

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

# The Authority and Sufficiency of God's Word

The Bible is the only book that God has written for the spiritual instruction of His people. This paper seeks to explain the authority and sufficiency of God's Word in the believer's life, as revealed in 2 Timothy 3:16-17:

*<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."*

### 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." In 2 Peter 1:20-21, the apostle describes how the inspired Word of God was written. It reads, "*But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*"<sup>1</sup> 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>2</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 defined as "discipline, instruction, training." It is used several ways in the New Testament. It is used when instructing fathers to bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). It describes the formal education of Moses and Paul (Acts 7:22, 22:3). It illustrates the grace of God instructing believers (Titus 2:12). It is used to express the corrective discipline of God (Hebrews 12:6, 7, 10). The term "*righteousness*" is defined as what is right in God's eyes.

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<sup>1</sup> Even personal comments by writers are not a "*matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*"

<sup>2</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 means that His Word fully supplies everything we need to live a life of godliness that continually glorifies Him. This is explained 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 continually exists  
as having been fully equipped for every good work."<sup>3</sup>

Several observations can be made about this verse:

- The first phrase "equipped man of God" represents the believer who has the Word of God.
- The second phrase "continually exists as having been fully equipped" describes the fact that the believer, who has the Word of God, has been fully equipped. 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 Timothy 2:15).
- The last phrase, "for every good work" describes the purpose of being fully equipped. To understand the significance of this statement, we need to understand the relationship between the believer and good works. In Ephesians 2:10, 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." The scope of these "good works" is explained in 1 Corinthians 10:31 where Paul writes, "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."<sup>4</sup>

## Conclusion:

The Bible is the only book that God has written for the spiritual instruction of His people. 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 our lives. It is "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;"

The sufficiency of God's Word is explained in verse 17 which literally reads: "so that the equipped man of God continually exists as having been 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. The last phrase, "for every good work" describes the purpose of being fully equipped. In Ephesians 2:10, 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." The scope of these "good works" is explained in 1 Corinthians 10:31, where Paul writes, "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Therefore, God's Word fully supplies everything we need to live a life of godliness that continually glorifies Him.

"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>3</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 tense verb. It conveys the idea "to 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>4</sup> Since only God knows the good works that He has prepared beforehand that glorifies Him, it is essential that we learn to walk by the Spirit. The Spirit will impress upon our hearts the principles of God's Word that He wants to apply at any moment in our lives. For further discussion about walking by the Spirit, see the paper entitled, "The Spirit-Led Life."