

Right Division Explained

II Tim. 2:15 is not the only verse that makes up the understanding of right division.

When the Apostle Paul writes to Timothy at Ephesus, he says,

“I besought thee...that thou mightest **charge some that they teach no other doctrine**” (**I Tim. 1:3**).

What one is taught doctrinally is of the utmost importance. That’s why Timothy was to be very careful himself to

- “hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me” (**II Tim. 1:13**),
- then “the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (**II Tim. 2:2**).

If Timothy, and those teaching with him, were consistent about teaching no other doctrine other than what Paul taught, this sound doctrine would “save” (or deliver, **I Tim. 4:16**) all who heard it from spiritual error. But the opposite was also true. If anyone taught or exposed themselves to doctrines which were contrary to what Paul taught, it would have devastating effects.

What doctrines were so precious and important, that nothing else was to be listened to? No sermon or article can adequately articulate all of the important things that the Apostle Paul taught. However, let's take a look at a number of things that we must hold dear to our understanding, and consistently demand from the teaching of anyone that we sit under.

- We learn from **Romans 6:14** that we are **“not under the law, but under grace.”** The practical impact of this is that we do not try to implement portions of our Bible that were written exclusively to Israel.
- From **Romans 11:13** we see that **Paul is “the apostle of the Gentiles.”** Peter, James, and John wrote Scripture, but confined their ministries to the nation Israel. Their writings dealt largely with the tribulation or millennial kingdom. Only Paul claims to be, or calls himself, the apostle of the Gentiles.
- He further urges that **we are to “be followers of me”** (**I Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Phil. 3:17**). So, someone who is sound in doctrine will recognize Paul's letters as the exclusive **“commandments of the Lord”** for believers today (See **I Cor. 14:37**).
- Our apostle had no tolerance for anything other than **the pure “gospel of the grace of God”** (**Acts 20:24; Gal. 1:6-12**).

- He demanded that it always be taught in a crystal clear manner. That meant salvation being proclaimed as a gift of God's grace, apart from man's works, and received through faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (**I Cor. 15:1-4; Eph. 2:8,9; Rom. 3:24-28**).
- Beyond this, Paul taught that he was **not sent to baptize**, "lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none effect" (**I Cor. 1:17**).
- Today there is only "one baptism" (**Eph. 4:5** and that is the baptism of the Holy Spirit which places us into the Body of Christ at the moment of salvation (**I Cor. 12:13**).
- Once saved, **we are eternally secure**, because we are "sealed" with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit "unto the day of redemption" (**Eph. 1:13, 14; 4:30**). Our security is not based on our performance but in the power of God.
- Paul also taught that **miraculous signs such as "tongues" and "prophecies" have been "done away" with** by the completion of Scripture (**I Cor. 13:8-11**). Therefore, any today who would claim special revelations from God, or miraculous powers, are deceivers. Today God uses His written Word to provide all that we need for our doctrine and daily walk.

- Paul asked some of his converts “if ye have heard of the **dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward**”? (**Eph. 3:2**). They needed to understand that the days in which we are living, and the program we are under, are different from anything at any other time in history. In the preceding chapter, he explained that “in time past” Gentiles were not a part of God’s dealings. Israel was His exclusive focus of outreach, and Gentiles were rarely saved, and only then by becoming a Jewish proselyte. “But now” (**Eph. 2:13**) ***Gentiles “are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”***
- Paul summarizes the above doctrines and more, by telling Timothy that “**rightly dividing the Word of truth**” (**II Tim. 2:15**) is the only way to be approved unto God. It is not enough to teach about “Jesus,” (prior to the death, burial and resurrection), nor to teach general Biblical principles for “Christian living.” The Apostle Paul was given the Churches marching orders through the revelation of the mystery, by the **risen LORD Jesus Christ** Himself, through revelation unto Paul. (See **Ephesians 3:1-6**)

Parents are very wise to refuse to allow their children to attend other churches or youth groups, where these basic Pauline doctrines are not understood or consistently taught. This may not be easy or popular, but the Scripture warns us about exposure to wrong doctrine, and tells us to avoid it. If all believers would follow this practice they would not only be obedient to Scripture, but also avoid being “tossed to and fro...with every wind of doctrine.” (**Ephesians 4:14**)

What happens when we listen to unsound doctrine?

Three things can happen.

- **One**, we can *become a spiritual “shipwreck”* (I Tim. 1:19).
 - a. Hymenaeus is an example. He had “swerved” and “turned aside” (I Tim. 1:6) from the sound doctrines of Paul, believing and teaching others that the resurrection (or rapture) had already past.
- **Two**, we can *“overthrow the faith of some”* (II Tim. 2:18).
 - a. This happened continually to the converts of the Apostle Paul. The Galatians were so “bewitched” that they no longer understood the gospel that saved them, and they desired to go back under the Mosaic Law.
 - b. The believers at Colosse, though saved, ceased to properly esteem the Lord Jesus Christ as their “Head,” and began the practice of worshipping angels (Col. 2:18-19).
- **Three**, believers can *“depart from the faith”* (I Tim. 4:1).

This certainly does NOT mean they can lose their salvation. Rather it refers to saved believers departing from the sound doctrines of the Apostle Paul, as their guide for living today.

All of this could have been, and can be avoided if we will simply obey what God says about allowing **no other doctrine** to influence us.

- Paul warned Timothy in **II Timothy 4:3, 4** that **“the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine: but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears: and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables”** (a story or teaching that is untrue).

In the days just before the Rapture, Grace teaching will not be popular. Even those who know it will begin to think these truths are boring. They will want something new, exciting, entertaining, something that will draw crowds. They will want to soft pedal Grace Truth, and have itching ears for other doctrines. Many will abandon a church that stands for sound Pauline doctrine to attend other “ministries” less worthy of their loyalty. I wonder if one of the arguments won’t be that what they are doing **makes them feel closer to God.**

In Grace circles we are continually hearing this explanation from those who are listening to doctrines that are not compatible with what Paul teaches. Recently, one ministerial student, one college student, and one older mature gentleman commented that attending a non-grace church made them feel like they were really worshipping God for the first time.

The real issue is how does God feel about what doctrine they are now standing for and with? Now we are reminded of the Scripture that tells us;

“unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required” (Luke 12:48).

Those of us who have been privileged to understand God’s Word rightly divided must stand true to what is true, and to allow our emotions to soar with the joy of doing what is right.

Early in aviation history, pilots had to learn the lesson of inertia. When flying through clouds or fog which prevented them from seeing the horizon, they could not feel the plane’s wings beginning to bank right or left. Initially pilots followed the myth of instinct: They believed they could feel the turn of their plane, and many banked unknowingly into a spiral dive that ended in a crash. Pilot William Langewieshe writes, **“instinct is worse than useless in the clouds.”** The only way for pilots to fly through the clouds is to rely on instruments like the artificial horizon gauge. This is a gyroscoped line that stays level with the earth’s surface and unerringly indicates when the wings bank left or right. In the early days of this instrument, the biggest problem fliers had was relying on their feelings instead of this instrument. When it comes to spiritual matters, our feelings, experiences, or what is most popular is not a reliable guide for us to follow.

Today God uses the instrument of **His Word**. It is unerring, if we are willing to rightly divide it and accept “**no other doctrine**” than what is taught by the inspired writings of the Apostle Paul.

Stand true to Paul’s doctrines of grace. This is not Paul worshiping, because the Apostle Paul reminded us to follow his lead as our Apostle (**I Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Phil. 3:17**). Paul also instructed Timothy about the rest of Scripture in **II Timothy 3:16** – “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:”

Blessings...

Vin