

GOD'S APPROVAL

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Daily devotions written by Pastor Thomas Smith

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

II Timothy 2:15

The goal of the student of God's Word is to be “approved unto God.” It is one thing to have man's approval, but it is another thing entirely to seek God's approval. Paul repeated this objective in his epistles; whatever the cost, his chief aim was to please the Lord. In another place, he said, “if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ” (Galatians 1:10). To the church of Thessalonica, this faithful apostle said, “even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts” (I Thessalonians 2:4).

Pleasing men should never take precedence over pleasing God. There are certainly those who have the applause of men, but God may actually disapprove of them. Similarly, it is quite possible that those whom God approves of may not have the approval of men. Thus the priority should always be to be approved of by God.

How is it that we, as sinful men, might have God's approval? The only place of sure approval with God is the position true salvation affords us – for us to be in Christ. God is obviously and eternally pleased with His Son. God spoke from Heaven on more than one occasion with words such as “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). No one will ever find God's approval outside of Christ. When a person trusts completely in Christ's sacrificial death for his sins, he is no longer a

stranger to God but a member of God's family. It is a wonderful thing to know that when He sees us, He sees us in Jesus.

In the Scripture we are considering, however, Paul is not referring to our position in Christ, but our doctrinal position. He encourages us to study the Word of God that we might be approved workmen, "rightly dividing the word of truth." What a needed admonition this is in our day, when so many are underestimating the importance of doctrine.

Contrary to popular opinion, it matters greatly what we believe. Our deceived critics often claim that we are being divisive because we emphasize the doctrines of the Scripture. Doctrine does divide, but that division does not make doctrine wrong or unnecessary. Error needs to be distinguished from truth. The Word of God commands us to study our Bibles. In doing so, as we rightly divide the Scriptures, we shall be workmen that have God's approval.

Let's Pray

Dear heavenly father, thank you for your word today. I pray that this devotional has blessed the person reading this and that the Holy Spirit will continue to speak to his or her heart. I ask this in Jesus name. Amen