student then, must work to understand that God's Word is filled with truth which is built according to God's laws and structure. Paul wants us to understand that each of these truths must be rightly understood, rightly obeyed, and rightly lived out as a demonstration of our faith in God the Father. In other words, Timothy was to look at the whole Word of God and apply its truth across the board. One cannot simply select a verse here and there and then choose to ignore another verse over here or over there. We must avoid looking at one passage of scripture in a bottle and must consider each verse in relation to what the whole of God's Word has to say. When we follow this advice from Paul we are protected from teaching and more importantly living in inerrancy.

As mentioned earlier, God has always encouraged man to learn and to seek wisdom and knowledge and understanding. This has been the case since the very beginning and still holds true for us today. If you know your history, you'll remember how God used Moses to teach the

Israelites His ways. Moses, under God's leadership, also encouraged them to hold on to the things God had taught them and to make sure to teach His truths from generation to generation. Christian, while we are not under the law as were the Israelites, we are still held to the standard concerning teaching God's truths across our generations.

I want to go back to several weeks ago and remind you of David's words from Psalm 19. Read Psalm **19:7-9**. *"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether."*

I know you guys remember **Proverbs 3:5-6** which says, *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."* But keep reading this proverb and when you come to **verse 13**, you'll see *"Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding,"*. And then, if you keep reading, you'll find some promises from God concerning our gaining of knowledge and wisdom. You'll also see where we are warned about not pursuing knowledge and not seeking after God's righteousness. **Read Proverbs 3:19-35**.

Jesus said while delivering the Sermon on the Mount that we are to thirst for truth and the right ways of God. He said it this way, *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."* (**Matthew 5:6**) What I want you to see this morning is that God has established a mandate for Biblical learning and this command is intended to help us develop spiritually and grow more like Christ as we learn to live with and serve others.

In **Philippians 2:12**, Paul said every believer is responsible to *"work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"*. Know this, it is your responsibility to work with the Holy Spirit to develop your own Christian walk. Not your spouse. Not your friend. Not your Pastor. Every believer must, according to the Scriptures, develop their own plan for personal discipleship. We are each responsible to read the Word, pray over the Word, pray about the Word, seek to understand the Word, think properly, or "rightly" about the Word, and then teach each other about the Word. In essence, every believer at some point has a duty to become a teacher. Whether through writing, or through spoken instruction, or through action, you have a responsibility to teach the next generation.

While most would agree, the local church is a good source for Biblical education and for expanding knowledge about God, we must not forget that time spent learning while at church is only supplemental to what should be taking place in the home. God never intended for institutions to serve as the primary form of instruction for us or for our children. The Bible makes it abundantly clear that this responsibility lies solely on the parents, and especially that of the father. According to the stats, one quarter of all the children in the US live in homes without a father. That doesn't sound bad, but when you apply the number instead of the percentage, there are around 17.4 million kids in homes without fathers. Consider the words of Paul from **Ephesians 6:1-4** when you think about this. Parents, we must teach our kids about God. Children, you must let them. I'm not going to linger on this any longer, but I wanted to make

sure I let you know what God says about educating our children. Education begins at home. God holds the parents responsible for this and contrary to our modern way of doing things, the church should only serve as a complement and reinforcement for what is being shared in the home.

Does this mean the church should stop educating? Absolutely not! If even thing, it means we must step up our efforts. The local church has been ordained by God for the work of expanding His Kingdom. How do we go about fulfilling this role? We preach the Word. We teach the Word. We live the Word. We, as Jesus demonstrated, must help to create disciples. In a world where the ways of God are rapidly being ignored and systemically being removed from our lives, it is important we continue our efforts to provide expository Bible studies, in-depth discipleship classes, as well as other Biblically based educational endeavors, designed for the sole purpose of sharing the Gospel and helping people grow spiritually.

Let me conclude this morning by summing all this up. The expectation for us to learn has been made very clear by God through His Word. We are to educate ourselves, not for selfish gain, but for the purpose of teaching others, who will eventually grow in wisdom, and will then become teachers themselves. Our problem is not our lack of knowledge or resources. We live in a time with more translations of the Bible, more commentaries of the Bible, and more educational opportunities than any generation before us. Our problem really stems from our lack of service. Church... part of serving others includes educating others. God gave you gifts, knowledge, understanding, insight, discernment, and wisdom, not just to fill your mind, but to fill your heart and motivate you for the work of the church, which is helping grow the Kingdom. There is more to the Great Commission of Jesus than “Go”. **Read Matthew 28:19-20.**

Church... we must share the goods news of Jesus. We must welcome new believers. We must then TEACH them to observe the ways of God. These things are not optional! So, how do we put our education to work?

Start by developing a plan for your own continued discipleship. Come to Sunday School, join, or start a small group, find a mentor, seek higher learning about the Bible.

Parents with children still in the home – Get intentional about their spiritual formation. Include them in your own studies. Consider alternative Christian based education. Monitor their media outlets. Don’t leave all this to someone else when God has made you the responsible one.

Get involved – There are always opportunities for this. Discover your spiritual gift and put it to use. Find somewhere here at MFBC to serve. Find somewhere in the community to serve. God has blessed many of us with years of experience, knowledge, and wisdom. All you need to do now is get active. Stay active. Teach the next generation about God, by serving them.