

STUDY PACK 7

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH, II TIMOTHY 2:15

"Beware of any teacher to whom context is not manifestly essential. Beware of any teaching that is not based upon it."

~~ E. W. Bullinger, *How to Enjoy the Bible*, p. 264 ~~

THE PRINCIPLE OF CONTEXT

I. DEFINITION

The single most important key to understanding the Word of God is _____. Every word is in a phrase, every phrase in a sentence. Every sentence is in a book of the Bible.

A. The Word of God must be rightly divided in several fashions:

What subject is being discussed?
Who is speaking?
Whom are they speaking to?
When was this spoken?
What time was it spoken about?

B. Every statement of Scripture _____, is influenced _____ and by _____. All of the Bible's teaching about any subject should be considered in understanding any statement. This is sometimes called the remote context of Scripture.

"No single statement or obscure passage of one book can be allowed to set aside a doctrine which is clearly established by many passages."

~~ Milton Terry ~~

"Make the Word of God as much as possible _____. You will best understand the Word of God by conferring it with itself, 'comparing spiritual things with spiritual,' I Corinthians 2:13."

~~ Bishop Newton, 1704-1782 ~~

"Scripture doth best interpret itself."

~~ Lowth, 1661-1732 ~~

II. SIX GUIDELINES FOR RECOGNIZING THE CONTEXT OF A SPECIFIC PASSAGE

A. A repeated term, phrase or sentence.

Example - "That they may know that I am the Lord" in Ezekiel.

B. A transitional _____:

Then.

Therefore.

Wherefore.

But.

Nevertheless.

Meanwhile.

And.

C. A rhetorical question.

D. A change in _____, _____ or _____.

E. A shift in the form of _____, Prov. 8; Ezek. 28.

F. A change in the _____, _____ or _____.

III. ALMOST ALL HERESY AND MISUNDERSTANDING COMES FROM IGNORING THE PRINCIPLE OF CONTEXT

Examples:

Lorenzo Dow's famous sermon against women's hairstyles, "Top-knot Come Down," Matthew 24:17.

Using Psalm 2:8 as a missions verse.

"All things work together for good," Romans 8:28, without the rest of the verse.

Philippians 2:12 Acts 2:37-41

IV. THIS RULE SHOULD ALWAYS BE A FACTOR IN THE INTERPRETATION OF EVERY VERSE

Grant R. Osborne, who teaches hermeneutics writes:

"I tell my classes that if anyone is half asleep and does not hear a question that I ask, there is a fifty percent chance of being correct if he or she answers _____."

~~ Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutic Spiral*, p. 21 ~~

"It shall greatly helpe ye to understande Scripture, if thou mark not only what is spoken or wrytten, but of _____, and _____, with what _____, at what

_____, where, to what extent, with what circumstances, considering _____."

~~ Miles Coverdale, *Rules for Reading the Bible*, 1535 ~~