



men's

DIGGING

DEEP

2018-19

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Month 4: Rightly Dividing the Word

Introduction: We must handle rightly God's word.

A. As we already have seen, God's word is powerful. We are responsible for handling it rightly (2 Timothy 2:15). Find examples of how the following people rightly handled the word of God. What can we learn from their examples? How does each person display a different aspect of properly handling the word of truth?

1. Jesus
2. Philip/The Ethiopian Eunuch
3. Daniel
4. The Bereans
5. Aquila and Priscilla

I. We must have God's authority for all we do in our lives.

A. The Bible teaches that we must have God's authority for everything we believe, say, and do. Study the following passages and summarize what they say about God's authority in our lives:

1. Colossians 3:16
2. 1 Corinthians 4:6
3. 2 Timothy 1:13; 3:16-17
4. Romans 6:17

B. God authorizes through the Scriptures in a variety of ways. With each category, there is one passage listed as an example. Read that Scripture, and then, to get a fuller grasp on the category, find an additional example from Scripture.

1. Direct statements.
 - a) Commands (Acts 2:38)
 - b) Declarations of fact (Romans 7:2-3)
 - c) Questions (Acts 22:16)
 - d) Rhetorical questions (Romans 6:1-2)

- e) Exhortations, or “let us...” statements (Hebrews 6:1)
 - f) “Amen” or “God forbid” statements (Galatians 6:14)
2. Necessary inferences, or inferences of truth taught by the text in a way that is not directly or explicitly stated. (E.g., If I said that my pocket knife was in my left hand, and then I said that my left hand was in my pocket, then you would be right to infer that my pocket knife was in my left pocket. It could not be otherwise.)
 - a) Mark 12:26-27
 - b) Think of an example from the Bible where someone drew an *incorrect* inference (e.g., Acts 2:13-15)
 3. Approved examples, or examples of action that are shown to be God-approved by the immediate context and the overall context of Scripture.
 - a) Acts 20:7 contains an approved example of what important Christian activity? Cite at least two other passages showing from the overall context that the activity reflected in Acts 20:7 is authorized.
 4. Expediency, or acts which facilitate the accomplishment of some act that is commanded, without violated any scriptural principle. Explain how the following actions, none of which are explicitly mentioned in the text, are authorized:
 - a) The use of a church bus.
 - b) The use of a baptistry.
 - c) The use of a church building.

II. There are two major divisions of the Bible: The Old Testament and the New Testament.

- A. The phrase “Old Testament” refers to the 39 books before the New Testament, but also refers to the Old Covenant, or Law of Moses that is contained in those books.
- B. The apostle Paul provides two analogies to illustrate that God intended the Law of Moses to be temporary.
 1. Describe the analogy in Galatians 3:24-25.
 2. Describe the analogy in Romans 7:1-6.
- C. Jesus said that He came to fulfill the law, i.e., to keep it perfectly and bring an end to its applicability (Matthew 5:17-18). At what point did Christ bring the Old Law’s applicability to an end?

1. What does Ephesians 2:15-16 teach about this?
2. What does Colossians 2:14 teach about this?

III. The Christian system is God's final covenant with man.

- A. When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, He said, "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28).
 1. Read Hebrews 9:11-17 and make a list of things it teaches about Christ's new and final covenant with man.
 2. Read the article here: <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/739-last-will-and-testament-of-jesus-christ-the>. Summarize what Wayne Jackson writes concerning the finality of the Christian covenant.

IV. Consequences of failing to handle rightly the word of truth.

- A. Here are two examples of false doctrines that stem from failing to understand the basic distinctions that have been taught in this lesson.
 1. In the first century, early Christians were persecuted by those who couldn't accept that the God's authority would come in three dispensations—they thought it would stop at two.
 - a) Study Acts 15 and discuss the significance of the Jerusalem conference.
 2. Seventh-Day Adventism. In this religion, largely inspired by the work of Ellen G. White, Sabbath keeping is enjoined. White wrote, "The Sabbath was not for Israel merely, but for the world. It had been made known to man in Eden, and, like the other precepts of the Decalogue, it is of imperishable obligation. Of that law of which the fourth commandment forms a part, Christ declares, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law.'" But she left off the end of Matthew 5:18. White cannot be correct, for Romans 7:1-7 describes the law that has been replaced as being the 10 commandments, which contains the command to keep the Sabbath holy. Using the Scriptures that have been mentioned in this lesson, write a one-page statement or outline that you can use in studying with someone who does not understand the Biblical difference between the covenants.
 3. False teaching concerning divorce and remarriage. Some have been unwilling to accept that Jesus' doctrine about divorce and remarriage, taught in Matthew 19:1-9, is the final law and replaces Moses' law of Deuteronomy 24:1-4.
 - a) Compare Moses' law and Jesus' law. What differences do you find?

- b) Some have suggested that, since Jesus spoke the words of Matthew 19:9 prior to His death on the cross, that He was speaking Old Testament doctrine. Why is this not the case? (You may want to consult the article here: <http://www.apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=13&article=1058>)
- B. Describe at least two more contemporary examples of failure to understand the distinctions discussed in this lesson, and post some of your thoughts to the Facebook group. If you need help thinking of some, think about the alleged justification of worship practices in Christendom. Or, think about how that many churches allege that physical Israel still is God's chosen people or has special favor from God.

Month 5: We are Not Ashamed of the Gospel

Introduction: A key passage about the gospel.

- A. The word “gospel” literally means “good news.” Find at least three Bible verses that say something about the gospel, and briefly summarize what these verses say about it. Find one passage where an Old Testament character is said to have had the gospel preached to him.
- B. Our passage of study for this lesson is Romans 1:16-17 (the text includes a quotation from Habakkuk 2:4). This passage is famous for its statement, “I am not ashamed of the gospel.” Read 1 Corinthians chapters 1 and 2, and Acts chapters 3 through 5, and list reasons why people living in the first century might have been tempted to be ashamed of the gospel. Are any of these reasons still applicable today? What reasons are prevalent in today’s culture?
- C. In our passage, the apostle Paul gives us several reasons why we must not be ashamed of the gospel. Let us consider them here:

I. We must not be ashamed of the gospel, because it offers salvation.

- A. What kinds of things make people proud (unashamed) of something they have in their lives? (For example, people may be proud of something if it brings them honor or wealth.)
- B. We must have no shame about the gospel, because it can provide a great service to others. (Would a medical doctor be ashamed of the treatment that could heal a dreaded disease?) The Bible teaches that the gospel must be preached to people in order for them to have the opportunity to be saved. Read Romans 10. What does this passage teach us about the urgency of teaching the gospel to others? Name three reasons from this text why it is urgent for us to preach the gospel to others.
- C. Who initially taught you the gospel? Surely each of us owes a great debt to those who taught us how to be right with God. Have you expressed your appreciation to this teacher? If you never have directly stated your gratitude for what this person or people did for you, write a letter to him, telling them how greatly he has impacted your life.

II. We must not be ashamed of the gospel, because it is for everyone.

- A. When Jesus gave His apostles the Great Commission, He sent them to all people of the world (Matthew 28:19-20). And yet, the apostles did not understand initially that they were to preach to all people, instead of to Jews (Israelites) only. In the first 12 chapters of the book of Acts, the gospel goes predominantly to the Jews. Read Acts 10 and 11, and summarize the events that led to the gospel being preached to the Gentiles. Why would it have been controversial for a Jewish Christian to preach the gospel to a lost Gentile?

- B. Read “God Made No Distinction” by Wayne Jackson, here <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/122-god-made-no-distinction>, and describe three things that you learned from the article.
- C. Acts 13:1-46 portrays a turning point in the work of Paul and Barnabas. Read this text and explain why Paul and Barnabas determined to preach primarily to the Gentiles. Find two passages in Paul’s epistles that discuss his Gentile mission, and note what can be learned about evangelism from them.
- D. Find out the current world population. Then, using the rough estimate that there are three million members of the Lord’s church, figure out how many people each member of the church would have to reach in order to evangelize the world. (The number is going to be in the thousands.)
1. Given that few of us can speak personally with all of these people, are there ways in which we can reach multitudes? Are there brotherhood works we might support or with which we might participate, that could reach thousands and millions of lost people? Check to see if your local congregation is supporting a mass media outlet such as World Video Bible School or Gospel Broadcasting Network. If not, draw up a proposal to suggest that your elders use funds from the church treasury to support such a work, and present the proposal to the elders. Do your research ahead of time about the benefits of supporting such a work. Can congregational involvement in worldwide evangelism through mass media also serve to aid in local evangelism? List three ways in which this can occur.
 2. We sometimes sing a song called, “Lead Me To Some Soul Today.” My personal opportunity to share the gospel probably will come as a product of my interpersonal interactions with other people whom I know. It is exciting to consider that someone may cross my path today who is ready to receive the gospel. Make a list below of five friends or acquaintances with whom you should share the gospel, and pray for them for one week. By the end of two weeks, find an occasion to mention Christianity to each of these five people, and begin a conversation. Do not *merely* invite them to services (although inviting folks to services is good). You can offer them a Bible study or suggest they watch an interesting video at wvbs.org.

III. We must not be ashamed of the gospel, because it makes available God’s righteousness.

- A. The “righteousness of God” refers to the righteous standing before God, which man may access through the salvation made known in the gospel message. In other words, “the righteousness of God” denotes the righteousness that God has made available through the scheme of redemption. Find at least three other passages that discuss man’s standing before God after he has become a Christian.

- B. The gospel provides growth, “from faith to faith.” There are at least four possible, biblical understandings of the meaning of this phrase. With each item below, read the passage mentioned, and briefly describe what is under consideration:
1. “From faith to faith” may mean, “from God’s faithfulness to man’s faith, i.e., man’s conviction that God is faithful” (see Hebrews 10:23).
 2. “From faith to faith” may mean, “from the faith of the Law of Moses to the faith of the New Testament” (see Galatians 3).
 3. “From faith to faith” may mean, “from the faith of the one who teaches to the faith of the one who learns” (see Romans 10).
 4. “From faith to faith” may mean, “from one degree of faith to a greater degree of faith.” This understanding is implicated by any of the four understandings we choose (Romans 12:2).
- C. There are a number of citations of Old Testament passages in Romans 10:16-21. Read each of these passages in their original context and answer the following questions:
1. What can we learn about the gospel from both the Old Testament passage and from how Paul marshals it to support his argument?
 2. What principles can we learn from these passages about Old Testament prophecy in general?
 3. What does it mean for someone living in the New Testament age to “call on the name of the Lord”? In your answer, consult Joel 2:32, Acts 2:21, Acts 9:14, Acts 9:21, and Acts 22:16.
- D. The gospel must be both *believed* and *obeyed*. Find Scriptural support for both of these points.

Month 6: The Three Covenants of God

Introduction: People gain peace with God through covenants or dispensations.

- D. By God's grace, He always has made arrangements for man to please Him (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). Man can know what God expects of him. We have seen in a previous lesson that there have been three different major covenants between God and man. This means that what God expects man to do in order to be right with Him has changed at various times. List five commands that are mentioned in the Bible but which are not for us today. (Example: God told Noah to build an ark of gopher wood [Genesis 6:14].)
- E. While all the Bible is beneficial for us (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Matthew 4:4; Romans 15:4), not every command is binding on us. Therefore we need a method for determining which Bible commands are for us and which are not. So, in this lesson we are going to study in greater detail the three covenants God made with man. When we are able to identify the covenant under which we serve, and why, then we will be in a position to determine which commands are binding on us today.

I. The Patriarchal Covenant.

- A. The word "patriarchal" denotes a connection to a patriarch, or father. In the book of Genesis, we read about six major patriarchs. Beginning in the garden of Eden, you can read about God giving commands for households, distributing these messages primarily through the heads of these households. Fill in the blanks below with the names of these six major patriarchs:

1. _____ (Genesis 1-4)
2. _____ (Genesis 6-9)
3. _____ (Genesis 12-25:18)
4. _____ (Genesis 25:19-27:46)
5. _____ (Genesis 28-36)
6. _____ (Genesis 37-50)

- B. List a passage with a command that was given specifically for the obedience of each patriarch's family.
- C. List a passage in which each patriarch *failed* to obey God, and *failed* to lead their family in obedience.

- D. Each of these fathers led his family in worship to God. Find a passage about Noah, Abraham, and Job (who also seems to have lived during the patriarchal age) leading their families in worship.
- E. Though God communicates the Christian covenant differently today, and with different rules, what can we learn from the patriarchal age about male spiritual leadership, and how can we apply it to our lives today? In your answer, follow this pattern several times: First, cite a New Testament passage, and then cite the Old Testament passage where a relevant strength or weakness of a patriarch reflects the truth of the New Testament passage. Consider the strengths and weakness that we see in the patriarch's leadership, and how it effected their families.

II. The Mosaic Covenant.

- A. Like the Patriarchal Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant also was temporary. The Mosaic Covenant singled out a group of people who had been living under the patriarchal system. Beginning at Sinai, God gave a written covenant just to the Israelites, the descendants of Jacob. This occurred in about 1,500 B.C. We call this covenant the "Law of Moses" or the "Mosaic Covenant." This covenant, with its 613 legal commands, was given as part of the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham. Most of the Old Testament concerns the Israelites who had this covenant with God.
 - 1. Read Deuteronomy 6:10-17 and summarize what God says through the lawgiver Moses about this covenant with Israel. What are the conditions of the covenant?
- B. The Law of Moses was not to last forever. Read Isaiah 2:1-4 and Jeremiah 31, and summarize what God says about a new covenant. What was this new covenant? (Use Hebrews 8:7-13 in your answer.)
- C. We do not know how much God communicated during the patriarchal and Mosaic ages, especially to the Gentiles. We do know that they were accountable to God for their sins. Read Romans 1:18-32 and Romans 2:12-16 and summarize what the apostle Paul says about sins committed by Gentiles. Find at least three Old Testament passages that give us insight into God's concern and expectations for the Gentiles prior to the coming of Christ.
- D. One of the conspicuous elements of the Mosaic Covenant is the sacrificial system which involved animal sacrifices for the sins of the people at regular intervals. List some passages that deal with the animal sacrifices the people made.
- E. Read Hebrews 10:1-25. What does this text say about the frequency of the animal sacrifices under the Mosaic Law, and the frequency of the sacrifice offered by Christ?

III. The Christian Covenant.

- A. Jesus fulfilled the Mosaic Covenant (Matthew 5:17) in at least the following senses (Find at least two passages that support each of the following):
1. Jesus never violated the rules of the Mosaic Covenant.
 2. Jesus brought the Mosaic Covenant to the end of its applicability to man.
 3. Jesus fulfilled many symbolic features from the Old Testament (especially priesthood and sacrifice).
- B. Christ claimed to have all authority in heaven and in Earth, and told His apostles to tell everyone to obey the things that He commanded (not the things that Moses had commanded; Matthew 28:18-20). List some passages where Jesus claimed to have divine authority, or where Christ's authority was demonstrated, in the following areas:
1. Authority as Creator.
 2. Authority over plant life.
 3. Authority over animal life.
 4. Authority over disease.
 5. Authority over death.
 6. Authority over angels.
 7. Authority over demons.
 8. Authority to forgive sins.
- C. The apostle Paul taught plainly that nobody living after Christ had come and had given His law could be saved by following the Mosaic Covenant. Find passages from Paul's epistles where he taught this, and summarize what Paul wrote.
- D. Suppose an American citizen living today said that he did not need to pay income tax, because income tax was not part of the Articles of Confederation. The federal government would not accept this argument, because the Articles of Confederation are not in force today, but rather the Constitution is the law of the land, and under the Constitution there is income tax. And yet, there are people who attempt to justify various religious practices on the basis that those practices are mentioned in the Law of Moses. Mention some such arguments below, and explain why they are invalid.
- E. When people resort to the Old Testament for their religious authority today, they seem always to pick and choose those parts of the Law of Moses they like. Will God be happy

with this “salad bar” approach to the Bible? Why or why not? Find Scriptural justification for your answer.

- F. The apostles wielded the authority of Christ in the first century. Though the apostles’ authority was derived from God, their words were just as authoritative as Christ’s words. This means that the apostles could present commands binding under the Christian covenant. What major texts support apostolic authority? Find texts from every genre of New Testament literature (gospels, history, epistles, apocalypse).