

# Christian Doctrine

## The Inspired Word of God (Part 1)

II Timothy 3:16-17

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**2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NASB95)**

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**John 5:24 (NASB95)**

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## The Inspired Word of God (Part 1)

### II Timothy 3:16-17

#### INTRODUCTION:

This morning we are continuing in a series on Christian doctrine. This will be the first of a two-part message on the inspired Word of God.

#### ILLUSTRATION:

Walk into any bookstore and you will find a number of books professing to tell you how to invest your money so as to get rich. Investing your money in these books makes the authors rich. But there are two questions you must ask about such books: First, is it **reliable**? Can I trust what the author is saying? Second, is it **useful for me**? The problem with most investment books is that they assume you have a big wad just waiting to be invested. That does not help me. I need a book that speaks to where I am currently at in my life. If you can show me a book that is proven to be reliable and useful, I will buy it and read it. Most likely, so would you!

The fact is, we all own a book that tells us how to invest our lives for maximum profit. This book has been proven to be totally reliable. No one has ever followed its life-investment strategy and been disappointed. And, the book is useful to every human being, right where they are at. And yet, strangely, it sits neglected on our shelves while we read newspapers and watch television.

I am talking, of course, about the Bible. It is a book that is totally reliable and useful for every person, in every country around the globe, no matter the culture or what his or her situation is in life. It has never let anybody down. Millions down through the centuries have followed its life-investment strategy and found it to be completely satisfying regardless of the trials they have encountered. Most of us own several copies in different translations.

But the Bible is not a good luck charm. Having a copy in a prominent place in the house will not rub off on a family. Like any book, the Bible will profit you only if you read it, study it, and apply it to your life.

I want to convince you that...

**You need the Bible because it is totally reliable and useful for all of life.**

The problem is, most of you already subscribe to that proposition, at least in theory. But I want you to go away so convinced of it that you will read, study, memorize, and meditate upon the Bible and apply it on a regular, on-going, basis.

In II Timothy Paul has been describing to Timothy the difficult times of the last days. He is addressing the question, "**How can a Christian survive and prosper in such an evil age?**". In our text this morning, he reminds Timothy of the reliability and profitability of the Scriptures. Timothy already knew that. So do you. But we need it burned into our hearts so that we will apply it.

## All Stand and Read Scripture

### **2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NASB95)**

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

## Prayer

### BODY:

#### **I. You Need the Bible Because it is Totally Reliable.**

"All Scripture is inspired by God". This means that God is the originator of Scripture. Since it comes from God who is totally reliable, all Scripture is reliable. (Next week I plan to elaborate on this, so I'm not going to be thorough today.) But I do want to touch on two questions:

**First, what did Paul mean by "all Scripture"?** The word translated "Scripture" is used 51 times in the New Testament and always refers to some part of the Bible. Sometimes it refers to the entire Old Testament, sometimes to a particular Old Testament passage, sometimes to a particular New Testament passage and sometimes to a larger portion of the New Testament, as when Peter refers to Paul's letters as Scripture.

### **2 Peter 3:15-16 (NASB95)**

<sup>15</sup> and regard the patience of our Lord *as* salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, <sup>16</sup> as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

In our text, Paul was referring to the entire Old Testament and probably also would include the New Testament books that had been written up to the time he wrote, including his own writings. Paul directed that his letters be read in the churches. Several times he claimed that his writings had divine authority. One of these verses is found in I Corinthians.

### **1 Corinthians 2:12-13 (NASB95)**

<sup>12</sup> Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, <sup>13</sup> which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*.

The only New Testament books written after 2 Timothy were 2 Peter, Hebrews, Jude, and John's writings. Time will not permit me to go into the history of how these books were recognized as authoritative Scripture, however, the 66 books of our Bible have generally been so regarded by Christians since the fourth century.

The Bible itself is the best witness of its own inspiration. The more you read it, the more you see the interwoven consistency between the books. It is utterly inexplicable and unaccountable in any other point of view. It is the greatest standing miracle in the world.

A **second** question is, **what does “inspired” mean?** The Greek word means, “breathed out by God” and points to God as the source of Scripture.

Thus the Scriptures find their origin in God. They are not the result of human religious genius. They are not great ideas of which God somehow approved. Rather they are the words of God imparted without error through the various authors. While God dictated a few portions of Scripture (such as the Ten Commandments), for the most part He allowed each author to use his own personality and style. But the final product came from God in the sense that what they said was approved by God.

The bottom line is that **the Scriptures are as reliable as God is**. If God is the God of truth and if He “breathed out” the Scriptures, then it is inconceivable that they would contain contradictions or errors. This does not mean that every sentence in the Bible is true: The Bible truthfully records the lies and falsehood of its subjects at times. So you cannot lift a statement out of context and claim that it is true. Good examples can be found in Job and Ecclesiastes. But taken in its proper contextual setting, the Bible is an accurate and true record of the very words that God wished to record and reveal to us through the various human authors. It is totally reliable. **(More on this next week.)**

Of course the Bible has always had its critics who seek to undermine its reliability. The Bible confronts sinners with their sin. Rather than face their sin, it is more convenient to attack the Bible. Direct attacks on the Bible are not the worst kind. Rather, the most dangerous attack is the subtle undermining which comes from those who say they believe in the Bible, but who deny its sufficiency for all of life. They say that the Bible is fine for dealing with “**spiritual**” problems (whatever that means!), but they turn to the wisdom of the world to deal with the tough problems of modern life, as if the Bible did not have God’s answers for living in our modern culture. But as Paul goes on to show, the Bible is not only totally reliable, but also...

## **II. You Need the Bible Because it is Useful for Your Life.**

Imagine God going to all the trouble to save us and then saying, “Now you are on your own! Look to the world and try to figure out how to get through life!” There is no problem in life for which the Bible does not provide God’s wisdom, either through direct teaching or through principles that apply.

In 3:16 Paul shows **HOW Scripture is useful** and in 3:17 he shows **the RESULT of such usefulness**.

### **A. The Ways that Scripture is Useful.**

#### **2 Timothy 3:16 (NASB95)**

**<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;**

#### **Teaching.**

God’s Word is the supreme and final source and standard of truth. It conveys to us God’s wisdom concerning the great questions of human existence: Is there a God? What is He

like? How can we know Him? Who are we? Why are we on this planet? Why is there death and suffering? What lies beyond the grave? What does the future hold? How do I know right from wrong? These and many other questions are answered in the Bible from God's all-knowing, authoritative perspective.

Furthermore there are principles and precepts in the Bible concerning all the practical matters we grapple with daily: How do I relate to my mate? How do I relate to others? How do I raise my children? How do I manage my money? How do I conduct my business? How do I make wise decisions? How should I think? How do I control my emotions, such as selfishness, anger, depression, anxiety, and impulsiveness? How do I overcome temptation? The Bible speaks practically on these and many more matters.

## **ILLUSTRATION:**

The Bible is like the instruction manual you get when you buy a new computer. The manufacturer explains to you how to operate the equipment for maximum results. It would be foolish to spend a lot of money on a new computer and then ignore or, even worse, violate the manufacturer's instructions.

God created people. The Bible is His instruction manual on how to live for best results.

The fact that the Bible is profitable for teaching implies, of course, that it is necessary to study it. God chose to communicate His truth in written form. One of the great tragedies of American Christianity is that the species, "pastor-theologian," is almost extinct. Today pastors flock to church growth seminars that give proven methods for increasing church attendance and managing a growing church. Theology? It's an interesting hobby for a few quaint pastors, but not very relevant to the work of the modern pastors.

As a result, pastors are not preaching God's truth and God's people are starving for the spiritual nourishment of the great **doctrines** of God's Word. We desperately need to know the living God and to know ourselves as revealed in His Word of truth.

To do this you must expose yourself to Scripture from every source so that you can grasp its principles and understand how to apply it to your life. Obviously it is not a one-page instruction sheet. You do not catch it by reading a few favorite texts now and then. You need to hear it taught by faithful teachers and pastors. You need to read it over and over, comparing Scripture with Scripture so that you have the balance of the whole counsel of God. You need to study it in more depth. You need to memorize key verses. And you need to meditate on God's Word (think about it carefully).

## **Reproof.**

"**Reproof**" means to convince or expose. In Greek, the verb means not merely to reply to, but to refute an opponent. It meant that a lawyer convinced the judge and jury as to the specific wrongs of his opponent's case. This means that the Bible has the power to expose sin in our lives and to convince us that we are in the wrong.

If you are thinking, "Why would I want **that** to happen?" the answer is, "Because sin will ruin your life!" It is only by exposing your sin that you can then confess and forsake it and be careful to avoid it in the future. Also, we need convincing because we all tend to justify our sin and blame others for problems that our sin created.

**Proverbs 19:3 (NASB95)**

<sup>3</sup>The foolishness of man ruins his way, And his heart rages against the Lord.

If you are not using the Bible to confront your own sin, then you are not growing in righteousness as God would have you to do.

### ILLUSTRATION:

There was once a little boy who loved his mother's strawberry jam. She put it on the top shelf and told him not to get into it while she ran some errands. He resisted for a while, but finally he succumbed. He put the chair by the counter, climbed up and could just reach his finger into the jam. He was enjoying his illegal treat until he heard his mother coming. He quickly climbed down and was standing there trying to look innocent when she walked in.

His mother said "John, have you been in the strawberry jam?" He looked her right in the eye and said, "No." She repeated, "John have you been in the jam?" His eyes fell down to her belt-line, and he said, "No." A third time she asked, and this time his eyes fell to her shoes, but he still said, "No." She asked a fourth time, "John have you been in the jam?" This time his eyes fell even lower, so low that he looked right in the middle of his shirt and saw a spot of strawberry jam.

That is how the repeated reading of God's Word works on us, to bring us to apply it to ourselves. The first time through we say, "This really applies to that no-good neighbor of mine. I wish he would read it!" The second time we might say, "This is good stuff for those obnoxious people at church." The third time we say, "I wish my wife and kids would read this! It would really improve our family life." The fourth time we see the spot on our own shirt and say, "Oh, Lord, I need to deal with my own sin!" The Word **reproves** us.

### **Correction.**

The Word does not just point out where we are wrong and leave us there. It also tells us how to get right with God, with others, and with ourselves. It helps restore us to the proper path of God's ways. When we become aware of sin in our lives, it tells us how to confess it and receive God's forgiveness. It tells us how to have our relationship restored with those we have wronged. It tells us how to overcome harmful habits and how to mend broken family relationships.

### **Training in Righteousness.**

Once we are back on the path, the Bible tells us how to stay there and make further progress. "**Training**" means, literally, "**child-training**." This implies a process where God teaches us how to deal with **all** of life. Just as parents work with their children over the years to train them in various social graces, morals, relational skills, and useful habits, so God, through His Word, trains us in all areas of life so that we can know what pleases Him.

No matter where you are at, whether a babe in Christ or a mature Christian, the Scriptures are useful in your life. But the final result is **not** so that we might live a happy, selfish life. Rather Paul shows us ...

### **B. The Result of Scripture's Usefulness.**

**2 Timothy 3:17 (NASB95)**

<sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

### **Adequate.**

“That the man [or, woman] of God may be **adequate**.” The word means whole or complete, sound of body and mind, full-grown, especially fitted for its intended purpose. Since God made you for His purpose, only His Word—**not** this world’s wisdom—is able to prepare you for that purpose. The Bible will enable you to form a **Christian** world-view, so that you think and respond to all of life as **God** intends. There is no such thing as a mature man or woman of God apart from being strong in the Word of God. But maturity is not an end in itself.

### **Equipped for Service.**

“**Equipped for every good work.**” “Equipped” means to be furnished or supplied with. You will have adequate resources to minister to others. It is not mere theory—you have proven through experience in the throes of life the truth of God’s commandments and principles in His Word. Thus you can confidently impart that truth to others, because you are not imparting your own ideas about life, but rather the very words of God, which you have applied to your life and proved reliable.

## **CONCLUSION:**

It is my prayer and aim that each person in this church would become a mature man or woman of God by living God's Word. I want each of you to know the great doctrines of the faith as a means of knowing the living God and of knowing your own heart. Each of us needs to let the Word confront our own selfishness, pride, anger, lust, greed, and abusive speech. We need to let the Word correct us and keep us on the path of righteous living as we walk in this wicked world. Then we can use the Word as God has used it in our lives to minister Christ to others.

You **own** a Bible. But do you use it to learn about God and godly living? It is the only reliable book that tells you how to invest your life. It is useful and sufficient for all of life and godliness. I strongly urge you to begin today consistently to read, study, memorize, and meditate on the Bible.

If you do not know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, listen to one final verse concerning a promise that Christ, through John, shares with you.

### **John 5:24 (NASB95)**

<sup>24</sup> “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

### **What a Day That Will Be.**