

# Bible Study Series: How to Detect False Teachers

## “Rightly Dividing God’s Word”- Part 2

### Introduction:

1. Here in 2 Timothy 2:14-18, we see that a failure to rightly divide results in:
  - Unprofitable **bickering** - vs. 14, 16a
  - The destruction of **people** - vs. 14, 17a
  - False **teachers** - vs. 17
  - False **doctrine** - vs. 18
2. In this lesson, we will share four guiding principles that will enable the Christian to rightly divide God’s Word.

I. You must carefully examine *who* God is addressing.

II. You must always place Scripture in its proper *context*.

III. You must hold to a *literal* interpretation of God’s Word.

- A. This means to explain the original sense of the speaker or writer, according to the normal, customary, and proper usage of **words** and language.
- B. Wrong methods of interpretation:
  1. The allegorical method – words have **hidden** spiritual meaning.
  2. The figurative method – words are used in a **different** sense from that in which they are ordinarily used.
  3. The problem with these approaches? The Bible could be made to say one thing to one person and something else to another. This takes away the **objective** approach to the interpretation of Scripture.
- C. When we do not allow the words of the Bible to speak for themselves in a literal sense:
  1. We end up with a person’s **private** interpretation. 2 Peter 1:20
  2. We end up adding to or taking **away** from Scripture. Proverbs 30:5-6, Revelation 22:18-19
  3. People’s **faith** in God’s Word is undermined. 2 Timothy 2:17-18

- D. Are any Scriptures symbolic in their meaning? The answer is yes, but here are some rules to guide you in your study:
1. When a Scripture is symbolic, the meaning will be very clear from the **context**. Example: Matthew 13:15
  2. When a Scripture is symbolic, God will give the **clear** interpretation in His Word. Example: Revelation 1:12-16, cf. Revelation 1:20
  3. Remember, there is no better interpreter of the Bible than the **Bible** itself.  
1 Corinthians 2:13
- E. When you take the Bible literally, you only allow **one** interpretation per passage.
1. Ask yourself, "What was truly intended to be taught in this text of Scripture?"
  2. After the proper interpretation is made, there can be several **applications**.