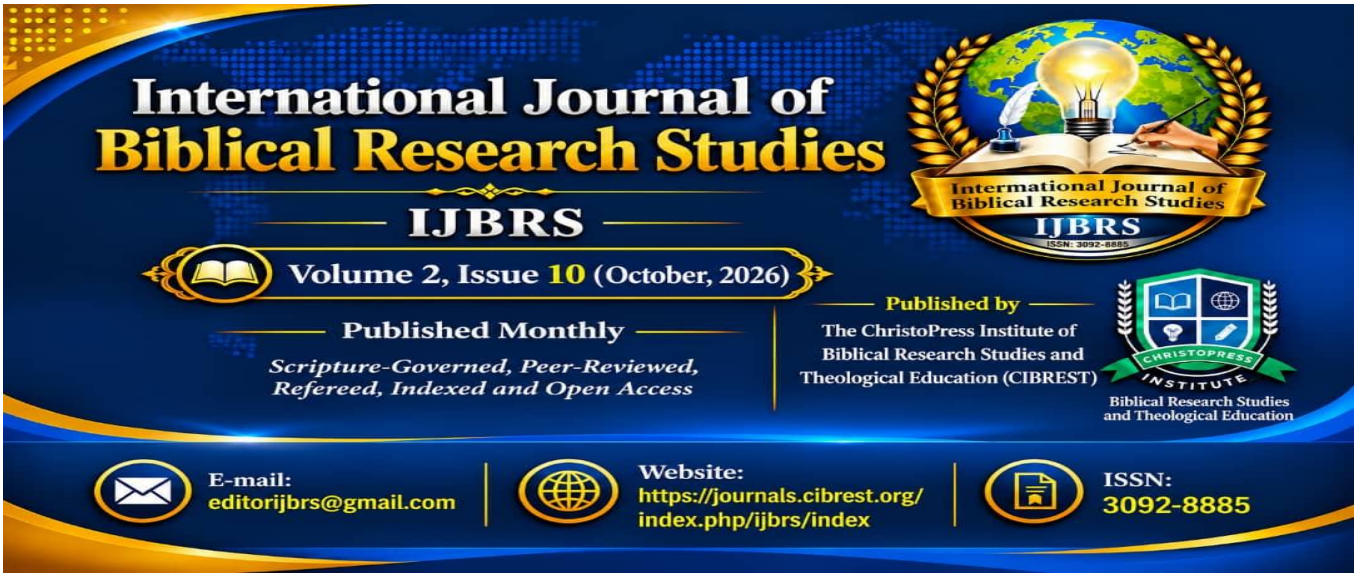
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# 2 Timothy 2:15 and Ministerial Formation in Zambia and Sub-Saharan Africa: Towards a Scripture-Governed Ministerial Diligence Framework

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## Abstract

Ministerial formation in Africa goes beyond just passing on theological knowledge. It is about shaping ministers whose character, skills, accountability, and approach to Scripture are all aligned under God's authority. This article takes a closer look at 2 Timothy 2:15, focusing on how the minister is described as a workman who should be "approved unto God." The study uses a Scripture-Governed research approach, diving into historical-grammatical exegesis, lexical analysis, contextual analysis, theological analysis, and a review of related literature. It makes the case that the competence of a minister, as outlined in 2 Timothy 2:15, is not just about academic success or technical abilities; it is a calling from God that involves diligence, proven character, skilled workmanship, a lack of shame, and a faithful handling of the truth. Building on the Scripture-Governed Ministerial Diligence Framework from the previous study, this article expands on the idea of the "approved workman" as a valuable model for ministerial training in Africa. The findings suggest that approval isn't merely a certificate or a public image; it is a theological mindset where ministerial competence is constantly assessed in God's eyes. The article recommends that African ministerial education should weave together biblical exegesis, spiritual growth, practical ministry, ethical accountability, supervised practice, and a commitment to lifelong learning. In conclusion, effective ministry is best seen as a disciplined stewardship of both Scripture and one's vocation before God.

**Keywords:** *Scripture-Governed research approach, Scripture-Governed Ministerial Diligence Framework, 2 Timothy 2:15, approved workman, ministerial competence, ministerial formation in Africa, Scripture-governed ministerial formation, scriptural review.*

## Thesis Statement

This article introduces the Scripture-Governed Ministerial Diligence Framework (SGMDF), a thoughtful theo-theoretical model based on 2 Timothy 2:15, aimed at shaping ministerial training in Zambian and sub-Saharan African settings. Through careful exegesis, we uncover four interconnected dimensions: diligence, divine approval, unashamed workmanship, and the proper handling of Scripture. These dimensions are structured into five formation domains and three lifelong phases, resulting in a comprehensive sixty-cell matrix designed to inform curriculum development and ensure accountability. This model is presented as a biblically grounded, context-sensitive proposal that needs to be tested in the field, rather than a finalized or empirically validated tool. The concept of the "workman at the well" serves as a teaching metaphor, rather than a strict exegetical conclusion.

## Research Gap

Although 2 Timothy 2:15 has been widely examined and discussed in exegetical and homiletical circles around the world, it hasn't been systematically woven into a cohesive, culturally relevant framework for ministerial training within African church life. Many existing training models tend to mirror Northern educational assumptions and resource distributions, failing to adequately adapt to the unique pastoral realities, communal rhythms, and practical ministry experiences found in Africa. Additionally, there is currently no published framework that effectively combines the verse's semantic elements into a clear, multi-level structure that connects exegesis, curriculum design, formation practices, and lifelong accountability throughout various stages of a minister's career.[1]

## Bible Version

All Bible quotations are from KJV unless otherwise indicated.

## 1.0 Introduction

[1] 1Anthony Lungu, Restoring Biblical Diligence in Ministerial Training: An Exegetical Study of 2 Timothy 2:15, 42.

Pastoral training in Africa today often swings between two unsatisfying extremes. On one side, you'll find theological schools obsessed with academic topics—so much so that their graduates can debate the documentary hypothesis or unpack the politics of ancient Israel, but if you ask them to walk through a simple psalm or explain a gospel story to their church, they're lost.[2] On the other side, church-based programs focus almost entirely on charisma, personal experience, and whatever crisis is at hand. That creates energetic, well-meaning leaders, but often they don't have the steady, deep study of Scripture that Paul told Timothy to chase after his whole life.[3] Somewhere between these paths stands the clear, grounded call of 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."[4] That's the heart of this article. It grows out of the ChristoPress Institute of Biblical Research Studies and Theoogical Education (CIBREST) postdoctoral project "Restoring Biblical Diligence in Ministerial Training," which digs into 2 Timothy 2:15 from every angle—word meanings, context, place in the Bible, theology—all to ask what this verse means for pastoral training in Zambia and similar places across sub-Saharan Africa.

This piece doesn't claim the framework has already been tested or proven in the field. Instead, it takes the research conclusions and offers them as a model for discussion, adaptation, and future testing. The main point is simple: in pastoral training, disciplined biblical study and faithful ministry belong together—they're not rivals. With that, the article aims to give seminaries, church bodies, and individual pastors a clear framework to test out in their own settings.

To picture the framework, the article uses the image of a "workman at the well." That analogy isn't found in 2 Timothy 2:15, or does it mean the Greek text mentions a well. The Bible gives us the worker image, and the metaphor of the well comes from how, in many places, water only comes up if you keep drawing, day after day. So, do not read the well into the text itself—it's just a way to help picture the kind of steady, repeated effort Paul is calling for.

### 1.1 Secular Literature Review

[2] Byang H. Kato, Theological Pitfalls in Africa (Nairobi: Evangel, 1975), 29–34.
[3] Kwame Bediako, Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and in Modern Africa (Oxford: Regnum, 1992), 121–125.
[4] 2 Timothy 2:15, KJV.

Ministerial formation sits at the heart of theology and church life, but honestly, you can't ignore the value that other fields bring when it comes to figuring out how we train, support, and evaluate church leaders.[5] Edward Farley's work on theological education stands out—he pointed out how theological studies used to offer a unified vision, but over time, they split into separate camps like biblical studies, systematic theology, church history, and practical theology. This break-up, he said, left ministers with weaker identities and stripped seminaries of a clear, shared purpose. His critique rings especially true in Africa, where seminaries often import these fragmented Western models, which result in training that doesn't quite fit or speak to the realities of local congregations.

Sociologists like Andrew Abbott show something similar in other professions: respect and trust don't just come from having the right certificate. They grow out of clear, shared standards that practitioners recognize, ongoing peer accountability, and a knowledge base that isn't static but alive—something people actually use and shape.[6] Bring this home to ministry: when biblical standards fade, accountability turns into personal favors or power games instead of honest, covenant-based community; and when people stop wrestling with Scripture, pastors lose credibility.

Then you have adult education experts, who insist that real transformation isn't about passing information from the front of the classroom. For adults, formation is life long—it's self-driven and happens in community, long after formal lessons stop.[7] Paul, when he spoke to Timothy, took the same approach: he called Timothy to keep reading, teaching, and guarding doctrine for the long haul—not just until graduation.[8]

African scholars and thinkers have sounded the alarm for years: you can't just lift education systems from Europe or North America and expect them to click with African contexts.[9] Ignoring local values, communal patterns, and church life produces structures that never quite feel at home or serve real needs. So, while insights from sociology, adult education, and local African scholarship have shaped this framework—its focus on integration, accountability, and forming leaders for a lifetime—they don't dictate the core beliefs or final authority. That remains rooted in Scripture above all.

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[5] Edward Farley, Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 24–28.
[6] Andrew Abbott, The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 14–18.
[7] Jack Mezirow, Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991), 12–15.

[8] 1 Timothy 4:13–16, KJV

[9] Laurent A. Parks Daloz et al., Mentor: Guiding the Journey of Adult Learners (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996), 22–25.

### 1.2 Christian Literature Review

Scholarly discussions around 2 Timothy 2:15 have been ongoing for centuries, cutting across all Christian traditions. Top commentaries on the Greek text consistently highlight this verse as a foundational statement that outlines the core character, motivation, method, and standards of faithful pastoral ministry.[10] George W. Knight III describes it as "a comprehensive summary of what is required of the minister of the gospel," emphasizing that the four elements are not just listed one after the other but are woven together into a single, cohesive image. Similarly,[11] I. Howard Marshall points out that Paul isn't giving four distinct commands; rather, he's painting a picture of the kind of person Timothy needs to be: diligent, approved, unashamed, and accurate.[12] Philip H. Towner places this verse within the larger context of false teachings and cultural pressures in Ephesus, highlighting that Paul's call for diligence also serves as a call for distinctiveness and doctrinal integrity.[13] For Reformed and evangelical pastoral theologians, 2 Timothy 2:15 has long been seen as a succinct guide to ministerial integrity. John Calvin's commentary notes that Paul "lays down here the rule and method of rightly discharging the office of a teacher," asserting that God's approval is the ultimate benchmark.[14] Thomas C. Oden expands on this by framing the verse as a lasting standard for pastoral vocation, balancing intellectual rigor, spiritual character, and practical skills.[15] Eugene H. Peterson emphasizes the temperamental aspect, pointing out that the diligent worker isn't rushed or frantic but rather patient, steady, and sustained—qualities that are becoming increasingly rare in a world obsessed with instant results and public performance.[16]

Systematic and biblical-theological works place this charge within the broader narrative of Scripture, anchoring Paul's guidance in the person and faithfulness of Christ. Gordon D. Fee highlights how the Christological hymn found in 2 Timothy 2:11–13 serves as a crucial foundation for verse 15, emphasizing that a minister's faithfulness is always a response to Christ's unwavering faithfulness. [17] Wayne Grudem ties the verse's focus on accurately interpreting Scripture to the doctrines of its sufficiency and authority, asserting that "right division" is not just a suggestion but essential for

[10] 1 Timothy 4:13-16, KJV
[11]. Knight, Pastoral Epistles, 403.
[12] Marshall, Pastoral Epistles, 76.
[13] Towner, Letters to Timothy and Titus, 289.
[14] John Calvin, Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, trans. William Pringle
[15] Thomas C. Oden, Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry (San Francisco: HarperOne, 1983), 26–29.
[16] Eugene H. Peterson, The Contemplative Pastor: Words for the Ministry of the Word (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 22–25.
[17] Gordon D. Fee, Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007), 245–248.

faithfully stewarding divine revelation.[18] Pneumatological studies expand on the idea that the diligence Paul praises isn't just about human effort; it's about Spirit-empowered perseverance, deeply rooted in the gifts and stirrings mentioned in 2 Timothy 1:6–7.[19]

Lexical and grammatical studies dive into the intricate language details that bolster this analysis. Daniel B. Wallace's syntactical research shows that the four terms work together as a cohesive descriptive portrait rather than a simple checklist.[20] The standard Greek lexicon edited by F. W. Danker, along with later theological lexica, clarifies the nuances and semantic ranges of each term, dispelling common misconceptions—like the idea that "study" only refers to academic reading or that "rightly dividing" means arbitrarily categorizing biblical texts.[21]

African Christian scholars have consistently argued that any effective model of theological education must be deeply rooted in the lived experiences and realities of the church on the continent, rather than being mechanically imposed from outside Byang H. Kato cautioned decades ago against "theological importation," insisting that African ministers should be trained to think biblically and contextually, rather than simply echoing foreign ideas.[22] Kwame Bediako further illustrates that genuine African theology arises from the faithful, sustained exposition of Scripture within the African context—demanding the very diligence and careful handling that Paul describes.[23] Jesse N.K. Mugambi has pointed out that theological education needs to be accountable to the churches it serves, woven into the fabric of community life, and responsive to the unique needs and cultural contexts of those communities.[24] This study builds on that body of work, taking the important next step of transforming these shared insights into a practical, implementable design that can be applied across the institution.

### 1.3 Research Problem

The main issue highlighted in this article is the disconnection between exegetical scholarship and ministerial formation. While 2 Timothy 2:15 has been thoroughly examined in commentaries, theological education literature, and preaching traditions, the studies reviewed seem to lack a cohesive

[18] Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020), 934–936.
[19] Sinclair B. Ferguson, The Holy Spirit (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996), 128–131.
[20] Daniel B. Wallace, Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 264–272
[21] F.W. Danker et al., eds., A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christia Literature, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 938–939; Ceslas Spicq, Theological Lexicon of the New Testament, trans. James D. Ernest, 3 vols. (Peabody: 22Hendrickson, 1994), 2:584–588.
[22] Kato, Theological Pitfalls in Africa, 38–41
[23] Bediako, Theology and Identity, 142–145.
[24] Mugambi, The African Christian and the Challenge of Theological Education, 61–67.

biblical-theological framework that integrates its essential elements into the formation of Christian ministry, education, or organizational accountability. This isn't to say that the literature doesn't provide valuable insights into the practical and ministerial implications of the verse. However, the core problem lies in the tendency to discuss various aspects of theological education without clearly defining how they relate to Scripture. Thus, the research problem this study addresses is the need for a more explicit conceptual link between exegetical scholarship and ministerial formation.

### 1.4 Research Aim

This study aims to develop a Scripture-Governed Ministerial Diligence Framework that brings together the insights from the reviewed exegetical and ministerial formation scholarship. Specifically, it seeks to identify the connections between the elements of 2 Timothy 2:15 and propose a system for their practical integration into theological education, formation, and organizational capacity-building. The study puts forward a conceptual model that suggests ways to contextualize each component within specific settings, creating a comprehensive view of the interconnected elements of ministerial formation.

### 1.5 Research Questions

This study revolves around a few key research questions:

1. What exegetical and theological elements are essential to understanding 2 Timothy 2:15?

2. How can we weave these elements together to create a framework for ministerial formation that is guided by Scripture?

3. What considerations for contextualization and implementation should we keep in mind for theological education in Zambia and sub-Saharan Africa?

### 1.6 Research Methodology

This study adopts a Scripture-governed qualitative research,[25] consisting of text-based, and constructive theological approach. The Scripture is our main source of information, while secondary sources enrich our understanding with lexical, historical, exegetical, theological, educational, and contextual insights. We follow a seven-stage research strategy: (1) analyzing the historical-literary context, (2) conducting a lexical-semantic analysis, (3) examining the scriptural context within 2 Timothy and the broader Bible, (4) synthesizing Christological and pneumatological insights, (5) reviewing theological-educational and African contextual literature, (6) identifying principles for conceptual ministerial formation, and (7) developing a Scripture-Governed Ministerial Diligence Framework that synthesizes its 4×5×3 principles and components. As a result, this study aims to provide a theoretical conceptualization of the practical implications of 2 Timothy 2:15, while acknowledging that its practical applications will require further situational analysis.

## 2.0 Scriptural Review

The Scripture text we are examining is from the King James Version: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."[26] The command begins with the aorist imperative of spoudason, and the subsequent participles and adjectives describe both the workman and the nature of his work as envisioned by this command. When we talk about handling the word of truth, it's important to see the four components not as separate commands or a strict checklist that Paul handed to Timothy. Instead, think of them as a cohesive set of interconnected elements that highlight the essential aspects of being responsible with Scripture.

### 2.1 Diligence: Spoudazō

The first command in 2 Timothy 2:15 is the aorist imperative of spoudason, which conveys the idea of earnest or zealous effort. It's crucial not to confuse this with the modern notion of "study," which often just means reading books or instructional materials. The term actually encompasses a broader range of meanings, including making every effort, being zealous, and striving diligently. In this

[25] The term Scripture-Governed is developed and first used by Dele Alaba Ilesanmi. This means that the Holy Bible (Scripture) is the primary governing authority over theological claims, such as concerning God, faith, doctrine, and Christian life. In other words, Scripture provides the primary normative standard by which theological claims, interpretations, and conclusions are assessed. See Ilesanmi's works on Grounded Truth (2026); Bibliogogy (2026); Scriptural Realism (2026); Beyond Seeing and Thinking (2026); etc.
[26] 2 Timothy 2:15, KJV.

context, it emphasizes Timothy's personal duty to be diligent in his ministry, particularly in teaching and remaining steadfast. So, when we consider this first component of Scripture-based responsibility, it expands beyond just study to include preparation, learning, training, personal devotion, and managing one's time wisely. While these elements aren't all laid out in a single verse, they can be inferred from the command.

### 2.2 Divine Approval: Dokimon

The phrase "approved unto God" uses the adjective dokimon in the accusative case, which characterizes the workman as someone presented to God. It signifies being proved genuine or validated after undergoing testing. This aspect is significant because it highlights God's interest in ministry, teaching, and doctrine. It implies that the minister's work should primarily seek God's approval rather than just human validation, although it doesn't dismiss the importance of being accountable to the church community and congregation. So, this part isn't just a standalone element; it's actually a piece of the larger duty we have towards God.

### 2.3 Skilled Ministry: Ergatēn Anepaischynton

When we talk about "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed," we're referring to someone who stands before God with confidence. The term anepaischynton suggests that this person has nothing to be ashamed of. When paired with the word ergatēn, it paints a picture of a capable worker who takes pride in their efforts. In this context, we can think of this phrase as skilled ministry — which means it's not just about personal faith but also about the essential skills in teaching, caring, and leading that every minister of the Word should possess. The qualities of competency are drawn from later verses and the overall message of ministry found in the Pastoral Epistles, rather than being laid out explicitly in this one phrase.

### 2.4 Right Handling: Orthotomounta

The phrase "rightly dividing the word of truth" uses the participle orthotomounta, which tells us how the word of truth should be approached. Literally, it means "cutting straight," but figuratively, it's about handling something correctly and faithfully according to one's responsibilities. We can't stretch this phrase to cover every possible interpretation of division, cutting, roads, or masonry. The context makes it clear that the minister has a duty to treat God's word with the respect and precision it deserves. So, we describe this aspect as right handling — which means faithfully explaining and applying Scripture in all its fullness.

### 2.5 Interdependence of the Pillars

The four components are deeply interwoven, each one relying on and informing the others. Diligence represents the minister's unwavering attitude; divine approval acts as the ultimate goal; the unashamed workman showcases integrity through visible service; and right handling guarantees faithfulness in doctrine and interpretation. While Paul may not have explicitly laid out a four-part model, these elements come together to create a cohesive picture of what faithful ministry looks like.[27]

## 3.0 Theo-Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The Scripture-Governed Ministerial Diligence Framework is designed around three concentric layers, all built on a solid theological foundation. These layers ensure that ministers, churches, and institutions are not just going through the motions or getting lost in theory; instead, they are led by Christ, supported by the Holy Spirit, and anchored in Scripture.

### 3.1 Foundation: Christ and the Holy Spirit

At the heart of this framework lies the Christological and pneumatological context that underpins the command. Passages like 2 Timothy 2:11–13 and 1:6–7 offer the theological grounding: our diligence is fueled by the Spirit and rooted in Christ's unwavering faithfulness. This foundation shapes every aspect of the framework, even if it isn't directly mentioned in 2 Timothy 2:15.

### 3.2 Layer One: The Four Pillars (P)

These pillars hold up everything else. They are the core standards that shape what ministerial life should look like, as in table 1

Table 1 The Four Pillars (P)

| Code | Pillar | Focus |
|---|---|---|
| P1 (spoudazo) | Diligence | Sustained, disciplined engagement with Scripture |

[27] Calvin, Commentaries on Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, 201; Oden, Pastoral Theology, 31–33.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| P2 (dokimo) | Divine Approve | Seeking God's assessment above human praise |
| P3 (ergaten enepaischynton) | Skilled Integrity | Competent, unashamed service in word and life |
| P4 (orthotomounta) | Faithful Handling | Accurate, faithful exposition of Scripture |

### 3.3 Layer Two: The Five Formation Areas (D)

Table 2 shows the key domains where ministers get shaped and formed.

Table 2 The Five Formation Areas (D)

| Code | Area | Institution Embodiment |
|---|---|---|
| D1 | Biblical Rigour | Language, exegesis, canonical and doctrinal depth |
| D2 | Practical Integrity | Supervised placements, reflective practice |
| D3 | Personal Growth | Mentored spiritual and character formation |
| D4 | Faculty Integrity | Accurate, faithful exposition of Scripture |
| D5 | Church Accountability | Shared governance, feedback loops, covenantal oversight |

### 3.4 Layer Three: Three Phases of Lifelong Formation (S)

The third layer has shown in table 3 walks through the various stages a minister move through, from the beginning all the way to the end of their journey.

Table 3 Three Phases of Lifelong Formation (S)

| Code | Phase | Approximate span | character |
|---|---|---|---|
| S-1 | Initial Formation | Year 1 -5 | Foundational learning and habit formation |
| S-2 | Early Ministry & Ordination | Year 3 – 7 | Transition to public leadership; ongoing supervision |
| S-3 | Sustained Lifelong Ministry | Year 5+ - retirement | Continuing study, mentoring, mature stewardship |

These three categories are tools, not one-size-fits-all formulas. You have to adapt them to fit the realities of your church, cultural background, and even the country you're in—especially in places as diverse as Zambia and sub-Saharan Africa.

### 3.5 The Integration Matrix (4 × 5 × 3 = 60 Cells)

Now, the practical stuff comes alive in the matrix. Take each pillar, link it to every formation area, spread that across every phase, and you get a grid—60 cells—perfect for designing curriculum, doing self-checks, and planning strategy. For example: P-IV / D-2 / S-2 stands for faithfully handling the Bible in a supervised preaching setting during someone's early ministry. Is this model perfect? Not yet. It still needs to be tested in the field, refined, and validated before anyone tries to call it the final answer.

## 4.0 Mojor Themes of the Study

This section draws on the exegetical work done in section 2 and the conceptual framework in section 3 to offer a theological proposal. It builds on the four pillars, five formation areas and three lifelong phases and demonstrates that these are mutually reinforcing elements of the same vision of ministry, inspired by and grounded in the Scriptures. The argument commences with the internal logic of the pillars (4.1) and proceeds to their institutional expression (4.2), expansion over time (4.3) and

epistemic clarification (4.4) to establish that the framework is a unified, context-sensitive tool and call for further empirical testing.

### 4.1 The Four Pillars in Mutual Relationship

Each of the four pillars relies on the others to function; they cannot work separately. Diligence (P1) serves as the chief motivating factor. It is the cultivated habit of steadfastness, the consistent and engaged posture of the soul that keeps the other three pillars functioning.[28] The word for diligence in the Bible is spoudazō, and it denotes enthusiastic eagerness, unyielding steadfastness, and diligent resolve to engage. If this habit is neglected, the minister is left lacking: 1) the approval of God, 2) the integrity to state "That is not God's will" and 3) the heart to serve God faithfully.[29]

Knight states that the four elements of 2 Timothy 2:15 do not command four distinct actions, but rather "a comprehensive summary" where each element enriches and qualifies the others.[30] It is also important to highlight that the word "approval" in P2 is not synonymous with "voting," and, therefore, the integration of faithful ministry as a means of godly integration is of utmost importance. This integral distinction to pastoral ministry is poignantly articulated by Oden.[31] Skilled integrity (P3) provides the embodiment of the inner, unfazed workman. This spirit is evident in teaching, and pastoral care and ministry. Peterson alludes to such skill being patient craftsmanship, where the goal is not to be the centre of attention and rather to display faithfulness in private.[32] Such a skill bridges the gap between a minister's private character and his public duty, because the minister cannot embody the message unless he is the message.

A diligent handling of scripture (P4) establishes the limits and defines what orthotomounta means in regard to the interpretation, teaching and application of scripture. Grudem ties this concept of diligent handling to the authority of scripture. Thus we can say that orthotomounta means the cutting, interpreting and applying of scripture with diligence and integrity.[33] The responsibility of integrity

[28] George W. Knight III, The Pastoral Epistles (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 403.

[29] I. Howard Marshall, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 762.

[30] Thomas C. Oden, Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry (San Francisco: Harper One, 1983), 27.
[31] Eugene H. Peterson, The Contemplative Pastor (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 23.
[32] Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, 2nd ed. (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity, 2020), 935.

[33] Gordon D. Fee, Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007), 246; Sinclair B. Ferguson, The Holy Spirit (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996), 129.

expressed in diligent effort and approved in faithful handling redefines ministry and produces a cohesive and integrated vision, far from fragmentation.

Such a vision is Christ-centred. The faithfulness expressed in 2 Timothy 2:11–13 is centred in Christ's faithfulness.[34] In regard to ministry, this passage says that the enabling grace of the ministry is the work of the Spirit, and so both faithfulness and enablement are centred in Christ. The overall emphasis of the work of the ministry is grace and not works.

### 4.2 The Five Areas as Institutional Embodiment

The five formation domains render the four pillars from the personal portrait into the practice of the institution. They address the practical question: What structures and cultures must exist for the integration of these qualities within the institution? D1 Biblical Rigour deepens P1 and P4 with linguistic study, textual criticism and doctrinal depth, developing the Habits of the heart that are pivotal for Stewardship. D2 Practical Integrity links P3 with the practice of teaching and the pastorate, through placements and reflective practice, directly impacting the pastoral-academic split critiqued by Farley.[35]

D3 Personal Growth strengthens P1 and P2 with mentored spiritual and character formation, and insists that emptiness is the fate of any life formed purely for the academy and the profession. D4 Faculty Witness renders the same framework from within: for credibility, it is not the institution, but the teachers of the school who must personify the precepts of the school. D5 Church Partnership renders P2 and P3 with shared leadership and oversight. This answers Mugambi's call for theological education to be more centred on community.[36]

These five formation domains are deliberately integrative and constructive. They can be inferred from the stance taken in 2 Timothy 2:15 and address the practical question: What institutional conditions need to prevail for the integration of these qualities? They serve to integrate the various formations of theology, and squarely respond to weaknesses caused by fragmentation in the various models of theological formation imported to the African context.

[34] Edward Farley, Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 26.
[35] Jesse N.K. Mugambi, The African Christian and the Challenge of Theological Education (Nairobi: Acton, 2002), 65.

[36] Jack Mezirow, Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1991)

### 4.3 The Three Phases as Lifelong Continuity

The phases overlap and repeat and the pillars of formation are deepened at each stage. The first phase, S1, Initial Formation, articulates the disciplines of study and prayer that lay the foundation for subsequent formation. S2, Early Ministry and Ordination, concerns the public domain and the testing of the heart. S3, Sustained Lifelong Ministry, consolidates all four pillars of formation. This is in line with the pastoral charge to "…practice these things, devote yourself to them, so that you may be trained…to present yourself approved to God…." (2 Timothy 2:15)[37]

Permeable boundaries: In contexts like in Zambia and sub-Saharan Africa, where bi-vocational ministry, multi-lingualism, and eclectic methods of ministry are the norm, inflexible boundaries may disqualify the very leaders the church needs the most. The phases are heuristic, and therefore variable and adaptable to the local context.

### 4.4 The Integration Matrix and Epistemic Clarification

When four pillars intersect five domains across three phases it produces a 60-cell matrix, more of a conceptual design than a formulaic construct. The matrix facilitates holistic mapping of a school's curriculum, locates curriculum gaps, and supports individual and group reflection across faith traditions. The conceptual matrix does not replace other key elements needed for a theological education by extension program but complements and facilitates the work of staff and volunteers. Importantly, the authors stress that what the matrix does not do is as crucial as what it does. The matrix is not something that has been proven, and therefore, should be distinguished from what is biblically rooted and what is contextually provisional. The four pillars are founded on the best evidence, the domains are derived, and the entire construct is, as yet, untested. In the same vein, this humility should be attributed to distinguishing what the Bible clearly teaches and what the Church prudently designs.

## 5. Findings

The findings are presented in relation to the three research questions that guided this study.

### 5.1 Exegetical Findings (Research Question (RQ1)—elements integral to the text)

[37] 1 Timothy 4:13-16, KJV

The verse paints a cohesive picture rather than a simple checklist. The aorist imperative spoudason governs the entire verse, while dokimon, ergatēn anepaischynton, and orthotomounta describe the individual being called—its one unified portrait, not four separate commands. There are four interconnected dimensions. Diligence (P-I) fuels the work, divine approval (P-II) provides direction, skilled integrity (P-III) embodies the work, and right handling (P-IV) ensures doctrinal governance. A foundation rooted in Christology and pneumatology. The charge is built on Christ's prior faithfulness (2 Tim 2:11–13) and is empowered by the Spirit (1:6–7): diligence is a response to grace, not just independent effort.

### 5.2 Integrative Findings (Research question (RQ2) – connecting the components)

Four pillars constructively correlate with five formation areas (D-1–D-5), resulting in twenty identifiable formation foci — these are derived from the text as faithful institutional expressions, even if they aren't explicitly listed.

Formation is a lifelong journey and occurs in phases: when we look across S-1–S-3, the twenty foci create a sixty-cell matrix (4 × 5 × 3). A cohesive organizing framework is possible — connecting exegesis, curriculum, practice, and accountability, filling a gap that the reviewed literature had left un-addressed.

### 5.3 Contextual Findings (Research question (RQ3) – contextualisation and implementation)

Formation is about lifelong development, not just something that wraps up at graduation.

There's a strong case for contextualization (Kato, Bediako, Mugambi): the phases and areas serve as adaptable heuristics, not rigid prescriptions. It is important to distinguish between metaphor and text: "workman at the well" serves a pedagogical purpose, but it's not part of the verse's semantic content. This proposal is still awaiting validation.

## 6.0 Discussion

This study explores a compelling question: can 2 Timothy 2:15 be transformed into a cohesive, practical framework for training ministers in Africa, rather than just serving as a sermon reference or a collection of academic thoughts? The answer lies in the SGMDF. What the verse offers us is a single portrait rather than a list of commands—it emphasizes diligence, God's approval, skilled

integrity, and the proper handling of the word, all anchored in Christ's work and the power of the Spirit. Diligence, in this context, is a heartfelt response to grace, not merely a display of human effort.

How this translates into a plan is through the connection of four key ideas with five areas of formation: biblical depth, practical experience, personal growth, honest faculty, and church accountability. These are further organized into three phases: early formation, early ministry and ordination, and lifelong ministry, creating a comprehensive grid of sixty points.

Why is this important? Most existing literature on the verse tends to compartmentalize topics (the Greek language here, educational methods there, and the African context in another place). This study aims to unify those insights under the authority of Scripture, making this integration a valuable contribution.

What's important to note is that this is a well-reasoned proposal rather than a tested product; it remains unproven. The phase ranges are merely guidelines, and the focus is primarily on Zambia and similar contexts. Additionally, the "workman at the well" serves as an illustration, not a detailed exegesis.

## 7. Impacts

The framework is important because it brings together three elements that are often kept separate: the teachings of the Bible, the training of ministers, and the accountability of church leaders. Each group stands to gain something valuable from this connection.

For churches, it creates a common language for ministry. When classrooms and pulpits use the same terms—like diligence, integrity, sound teaching, and accountability—congregations can better understand what to look for in a minister and how to support them throughout their journey.

For theological institutions, it serves as a checklist for evaluating their programs. Are we ensuring biblical depth? Are students getting hands-on experience under supervision? Are we focusing on character development, not just knowledge? Do our lecturers embody the teachings they present? Are we accountable to the churches we serve?

For individual ministers, it offers a lifelong self-assessment tool. The four pillars and three phases provide a straightforward way to reflect on personal growth and identify areas where they might be feeling stuck.

For denominations and leadership bodies, it establishes a unified standard for training, ordination, and ongoing education across various churches.

However, a word of caution: while there may be broader social benefits, these are still unproven. This is more of a proposal than a fully developed program, and it hasn't been tested in real-world settings yet.

## 8. Recommendations

The following suggestions stem directly from the findings above and are intended to serve as constructive proposals for consideration, adaptation, and testing.

1. Integrate the SGMDF into institutional curricula — align current courses with the key pillars/areas using the matrix as an audit tool; implement gradually.

2. Create practical formation resources — develop an implementation handbook, a curriculum guide, a self-assessment tool linked to the pillars, and mentoring/supervision templates for each phase.

3. Establish accountability between the church and institutions (D-5) — create memorandum of understanding (MOUs), feedback loops, and covenantal oversight that connect institutions, denominations, and congregations.

4. Enhance faculty integrity and capacity (D-4) — focus on continuous professional development, peer reviews, and demonstrated competence; the framework's credibility relies on its models.

5. Contextualize responsibly for Zambian and sub-Saharan settings — consider bi-vocational ministry, oral/multilingual contexts, mobility, and communal structures; avoid a one-size-fits-all approach.

6. Pilot and evaluate empirically — assess feasibility, reception, and formative impact using the matrix as an evaluation tool, then make necessary revisions.

7. Maintain lifelong learning structures (S-3) — offer continuing education, peer networks, refresher courses, and mentoring.

8. Encourage scholarly dialogue and refinement — share for critique and comparative testing in other African contexts.

## 9. Conclusion

The study explored whether 2 Timothy 2:15 could be transformed into a cohesive training plan for ministers in Africa. The answer is a resounding yes, thanks to the SGMDF. It identified four interconnected concepts within the text, organized them into five practical areas and three stages of ministry, and created a straightforward grid of sixty points for curriculum development, personal growth, and accountability. The true strength of this approach lies not in creating something new, but in weaving together insights from biblical scholarship, education, and African theology into a unified, Scripture-based plan wherein in-depth study and dedicated pastoral work are two facets of the same calling. The study is upfront about its nature: it's a well-considered proposal that hasn't been tested in the field yet. Paul's message remains relevant today — urging us to be diligent, seek God's approval, work without shame, and handle the word with care — and through the SGMDF, it serves as a practical link between Scripture and everyday ministry.

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