

**Study Guide**  
**How to Study the Bible**

This study is arranged as a Commentary.

Commentary = a series of comments to explain the  
scope – (How much information does the written passage contain?) and the  
sequence – (In what order is the information given in?) of a  
text – (The actual and original words of the original author.)

The scope and sequence of this commentary have already been determined. What is left to be discovered is the text:

- 1) What are the actual, original words of the original author?
- 2) What is the actual, intended meaning of the words of the original author? ('then-and-there' meaning)
- 3) How are these words to be applied to the current life of the student? ('here-and-now' meaning)

**II Timothy 2:15 “Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”**

Study = “use speed; make every effort; exert oneself; labor” Studying demands effort, time and exertion.

Approved unto God = “God-tested for approval.” Our approval for what has been studied comes only from God. He tests our work because He wants to approve it.

Workman = “a toiler; a field laborer” God Himself has assigned the labor of studying the scriptures. Studying is work, and it is good work that will be rewarded.

Not ashamed = “Having no cause for shame” Four things that cause shame:

- 1) ‘the accuser of the brethren’. Rev. 12:10.
- 2) the judgment of people. Rom. 14:10-13
- 3) our own hearts. I John 3:18-23
- 4) being shamed before the Lord at His coming for something done or undone. I John 2:28 “...abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him...”

Rightly – “unbiased; upright; level” (square) When the workman’s character and life before God are brought into alignment with the word of truth that he/she studies, there is no cause for shame. No biased ‘slanting’ of the words to support pre-determined conclusions.

Dividing – “making a sharp cut” The student must submit his/her life to “...the sword of the spirit...” (Eph. 6:17) that “pierces all the way to the judging of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” The student also makes a sharp cut through the many layers of meaning that time, culture and translation have caused to cover the original meaning of the author’s words.

noble...received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so.”

**Metaphor:** Matt. 13:44 “The kingdom of God is like a treasure hidden in a field...which when a man has found it...he buys that field.”

The message that accurately describes the kingdom of God is concealed by God within or beneath the surface meaning of the words of scripture.

**My metaphor** to illustrate the difference between reading the scriptures and studying the scriptures: There are two people seeking valuable metals in a section of ground (field). One person quickly skims the ground without any tools. The other person carefully inspects small sections of the ground with the aid of a variety of “digging tools”.

- The person reading the scriptures without reliable Bible-study helps has:

- 1) what one or a few people tell him/her that the Bible says. (who gets to decide what it says?) See Acts 17:11 Do your own studying.
- 2) their own limited understanding of what the original intent of the author was, (why he said it?)
- 3) their own limited knowledge of the entire Bible, (what does it say?)

- The person studying the scriptures with the aid of reliable Bible-study helps has:

- 1) the science of linguistics, (what do the words really mean?)
- 2) the knowledge of hundreds of scholars, (what does the entire Bible have to say about this?)
- 3) the insight of Spirit-inspired teachers (what is the Spirit showing reliable students of the Bible what it really says)

**Four “digging tools”:**

1) The Holy Spirit. He is our metal detector. John 14:26 “...he (the Holy Spirit) will teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance...” John 16:13 “...he (the Holy Spirit) will guide you into all truth...” The Holy Spirit will reveal to students of the scriptures far more than what they are capable of comprehending with their own human intellect.

2) Original language/careful translation. II Tim. 1:13 “Hold fast the form of sound words...” (uncorrupted; undamaged)

How words get damaged:

- 1) Cultures (the ideas and habits of a given people) change the meanings of words. (cool; mouse; strike, etc.)
- 2) Translators can change the meanings of words in their attempts to transfer ideas from one language and culture to another.
- 3) Bias (slant; slope) changes the meanings of words. Because of their past experiences, everyone has their own pre-determined conclusions as to what each word means.

To restore damaged words use Greek/English and Hebrew/English Dictionaries, Interlinear Bibles, Expository Bible Dictionaries, Annotated Reference Bibles and Bible encyclopedias.