

Seeking to Apply God's Word to Our Lives

The Authority and Sufficiency of God's Word

This paper seeks to explain the authority and sufficiency of God's Word in our lives, as revealed in 2 Timothy 3:16-17:

"¹⁶All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷so 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.*"¹ 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 does not change (James 1:17, Isaiah 40:8). The Word of God, in its original manuscripts, is inerrant (does not contain error) and infallible (does not lead us into error).

The authority of God's Word is further defined by its effectiveness in our lives. Verse 16 continues, "*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 verse, we find the Word of God is beneficial 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 (v. 9), keeps us from sin (v. 11), and counsels our lives (v. 24). God's Word gives us discernment and knowledge (v. 66), teaches us truth (v. 160), and makes our hearts blameless (v. 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 reproving 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.*" The Word of God reproves us by continually piercing our lives and judging the thoughts and intentions of our hearts.²

"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 grace of God instructing believers (Titus 2:11-12). It expresses the corrective discipline of God (Hebrews 12:6, 7, 10). The term "*righteousness*" is defined as what is right in God's eyes.

¹ Even personal comments contained in Scripture 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*" (2 Peter 1:21).

² In Hebrews 4:12, the word "*piercing*" is a present tense verb denoting a continual action.

The Sufficiency of God's Word:

Verse 17 reads, “so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”³ Several observations can be made about this verse:

- The phrase “so that” introduces the result of all Scripture being “*inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.*”
- The Greek word for “*equipped*” literally means to be “to be equipped completely or fully equipped.” This definition explains the extent to which we can be equipped. The Word of God has the ability to fully equip us for every good work.
- The last phrase “*for every good work*” describes the purpose of being fully equipped. To understand the significance of this phrase, we need to understand the relationship between the believer and good works.
 - A. God prepares beforehand the good works that we are to accomplish. In Ephesians 2:10 the apostle writes, “*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.*”
 - B. Only God knows the good works that He has prepared beforehand for us to walk in. As we walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16), the Spirit uses the principles of God's Word to guide us in accomplishing these good works which encompass every aspect of our lives (1 Corinthians 10:31).⁴

Therefore, the phrase “*for every good work*” refers to the good works that God has prepared beforehand for us to walk in throughout each day.

Conclusion:

The authority of God's Word is established in 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 (does not contain error) and infallible (does not lead us 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 the statement, “so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” In this verse we find that the Word of God can fully equip us to accomplish every good work that God has prepared for us to walk in throughout each day. Therefore, the Bible is the only book we need to be fully equipped to live a life of godliness.

“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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³ For further studies we have supplied the following grammatical observations and a literal translation (quotes from the NASB are italicized). The Greek word for “*adequate*” means “to be able to meet all demands, fully ready, perfectly fit, equipped.” Being an adjective that describes the subject “*man*,” we have translated it, “the equipped man.” The Greek word for “*may be*” is a subjunctive, present tense 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 is translated, “having been fully equipped.” Based upon these observations the verse can be literally translated “so that the equipped man of God may continually exist as having been fully equipped for every good work.”

⁴ For further discussion about walking by the Spirit, see the paper entitled, “The Spirit-Led Life.”