

Profit! • 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I. INTRODUCTION

A. A Resource

1. When your car breaks down, you want an expert mechanic to look at it, not some novice whose never picked up a socket wrench before
2. If you've been experiencing some health problems, you want to go to a qualified doctor who has years of knowledge and experience, not a brand new med-student
3. When it comes time to buy your first house, you long for an advisor who understands escrows and impound accounts and points.
4. When there's trouble among the members of your home, you wish there was some expert counselor you could go to who has the perfect answer to the problem.
5. What if I told you – there *is* just such a counselor?
 - a. what if I told you there is someone who wants to be a live-in tutor, teacher and advisor to you and your family?
 - b. he will never take a vacation or be in a bad mood
 - c. he doesn't drink or smoke so he won't stink up your house
 - d. he won't borrow your clothes or raid your refrigerator
 - e. he will be up in the morning before anyone else and will stay up as late as anyone wants to talk.
 - f. he will give you information that will help you with your job, your family and all of your other interests.
 - g. oh – and all his counsel is free!

B. No Fable

1. Guess what – you have just such a counselor who wants to live with you and give you expert, free advice.
2. It's in your hands – your Bible!

II. TEXT

A. Vs. 16-17

16 All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is*

profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

1. In this passage, Paul is calling Timothy to *not* grow faint in confronting the error of the false teachers there in Ephesus.
2. In these verses he tells Timothy what his chief weapon is in combating error – the Word of God.
3. He reminds him where scripture *comes from* and what it's *able to do*.

B. Essential Today

1. These two verses are important because they remind US of Scripture's *source* and *ability*.
2. Just as in Timothy's day, the Bible is under assault today – and not just from skeptics; it's under attack from those who say they *believe* it.
3. It's often the *friends* of the Bible who present the biggest challenge to it.
4. For contrary to what Paul says here, there are many Christians today who say that the Bible is not the Word of God, so much as it contains the Word of God.
 - a. then they would send us to the so-called “experts”,
 - b. like the people on the Jesus Seminar – to find out what *is* and *isn't* truly inspired.
5. Poor, uneducated unsophisticates like you and I have to kneel at the feet of the scholars and let them pick through the pages of the Old and New Testament, telling us what God *really* said and meant.
6. What Paul wrote here melts this idea and gives us complete confidence that all of scripture is the Word of God.
7. Look at what he says in v. 16 . . .

16 All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God,

- a. let's stop right there because these words are rich!
- b. “All scripture” is literally, “all writing” and means the movement of the pen on the parchment

- c. “given by inspiration of God” translates one word in Greek – “theopneustos” which means “God-breathed”
 - d. what Paul says here is a compact idea he means to be taken altogether as one thing
 - e. all writing God breathed
 - f. the movement of the pen on the parchment was the activity of God
 - 1) sure a human hand held the quill
 - 2) a human eye beheld the ink as it left the tip and spread in to the fibers of the sheet
 - 3) but the ideas, words, and even letters formed were the direct result of God’s inspiration.
8. Jesus affirmed the inspiration of *all* Scripture this way in Matthew 5:18

18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

- a. not even the smallest marks made on the Hebrew letters to differentiate one from another would pass away from the Law until it was all fulfilled.
 - b. we might say, the crossing of a “t” or the dotting of an “i”
9. Jesus narrows the scope of inspiration all the way down to the very letters
10. And of course, in dealing with the devil in the wilderness, he said that man would not live by bread alone but by what? *Every* WORD that proceeds from the mouth of God.
11. So God didn’t just inspire *ideas* in the heads of those who penned scripture and then leave it to them to figure out how to express them.
12. God worked in such a way that *all scripture* – ALL of it, even the letters that form the words that convey the ideas, are His choice.
13. Peter says it this way in 2 Peter 1

20 know this first - no prophecy of Scripture is of any private origin,

21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy

men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

14. One Sunday morning as a first-grader was sitting next to her mother in church, she looked over at the open Bible in her mother's lap and whispered, "Did God really write that?"
 - a. the mother answered, "Yes."
 - b. in amazement the little girl said, "Wow! He really has neat handwriting!"
15. The scope of God's inspiration of scripture is from the mind of the human authors on one hand, all the way down to the slightest flick of the pen on the other.
16. So, we don't need some expert, some outside authority, to tell us what is and isn't inspired.
17. The Bible is its own authority!
 - a. in fact, rather than men sitting in judgment on the Bible –
 - b. the Bible sits in judgment on them!
 - c. they are not the authority – It is!

D. Trusting Inspiration

1. There's another way in which the inspiration of the Bible is under attack from its friends today
2. There are many churches and pastors who would agree with the view of inspiration I've just given, but when it comes to teaching and preaching, they depend far more on the opinions of man than the counsel of God
3. They would stand side by side with us when we say *all* scripture is inspired.
4. But when it comes to the Sunday morning message, they draw their text from the latest best-seller or this week's headlines
5. I knew a man, a pastor, whose Sunday morning message was often an exposition of the latest Peanuts cartoon strip.
6. Some preach a chapter out of *Chicken Soup for the Soul*.
7. Don't get me wrong – the bible is quoted here & there.
8. A select verse is thrown in for effect – but the teaching is not based on the authority of scripture!
 - a. the message may be interesting and inspirational.
 - b. if the speaker excels at his craft – it may even be *captivating*.
 - c. but if it isn't based on and bounded by the Word of God, then

- it's effect is short lived
- d. flowing from purely human inspiration, it will have a short life span
9. Compare that with what Paul says the effect of All Scripture is . . .

E. Profitable

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

1. *Because* all scripture is inspired by God, it's of *profit* to us.
2. Paul knows that God wants what's best for us
3. And he knows the pathway to what's best is laid out in scripture.
4. Here he tells us what *profit* the Word of God brings us
 - a. it is wealth that lasts long after money is gone
 - b. it is riches that surpasses earthly treasure
5. Paul mentions *four things* scripture is profitable for.
 - a. the first two deal with *doctrine*.
 - b. the second two refer to *conduct*.
6. First, All Scripture is profitable for *doctrine*
 - a. the Greek word is *usually* translated as "teaching"
 - b. the Apostle is saying that it is Scripture which defines for us *what* to believe
 - c. we don't look to the philosophers or stars – we look to the Word of God for truth
7. Second, All Scripture is profitable for *reproof*
 - a. the word means to *challenge* or *rebuke*
 - b. Paul is being *progressive* here
 - 1) first, scripture shows us what is true and right
 - 2) then as we see what is true and right, it is like a mirror that shows us where we are false and wrong
 - c. the bible is a moral and spiritual mirror
 - d. as we approach it we see it as an expression of truth, a window into the reality of the realm of the spirit
 - e. but as we *face* it, we see ourselves reflected against it and

- realize how far short of it's standard we fall
- f. it first *teaches*, then *confronts* us.
8. Third, All Scripture is profitable for *correction*
 - a. the word means to *make straight*, to *reform*
 - b. the Word of God doesn't just show us what's right and how we're wrong
 - c. it points out the path to change
 9. Fourth, All scripture is profitable for *instruction in righteousness*
 - a. the word translated "instruction" is a rich word that speaks of the task of a *tutor*
 - b. in the ancient world, the wealthy would hire a tutor who lived with the family and oversaw the entire education and training of the children.
 - c. some of the best known philosophers of the ancient world served as tutors
 - d. by using this word, Paul means that scripture actually takes us by the hand and guides us into the very course of truth and goodness we see in the Word of God
 10. So first, scripture shows us the truth, then we see how we fall short, next we find the path to be made right, and finally, we find ourselves led by the hand along that path.
 11. A few weeks ago, I stopped at the donut shop on my way to work.
 - a. there was a truck driver there from out of town
 - b. he'd gotten lost on his way to some business in Oxnard and stopped for coffee
 - c. I over heard him asking one of the other customers for assistance, but he wasn't getting any help
 - d. I knew well where he needed to go so I offered to help
 - e. he showed me the address on the delivery paper – that's where he needed to be – that was *doctrine*.
 - f. I grabbed a napkin and sketched out a map, showing him where the address was and where we were in the donut shop. "This is where you want to be," I said, "And here is where you are here." – that was *reproof*.
 - g. then I drew an arrow to show him what streets to take to get to his destination – that was *correction*.
 - h. when I realized that he was getting nervous about finding his

way there in a strange town, I said, “Look, this is on my way to work. Why don’t you follow me.”

- i. we went out to our respective vehicles; he climbed into his cab, I got in my van, and then pulled in front of him and off we went until I got him to the street he needed.
 - j. then he gave me the “okay” sign and mouthed a big “thank you.” – That was *instruction*
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12. Who here would like to be right all the time?
13. Look at what Paul says – All scripture is profitable for instruction in what? RIGHTEOUSNESS.
 - a. righteousness means being right –
 - b. right with God first, and then, because of that, right with others and the world around us
 - c. we can never be right with others if we are not right with the God who created all things
14. Scripture – All Scripture, leads us by the hand into the place of being right and that’s why it’s profitable!

F. Complete

1. Verse 17 brings it all together

17 that the man of God may be *complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

2. The word *complete* means to be *fully provisioned*
 - a. it was a word used to describe a ship with a full hold -
 - b. the crew was on board, the food and water stores were full and she was ready to set sail.
3. But the simple word complete didn’t really communicate what Paul wanted to say and the Holy Spirit wants you and I to learn
4. So he added a superlative and said, “thoroughly equipped”
5. My mother was always correcting my speech when I was younger
 - a. and one of the things she used to correct me on was being *redundant* –
 - b. saying the same thing twice – you know, two times – again and again – repeating myself.
6. Paul badly violates the rule against being redundant in v. 17.
 - a. he says that all scripture is profitable so that the man of God

- may be complete
- b. but then he takes the very same word, and repeats it, adding an intensifier onto it
 - c. so we could read v. 17 like this . . .

that the man of God may be fully provisioned, *super-fully-* provisioned for every good work.

- d. now the picture is of a ship that is not only full of crew and supplies to make a simple voyage – but it’s followed by an armada of support ships that *no matter where* it goes, it will have plenty

III. CONCLUSION

A. Thoroughly Equipped

1. As we take these two verse together we have an incredible picture and promise.

16 All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2. Paul is saying that the Word of God is sufficient, *more than sufficient*, to cover all of life!
3. Before we turn to the so-called experts who are learned in the ways of the world, shouldn’t we turn to our Creator who made the World?
4. **All** scripture, from the first pages of Genesis to the last leaves of Revelation, hold forth truth, counsel, and direction.
5. As we apply ourselves to that counsel, searching the scriptures for guidance and help, we’ll find the *good* we need – that’s the promise of v. 17.

B. God-Breathed

1. Paul’s use of the phrase “God breathed” in v. 16 is a subtle reference to the creation of Man in Genesis 2.
2. We read that God formed man’s physical body of the dust of the

ground, then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.

3. Here Paul says that scripture is God-breathed and by it we may live life as God intended.
4. Just as the life of the *physical* body is maintained by *physical* food – *spiritual* life is maintained by *spiritual* food
5. It was God's *breath* that gave life to man – and it is God's breath, still pulsing in the scriptures that sustains and strengthens that life.
6. When Moses finished his task of leading the people and it was time to pass on the leadership to Joshua he concluded with these words . . .

Deuteronomy 32:46-47

46 “Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe—all the words of this law.

47 For it *is* not a futile thing for you, because it *is* your life.”

7. Again, Jesus said – “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4)

C. What Kind of Man or Woman?

It is by ALL Scripture that the man or woman **of God** is made complete

1. Let me end this morning by asking what kind of man or woman you want to be?
2. Do you want to be a man of *God* or a man of the *world*?
3. Do you want to be a *worldly* or *godly* woman?
4. The man of the world is equipped by these . . . [mags]
But v. 17 says that the man of God is made complete by this [Bible]
5. The woman of the world is nurtured by these . . . [mags]
But the woman of God is adorned by this [Bible]
6. If you choose to be a person of the world, then you will have to get new ones of these every month or so – because the world is fickle and today's fashions are tomorrow's garage sale
7. This, [Bible] on the other hand never changes and meets the needs

of every new day that dawns.

Percentage of Americans who believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God: 80

Percentage who believe there is no one set of values that is right: 48

■ U.S. News & World Report,