



August 22, 2025

Each one of us must labor in the Word

Warm hellos once again friends, brethren, fellow laborers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

We've been blessed on this trip to spend time with our daughter, son in law, and grandchildren for several days. We've also been able to visit my mother and scattered brethren in Nebraska, Iowa, and South Dakota.

While away from my office, the work continues, and we had a productive pre-Feast of Tabernacles speaker's meeting via web conference as well.

I'm reminded that you and I have been given a most precious and awesome calling accompanied by some wonderful promises!

Notice what the apostle Peter tells the disciples. *"Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."* (2 Peter 1:2-4)

Where do you and I find that knowledge of and from our Father in Heaven and Jesus Christ?

It's a pretty simply answer actually. We go to that collection of inspired writings we call the Bible or the Holy Scriptures. There is no other genuine source of knowledge about the true origin of mankind and his ultimate destiny. Only in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures are we given knowledge about the true God, what He instructs mankind in how to live, and how to seek a relationship with Him.

Over the decades I've read multiple times in 1 Timothy and heard the words "*Labor in the Word*".

What does that mean?

I'm also reminded where the apostle Paul mentored and instructed the young elder Timothy, "*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" (2 Timothy 2:15)

Later in this letter Paul went on to emphasize, "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*" (2 Timothy 3:16-17) Of course the Scriptures available then were the Hebrew Scriptures found in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms as Jesus referred to in Luke 24:44.

God and the Word inspired more writings to be added - the Greek Scriptures. The apostle Peter alluded to this when he referred to the writings of Paul, "*our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.*" (2 Peter 3:15-16) In what became the official or approved canon, there are 49 books (or collections of books) of the Bible as originally organized.

You and I are told to prove all things and test what is preached by using the Scriptures as the standard. The apostle Paul stated, "*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*" (1 Thessalonians 5:21 KJV)

The Greek word translated "prove" is dokimazo. The Online Bible Greek Lexicon comments on how the word is applied:

- 1) To test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing is genuine or not), as with metals.
- 2) To recognize as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy of.

The Greek word translated "hold fast" is katecho. The Online Bible Greek Lexicon comments on how the word is applied:

1) to hold back, detain, retain 1c) to hold fast, keep secure, keep firm possession of.

2) To get possession of, take 2b) to possess.

So, to accomplish this you and I must "Labor in the Word." We must search, study, rightly divide, inter-relate, and apply the word of truth as we saw in 2 Timothy 2:15 above. We must then personally own and protect these wonderful truths. We must reject the attempts to twist them and misapply them by deceivers that may come along. Jesus clearly warned, *"For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many."* (Matthew 24:5)

The apostle John stated, *"For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."* (2 John 1:7) John was warning about Docetists and Gnostics of his day. Docetism, (from Greek dokein, "to seem"), was a Christian heresy and one of the earliest Christian sectarian doctrines, affirming that Christ did not have a real or natural body during his life on earth but only an apparent or phantom one.

Sadly, confusion about the nature of God and the eternal existence and incarnation of the Word of God persists even into our present time today. As time goes on, even within the "Church of God" some remain confused and searching.

We in the body of Christ (or His church) respect proper and solid Bible-based tradition and understanding that has been handed down by respected leaders in the body. But more importantly, we must always seek His Truth. To do that we must labor in the Word. Tradition must never become more important (or just as important) as truth from His Word. Within the "church" we still see today some tradition holding the same weight or even more weight than what is in God's Word. But, traditions are hard to change, aren't they?

Over the years, many have believed or been taught that the best way to remain faithful was to only be instructed by the ministry and/or attend "church". Yes, the

ministry has its Godly function. The apostle Paul instructed Titus to select overseers or elders who met certain qualifications, among them: *"holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict."* (Titus 1:9)

Paul also told Timothy *"And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit the same to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."* (2 Timothy 2:2)

Paul then told Timothy, *"Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine."* (1 Timothy 5:17)

However, we must always remember that we all are members of the body of Christ. Each one of us must personally labor in the Word. We all will answer for our calling, not to any man or fellowship. No elders or church leaders answer for any of God's children.

You and I must continue to study and personally own the words and message of the Scriptures and then apply it daily in our lives. We hold on to hope in the face of an increasingly negative and hopeless world. The source of the message of the Bible is the Living Word of God, who became flesh and preached the gospel of the kingdom of God. In His great teaching in John 6, Christ summarized it with *"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."* (John 6:63)

Let us invest in and hold on to these words of life, His Words, which guide us on the path to eternal life. Let us all be truly laboring in the Word!

I hope as we count the days up to the Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles, and Last Great Day that we will labor, study, dig deeply, and seek the spiritual significance of what our Lord desires of us to see personally, collectively, and more deeply understand.

Use these days well my friends...for indeed these times remind us we are one day closer to the return of our Lord and Master and King of Kings.

We'll be headed back to Lower Alabama early this next week. Arms up friends!
Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your
heartfelt prayers for us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'T. S. Hoefker', with a stylized, cursive script.

T. S. Hoefker

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