

## CUT THE SCRIPTURE STRAIGHT

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

2 Tim. 2:15 (KJV)

Bible study should be about more than discussing "what this verse means to me." Bible study should be about discovering "what this verse means to God." Paul admonished Timothy to **rightly divide** the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15). To "rightly divide"—an expression from Paul's tent making experience—means, "to cut straight." In Paul's day, large tents were made of many small animal hides sewn together. If one piece of animal hide were not cut straight then the other pieces would not fit together properly. Teachers should make certain that they cut the Scripture straight so that individual passages under consideration fit together properly into their larger context.

### How to Avoid Crooked Cuts



Crooked cuts result when fail to pray before we begin our study and to trust God as we study His Word.



Crooked cuts often result when we try to rush through our study of the Scripture.



Crooked cuts result when we take a text out of its context.



Crooked cuts result when we ignore the type of literature under consideration.



Crooked cuts result when we ignore the culture, background, and historical setting of the passage under consideration.



Crooked cuts result when we partially quote or misquote a verse or passage.



Crooked cuts result when we study without an attitude that is willing to obey and personally apply what we learn.

### How to Make Careful Cuts



Intentionally ask God to open your eyes that you may see wonderful things in His Word (Ps. 119:18). Ask Him to guide your study (Jn. 16:13) and to enlighten the eyes of your heart (Eph. 1:18).



Intentionally set aside adequate time to study. Avoid hasty last minute preparation. Your preparation time is God's time to teach you.



Intentionally consider the setting of the words and ideas in which a particular word or statement appears.



Intentionally consider the type of literature used in the passage under consideration (e.g., poetry, narrative, parable, law, letters, apocalyptic, etc.).



Intentionally and carefully consider the entire setting of the passage under consideration. Consider the personality and perspective of the writer and the place and occasion of writing.



Intentionally and accurately quote the entire verse.



Intentionally study with the understanding that you must personally practice what you teach (Ezra 7:10).