

## HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

### Cultural Customs, Word Studies, and Interpretation

### Lesson #3 (Answers to Homework)

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#### I. HOMEWORK

- A. You were supposed to read, "Precision, God's Will for My Life," by Dr. Robert Thomas appended to the end of Lesson #3.
- B. Apply the hermeneutical principles you have learned so far by answering the questions below. **For this lesson do not use any commentaries or books which interpret the passage for you until the very end of the lesson when it says to do so.**
- C. **Read all of II Timothy**, then answer these questions:
1. What **kind or genre** is the book of **II Timothy**? **Pastoral Epistle**
  2. What is the **historical setting** of the book? **It was Paul's second Roman imprisonment. He was abandoned by friends and had no support. Nero had blamed the burning of Rome on Christians and persecution was severe. Paul knew his life was in peril and that he would almost certainly die a martyr. Wanting to encourage Timothy in his ministry he writes his final words stressing those things which are most important for the church to carry out.**
  3. What is the **theme** of the book? **The endurance and responsibility of a good minister.**
  4. What are the major outline points of **II Timothy**?
    - a. **Chapters 1 & 2 Persevere in present testings.**
    - b. **Chapters 3 & 4 Persevere in future testings.**
  5. What part of the general outline does **II Tim. 2:3** fit into? **Chapters 1 & 2 Persevere in present testings.**
  6. Look at the theme and look at a detailed outline of the book. What are some of the sub themes in the context leading up to **II Tim. 2:3**?
    - a. **The patterns of a man of God (2:1-26)**
      - (1) Paul (2:1-2)
      - (2) A Soldier (2:3-4)
      - (3) An Athlete (2:5)
      - (4) A Farmer (2:6-7)
      - (5) Jesus (2:8-13)
      - (6) A Worker (2:14-19)

- (7) A Vessel (2:20-23)
- (8) A Servant (2:24-26)<sup>1</sup>

1. What is the near preceding context before **II Tim. 2:3** talking about? **Timothy is exhorted to be strong in the grace, which is found in Christ Jesus and to disciple faithful men who will teach others.**
  2. What is the following near context of **II Tim. 2:3** talking about? **Analogies of the athlete and farmer who both work hard to achieve their goals.**
  3. What cultural information helps you understand the hardships of being a soldier in **II Tim. 2:3**? **Soldiers at that time were hired to fight for Rome. Being a soldier meant being on duty 24 hours a day, it meant training, obeying the orders of his superiors, fighting the enemy, honor, faithfulness, etc. "The Roman soldier was expected to keep one thing in his sights, and only one: the service of his commander. He was not allowed to marry, nor could he engage in agriculture, trade, or manufacture. He was a soldier and could not be anything else."**<sup>2</sup>
  4. What do word studies of the words below reveal?
    - a. Suffer *to partake of affliction, to suffer with, translated in II Tim. 1:8 as "Join with me in suffering."*
    - b. Hardship **Same word as above, one word in Greek translated with two words in English!**
    - c. Soldier *Figuratively, a heavily armed soldier (described above). Figuratively, one sold out for the cause of Christ who is willing to suffer and fight for the truth of the gospel and holy living.*
- B. What is your interpretation of **II Tim. 2:3** before consulting commentaries? **Christians need to be like soldiers in that they need to live for Christ 24 hours a day, suffer hardship for Christ, fight for the truth, put on the full armor of God (Eph. 6:10ff), and be examples of faithfulness and readiness to their commander and chief Jesus Christ.**
- C. Read as many commentaries as you can on **II Tim. 2:3**. Write down any key bits of information you find in them and, if necessary, refine your interpretation. If your interpretation has changed, explain how it has changed and why.

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<sup>1</sup>Taken from *The MacArthur Study Bible*.

<sup>2</sup>James M. Freeman and Harold J. Chadwick, *Manners & Customs of the Bible, "Rewritten and Updated by Harold J. Chadwick"*— (North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos Publishers, 1998), 543.

## APPENDIX TO READ FOR HOMEWORK “Precision as God’s Will for My Life”

Below are the slightly modified sermon notes from Dr. Robert Thomas on II Timothy 2:15. (Emphasis, bolding and italicizing, has been added to emphasize key words and statements. Having already studied the text of II Timothy 2:15 in the previous lesson, read the following sermon transcript and:

- 1) Notice *the progression* from what the text says, to what the text means, to how the text applies.
- 2) Notice the amount of *information that can be gleaned from examining the near context* of II Timothy 2:15.
- 3) Notice the amount of *information that comes from word studies and knowledge of the original languages* that cannot be seen from the English text alone.
- 4) Notice *how relevant cross references are used* so that the Scriptures might be understood better by other Scriptures which speak to the same issue.
- 5) Notice how Dr. Thomas states at times *what the text does not say or mean* in order to help clarify what is being said and the true interpretation.
- 6) Notice that though the text was first written to Timothy, a pastor of the church of Ephesus during the first century A. D., and though seminary students are never mentioned in the text, *once Dr. Thomas discovered the principles from the text he is then able to apply those principles to anyone who studies the Bible.*
- 7) Notice *how illustrations and examples are used throughout to aid in both understanding, relevance, and application of the text.*
- 8) Compare and consider what you discovered from II Timothy 2:15 with what Dr. Thomas discovered. *Consider areas you did well and areas you might need to improve.*
- 9) After reading through the notes below and making the observations suggested above, take some time to pray and ask God to help you become an “unashamed workman” in your study of the Scriptures.
- 10) Write down any other lessons you learned from reading the text below or any questions you have so that you can bring them up in class discussion.