

HOLY HELPS

BACK TO SCHOOL TIME

II Tim. 2:15

“Study to show yourself approved to God, a workman who needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

A strange chill is in the morning air, the sky is a deeper shade of blue, clusters of children are walking together or standing in groups on street corners waiting for the bus. The scene brings back memories of years gone by. It's that time of year again -- it's back-to-school time!

School days were great times, and yet there ought to be something more lasting about them than fading memories. There were certain practices during those days that should not exist as memories only. They need to be a continuous every-day experience throughout our lives.

Especially should this be true of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. The moment we enter the family of God we are enrolled in the discipleship school of Christ. The school of Christ has no recess. It is not seasonal. There is no summer break. The thrill of learning new truth, the spiritually healthy challenge of filling one's mind with godly principles and discovering the will of God for our lives is a practice that should be with us throughout our lifetimes.

As a pastor, I have always encouraged people to practice II Timothy 2:15. On some occasions I have heard some say, "I have already read the Bible." Or, "I read that section of Scripture once." Or, "I have already heard a message on that subject." After a Sunday morning service I was standing at the doorway greeting worshipers as they exited. An elderly gentleman said to me, "I heard Billy Sunday preach on that subject once and he did a better job than you did."

When the apostle Paul said, "*Study to show yourself approved to God....*" he meant that this was to be a continuous action. He was not saying, "Do this one time." This was to be a life long goal. I have never heard anyone say, "I ate three meals a day last week, so this week I will not eat." And yet that is an attitude that I have detected among some of God's people when it comes to feeding on God's Word.

My father was called by God to preach at age 33. He started seminary but did not finish because of the responsibility of family and ministry doors that opened to him. He believed that he needed to continue to diligently study every day. He developed a habit of Bible study that continued daily throughout his life and his practice has been a great model for me. He said, "Happy is the man who never graduates from the school of Christ."

Most of us are out of school, that is, a formal educational institution. However, we have not arrived! The joy of learning and growing in God's school of grace must become a lifelong occupation for every believer. Am I saying these things out of feelings of nostalgia or do the Scriptures say these same things also? Yes! The apostle Paul sets before us a life-time goal in II Timothy 2:15. The purpose of this goal is not to win the approval of men but the approval of God. So, it's back to school time – the School of Christ!

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