

Diggin' In

The Bible is a complicated book. Actually, it's 66 books written by different authors, at different times, in different styles, for different purposes. It's no wonder that twenty-first century people sometimes have a hard time understanding what it says.

In spite of the diversity of the Bible, however, it all fits together and makes sense. It is God's Word to us, and we can understand it with a little help.

A good place to start seeking help is by praying for the Holy Spirit to guide you as you study. This will then help you study the Bible deeper and smarter.

There are several different tools that we can use to help us dig deeper in our understanding of the Bible. These tools are Bible reference books or Bible study aids. Here are examples of some of the most common and most helpful ones used to dig into various verses.



Study Bibles

These are the easiest study aids to use because most of the help you'd want is right there in the pages of one book—your Bible.

Study Bibles give you notes and background on the text, along with charts, maps, and other study aids.

Look up 2 Timothy 2:15 in a study Bible. Read all the notes that cover that verse. What did you unearth about 2 Timothy 2:15?

Commentaries

Commentaries give in-depth interpretations of most every passage in the Bible. Handbooks are abbreviated commentaries and also include some of the same kinds of information as dictionaries and atlases.

If you're confused about a passage in the Bible, you might get some insight from a commentary or a handbook. Remember, though, that even though these writers know a lot about the Bible, their commentary is interpretation, not revelation. You still have to think for yourself.

Look up 2 Timothy 2:15 in a commentary or handbook. What did you discover about the verse as you sifted through the information? _____

DIGGIN' IN

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

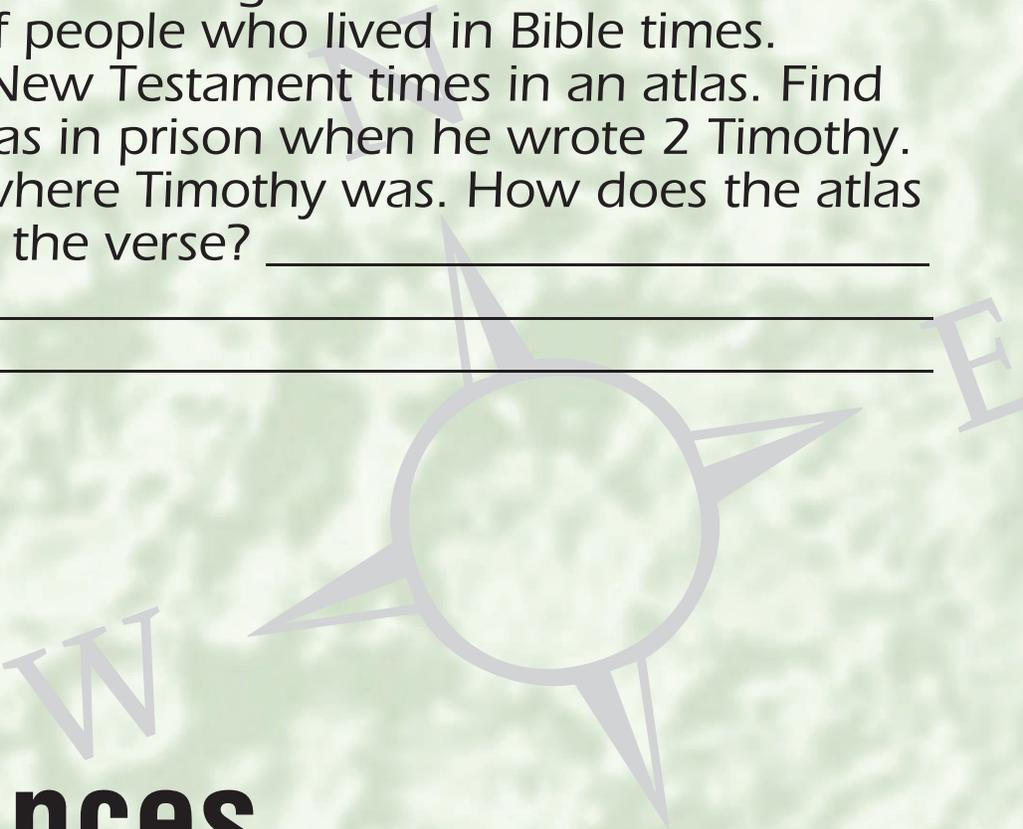
2 Timothy 2:15



Atlases & Almanacs

You might have noticed how some Bible stories are hard to understand because they are set in different times and cultures. Atlases and almanacs give facts about Bible lands and the way of life of people who lived in Bible times.

Look on a map of New Testament times in an atlas. Find Rome, where Paul was in prison when he wrote 2 Timothy. Then find Ephesus, where Timothy was. How does the atlas help you understand the verse? _____



Concordances

These are books that list key words from the Bible in alphabetical order. (Exhaustive concordances list every single word—including the *the's*.) If you want to look up a verse, but don't remember the reference, chances are you can find it even if you don't remember the whole thing. You only need to remember one word to use the concordance.

Another use for concordances is to look up other verses that use the same key words as the verse you are studying. Look up either "approved" or "ashamed" in a concordance. What do other verses say about the word? Define the word you looked up: _____

Bible Dictionaries

Bible dictionaries give you all kinds of information to help you understand the history, culture, people, places, and teaching of the Bible. They include essays on topics ranging from Aaron's rod, to herbs, to the Book of Zechariah.

Look up Timothy (the Epistles) in a Bible dictionary. What did you uncover that helps you understand 2 Timothy 2:15? _____



Use this booklet as a help when you take time for God's Word this week.

These are just a few examples of the many reference books that are available to help you understand the Bible. We recommend that you get yourself a good study Bible for starters. Then check out your local Christian bookstore, the Internet, or your church library for other books or Bible software you can refer to when you have more questions.