

Approved of God

BE DILIGENT

"Be diligent to show yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

2Tim. 2:15

In Paul's final words to Timothy, he shares with his young colleague some of the most important lessons that Paul himself had learnt throughout his ministry. These gems of godly wisdom from an elder statesman like Paul provide those of us who lack his experience to gain the benefit of many years of godly training without the pain of ignorantly stumbling on to them. Not that Paul's words to us mean that we will never learn by mistakes, but it does provide us with the opportunity to learn both from his mistakes, and his experiences. (In fact this is the basic principle that applies to how we learn from anyone). How can a young person succeed in their ministry? Is it a matter of using all the latest gimmicks? Or perhaps administering an evangelism campaign of thousands of dollars? Maybe it is to be found in employing marketing tools to bring Church growth? Paul's prescription for ministry success is summed up in our text (2Tim. 2:15). While the thrust of the verse emphasizes *faithfulness*, the first component of this faithfulness is diligence.

Do Your Best

Spoudazo! This is the Greek word that Paul uses here which is variously translated as: *be diligent, endeavour, labour, study*. It comes from the root word *spoude* (spoo-day), which means *make haste, speed, eagerness, earnestness*. The servant of God must be diligently focussed on sharpening their skills for God's service.

1. In relation to making haste and being diligent, what does Scripture say in Ephesians 5:16, that can be applied here? (Col. 4:5)

2. The King James Translation translates *spoudazo* as "study". What relationship is there between time management (making haste) and study?

Making haste to be diligent is the instruction given to God's servant. It involves giving our best to God, not our "left-overs". Scripture consistently encourages giving God the "first" of our belongings, efforts, and life (Ex. 23:19; Lev. 9:15; Prov. 3:9). "First" in this instance equates to "best". Charles Finney used to challenge his listeners about giving God the first of their lives. "Do you spend more time preparing your outward appearance for Church, than you do praying for the Church service?", he would ask. As the servants of God we must make sacrifices to give God our best.

3. What kind of sacrifices does the servant of God have to make to be diligent for God and His service?

While the context of our text is in relation to the Word of God, the servant of God must be diligent in the other areas involved in Christian ministry.

4. What did the apostles say to the people in Acts 6:1-4 (especially vs. 4)? Therefore, what areas of ministry is the servant of God to be diligent in?

5. What advice does Ecclesiastes 9:10(a) give to God's servant?

PRAYER:

Our instructions for service come from our Master. These times of instruction are received in our prayer closet (Mtt. 6:6). While prayer is a time to request things from God, it is also a time to *seek* God. We recall our Lord's time here on earth. He was constantly praying to His Father (eg. Mtt. 14:23; Lk. 6:12; Jn. 17:9).

6. What did Jesus teach His disciples to do in Luke 18:1?

THE WORD:

As we have stated about the text, diligence in this sense refers to our labour in God's Word. The King James Version translates the verse by saying that the servant of God needs to *study to show thyself approved*. God's servant needs to be studying the Word of God.

7. Note the following about God's Word, and what we should do about it-

a) Ps. 119:9 _____

b) Ps. 119:11 _____

c) Ps. 119:16 _____

d) Ps. 119:133 _____

Our wisdom is useless. We need God's wisdom. This wisdom is revealed in God's Word. The servant of God must be equipped with a knowledge of God's Word, so that their wisdom is that of the Word of God (Prov. 4:1-7). This can only happen when the servant of God seeks the wisdom and instruction of God through prayer and the Word of God. This is where the Christian worker needs diligence. God grant us the grace to be diligent for Him.

Amen.