

The Greek verb for “rightly dividing” in 2 Tim 2:15 is

NT:3718

ὀρθοτομέω

orthotomeo (or-thot-om-eh'-o); from a compound of NT:3717 and the base of NT:5114, to make a straight cut, i.e. (figuratively) to dissect (expound) correctly (the divine message):

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"to cut straight," as in road-making (orthos, "straight," temno, "to cut"), is used metaphorically in 2 Tim 2:15, of "handling aright (the word of truth)," RV (KJV, "rightly dividing"). The stress is on orthos; the Word of God is to be "handled" strictly along the lines of its teaching. If the metaphor is taken from plowing, cutting a straight furrow, the word would express a careful cultivation, the Word of God viewed as ground designed to give the best results from its ministry and in the life.

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NT:3718

cut in the right direction, divide correctly

2 Tim 2:15, in the instruction to Timothy, who should show himself to be a zealous workman "who correctly administers the word of truth." In accordance with its original meaning, orthotomeo can also mean here: "follow the right way," or "proclaim [the word] forthrightly," i.e., without unprofitable (from Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament © 1990 by William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. All rights reserved.)

NT:3718

to give accurate instruction - 'to teach correctly, to expound rightly.'

'do your best ... to teach the word of truth correctly' 2 Tim 2:15.

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1. to cut straight:

to cut straight ways, i. e. to proceed by straight paths, hold a straight course, equivalent to to do right

2. dropping the idea of cutting, to make straight and smooth;; i. e. to teach the truth correctly and directly, 2 Tim 2:15;

1. This word occurs in the Greek Bible only at Prov 3:6; 11:5; 2 Tim 2:15. Underlying it is the phrase

τέμνω ἁδόν

, "to lay down a way," "to open a way," "to build a road."

2. The phrase

ὀρθοτόμῃ ἁδόν

has the same sense in Prov 3:6 and 11:5 (plural). The

ortho-

lays stress on a straight path.

4. The figurative idea of the way is very pale in the one NT instance of

ὀρθοτόμῃ

in 2 Tim 2:15. As distinct from those who engage in useless theological chatter, Timothy is to do what is right relative to the word of truth. Other possible meanings, e.g., "to cut," "to handle," or "to deliver," do not fit the context or agree with the parallel expression in Gal 2:14. The real meaning seems to be that Timothy should speak the word of truth in his conduct, i.e., follow it. When he does this, he need not be ashamed, for, unlike the false teachers, he will present the word legitimately, confirming it in his life.

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Gal 2:13-14

13 The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

NASU

Here is what BDAG says about the matter: "found elsewhere independently of the NT only Pr 3:6; 11:5, where it is used with "hodous" and plainly means "cut a path in a straight direction" or "cut a road across country (that is forested or otherwise difficult to pass through) in a straight direction", so that the traveler may go directly to his destination...Then "orthotomein ton logon tes aletheias" would probably mean "guide the word of truth along a straight path" (like a road that goes straight to its goal), without being turned aside by wordy debates or impious talk. (pg. 722).