

## Seeking to Apply God's Word to Our Lives

# The Authority and Sufficiency of God's Word

In today's world, Christians are tempted to embrace the world's philosophies rather than depending upon the Word of God. Where does God's Word get its authority? Is God's Word sufficient to direct my life? The answers to these questions are found in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, which reads:

*<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 maybe adequate, equipped for every good work."*

### The Authority of God's Word:

The authority of God's Word is established in the phrase, "*All Scripture is inspired by God.*" The word "*inspired*" literally means "God breathed." The Word of God was not created by human interpretation, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God (2 Peter 1:20-21). Being God breathed, the Word of God reflects the very character of God. Both God's Word and His character are holy (1 Peter 1:16, Romans 7:12a), righteous (Psalm 116:5a, 119:160b), true (Psalm 31:5, John 17:17), and do not change (James 1:17, Isaiah 40:8). The Word of God, in its original manuscripts, is inerrant (it does not contain error) and infallible (it does not lead us into error).

The authority of God's Word is further described in its effectiveness in the believer's life. The rest of verse 16 reads, "*and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.*" The Greek word for "*profitable*" means "to be beneficial or useful." In this phrase, the Word of God is beneficial to the believer in four ways:

#### *"For Teaching"*

The Word of God instructs us in godliness, in accordance with God's divine nature. In Psalm 119, the author describes several ways in which the Word instructs our lives: The Word of God keeps our ways pure (Psalm 119:9), keeps us from sin (Psalm 119:11), and counsels our lives (Psalm 119:24). God's Word gives us discernment and knowledge (Psalm 119:66), teaches us truth (Psalm 119:160), and makes our hearts blameless (Psalm 119:80).

#### *"For Reproof"*

The Word of God reproves us. The Greek word for "*reproof*" is defined as "to rebuke or to convict." In Hebrews 4:12, the author describes this reproofing process. He writes, "*For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and [continually] piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*"<sup>1</sup> The Word of God reproves us by continually piercing our lives and judging the thoughts and intentions of our hearts.

#### *"For Correction"*

The Word of God provides correction. The Greek word for "*correction*" means to "make upright again or to be restored." Psalm 19:7 says, "*The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul.*"

#### *"For training in righteousness"*

The Greek word for "*training*" is translated "*instruction*" (Titus 2:12), "*discipline*" (Hebrews 12:6-7), "*correction*" (2 Timothy 2:25), and "*education*" (Acts 7:22). The term "*righteousness*" is defined as what is right in God's eyes.

The inspired Word of God is to be authoritative over our lives since it is the only book that God has written for the spiritual instruction of His people.

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<sup>1</sup> The word "piercing" is a present tense verb denoting a continual action.

## The Sufficiency of God's Word:

The sufficiency of God's Word, the extent to which God's Word is to direct our lives, is addressed in verse 17. It reads, "*so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*" In the Greek, verse 17 literally reads:

"so that the equipped man of God may continually exist  
as having been fully equipped for every good work."<sup>2</sup>

In this verse, several important observations can be made concerning the sufficiency of God's Word:

- The "*man of God*" represents the believer in Christ.
- The "*equipped man of God*" represents the believer who has the Word of God.
- The inspired Word of God has equipped the believer so he is "fully equipped for every good work." Although the believer is fully equipped by having the Scriptures, it does not mean he has been trained to use God's Word. Training occurs as we prayerfully allow God's Word to teach, reprove, correct, and train us in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16, 2:15).
- A "good work" is an action or deed that glorifies God (1 Corinthians 10:31).<sup>3</sup> In Ephesians 2:10, the Apostle Paul writes, "*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.*" Every good work that we will do was prepared by God beforehand that we should walk in them.<sup>4</sup>

God's Word has fully equipped us for every good work. Therefore, as we prayerfully allow God's Word to train us, it provides everything needed to accomplish the good works that God has prepared for us to walk in.

## Conclusion:

The authority of God's Word is described by the phrase, "*All Scripture is inspired by God.*" The Word of God was not created by human interpretation, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. The Word of God, in its original manuscripts, is inerrant (it does not contain error) and infallible (it will not lead you into error). The authority of God's Word is further defined by its effectiveness in the believer's life. It reads, "*and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;*" The inspired Word of God is to be authoritative over our lives since it is the only book that God has written for the spiritual instruction of His people.

The sufficiency of God's Word is described by the phrase, "*so that the man of God may be adequate equipped for every good work.*" Verse 17 would be better translated, "so that the equipped man of God may continually exist as having been fully equipped for every good work." The inspired Word of God has fully equipped the believer for every good work. As we allow God's Word to teach, reprove, correct, and train us in righteousness, it provides everything needed to accomplish the good works that God has prepared for us to walk in.

"Seeking to Apply God's Word to Our Lives" papers represent an overview of various Bible doctrines. Each paper contains biblical truths that often set TVBC apart from other churches and religious organizations. We invite the congregation's biblically based feedback as we seek to accurately handle the Word of God.

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<sup>2</sup> This translation is based upon the following grammatical observations. The Greek word for "*adequate*" means "to be able to meet all demands, fully ready, perfectly fit, equipped." This word is an adjective that describes the subject "*man*." In this verse, we have translated it, "the equipped man." The Greek word for "*may be*" is a subjunctive, present verb. It conveys the idea "may continually exist as." The Greek word for "*equipped*" means, "to be fully equipped." Being a participle, perfect, passive verb, it should be translated, "having been fully equipped."

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:31 reads, "*Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*"

<sup>4</sup> Only God knows the good works that He prepared beforehand for us to accomplish each day. As we walk by the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16), He impresses upon our hearts the principles of God's Word that He wants us to apply to each circumstance. As we prayerfully submit to the Holy Spirit's leading, we walk in these good works and glorify Christ (1 Corinthians 10:31). For further discussion about walking by the Spirit, see the paper entitled "The Spirit-Led life."