

Questions

Question: What does “rightly divide” mean and where did you get it?

This phrase is found in *2 Timothy 2:15* where it states, “*Study to shew thyself approved by God... rightly dividing the Word of Truth.*” King James Version.

This is translated from the Greek word “orthotomeo” which means to cut straight, to hold a straight course, to teach the truth directly and correctly, handle correctly or to dissect correctly. Different translators will use any of these phrases when translating this word depending on the translator. Get a good Greek dictionary if you don’t already have one and look it up; “*Vines*” is a good one.

The reason we use this phrase so much is because it is so important for the understanding of the Scriptures. Without “*rightly dividing*” the Word of God, one will find conflicts too numerous to mention, whereas, when it is “*rightly divided*” or “*correctly handled*” or “*taught directly and correctly*” there are no contradictions because then all is in the context in which it was given and the meaning very clear. It is interesting how people can read a book, magazine article, news paper article and even a very large novel and put every person, place and event in context of the story; but the Bible, even elders (pastors, teachers) will consistently take people under a covenant of grace and try to put them under a covenant of law. It makes me wonder if they have read *Galatians* or if they have the Spirit.

Let me give one example: in *Matthew 6:14-15*, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus states “*For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.*”

Now read *Ephesians chapter 1* and note *verse 7* which states, “*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace...*” Wait a minute, in *Matthew* it says we have to forgive our brother and this says we have forgiveness through His blood. So which is it? Both are true but the first does not apply to the second. The statement of Jesus was given to Israel, under a covenant of law, in preparing them for entrance into the kingdom. At this time, their entrance or denial of entrance was based on their obedience to the law because “... *that will be our righteousness*” (*Deuteronomy 6:25*). Jesus came to Israel with an offer to bring the fifth kingdom of *Daniel 2:44* down to earth and set it up; they rejected the offer. The statement in *Ephesians* is given after Jesus died and rose to eternal life, where sin can now be forgiven/removed, to people under a covenant of grace.

This is a decisive and distinct “straight cutting” of the Scriptures, but, when this “*rightly dividing*” is not understood, the **plan** of God is not being considered and all is lumped together as one teaching and we wind up with a huge confused mess and 3000 plus so called “Christian” denominations. God’s Word is still the same Truth as when He gave it but most can’t understand it because we won’t put it into the proper context in which He gave it.

Consider conversations you have had with others where you say something, meaning something specific and the other person takes what you said completely out of context and comes back with a statement that is on the other side of the world as to what you were talking about. It should not be hard to see how many problems can result when statements are taken out of context and the Scriptures are not “*rightly divided.*” All of God’s Word is Truth but not all Scripture has application to all groups of people. God does not change, but as His plan advances through time, His requirements of repentance vary according to the message or gospel presented to Man and by events that have taken place (example: Christ’s death and resurrection) in any given period of time and this we need to recognize and understand. This is why to “*correctly handle*” (NIV translation) is so vitally important.

Under the Law of Moses, a parent was to bring a stubborn and rebellious son to the elders and they were to stone him to death. Yes, it says that, read *Deuteronomy 21:18-21*. Have you done that with your rebellious son? If my mother had followed the law, I would not be here today; would you? I doubt if anyone we know has done this either. Why? Because those who try to follow the Law of Moses pick and choose the things they like and omit the others. Example: many teach that we, as the body, are to tithe but do not observe the Sabbath (the Sabbath is Saturday, not Sunday) and they sure are not going to stone a rebellious son. This mixing of the covenants is misleading and deceptive and why we must “*rightly divide*” God’s Word if we are ever going to understand what it means to be “in Christ” under a covenant of grace. Refer to the Body of Christ under Grace tool in the toolbox.

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Today we are in between the 69th and 70th weeks of Israel's prophetic time given to Daniel in *Daniel 9:24-27* when the body of Christ is being gathered; that's who we are: the body of Christ. We are not Noah before the flood, we are not Abraham before the Law of Moses was given, we are not the nation Israel, we are not the people on the earth during the 70th week (tribulation), and we are not at the judgments of *Matthew 24:45* through *25:46* and we don't go to the accounts of Jesus coming (*Matthew, Mark, Luke* and *John*) to see how to be saved or to see how to live without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; we go to the Epistles which were written for and to the body of Christ, us. This is "*rightly dividing*" the Word of God and why it is so important. Hope this helps.