

XI. Thy Word is Truth in Biblical Perspective
The Supremacy and Sufficiency of God's Word
"The Word of God—Its Nature"

II Timothy 3:16–17

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We are in are fall text and it ought to be familiar by now. II Timothy 3:16–17 says, [16] *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God's Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

My wife and I have many things in common and increasingly as we get older we get more things in common. In fact the things we had in un-common we now have in common so it is really interesting what happens as you grow together and get older together in the Lord. One of the things we've had in common is that we're both pragmatic – not pragmatism where the end justifies the means for that's wrong world and life view. We are both pragmatic where we look at things and think 'is this useful.' Now we have different criteria for what is useful when we're cleaning out something. I'm not sure if it was because of the context I was raised in where my grandparents who were so influential in my life had gone through the Depression and we'll be cleaning out something and I see a roll of rubber bands and think 'we can't throw these away. I'm convinced we could save the world some day with this roll of rubber bands.'

My pragmatic bent of what is useful or what has working ability would show up every January when I would get together with some pastors especially two of them in this church where I would have about ten questions that I would ask them. Two of the questions I would always ask was 'what have you been reading that you find useful, besides the Bible' and they would always have an answer. Then secondly I would ask 'in ministry what have you found that works or is useful.' They would always have some ideas to share with me that would be very helpful. I want you to remember the word 'useful' as we get into this study. What is profitable?

One thing is very obvious. Satan despises and is assaulting the glory of God. He wants to put himself in the glory that belongs to God alone. That means that Satan assaults people. Why? It is because God made people for His glory. Therefore he assaults people. He assaults the people of God, saved people, directly, because we were saved to the praise of God's glory. In his assault, what does he do to assault the people of God who exist for the glory of God, because he wants to assault the glory of God? I think there are number of things that he does but I don't want you to forget this one. He wants to disconnect people from the Word of God because it is the Word of God that tells them about the God of glory and how to be right with the God of glory.

The Word of God tells them how to glorify God so Satan wants to disconnect men and women from the Word of God and he has done it ever since the garden. When he comes to Adam and Eve he says 'has God said...?' So he wants to disconnect you from trusting, engaging, embracing, knowing and surrendering to the Word of God. That is his point of attack. Now how will Satan who stands against the glory of God and the people

made by God and saved by God by attacking the Word of God, try to disconnect us from the Word of God? There are two things he does.

As we work our way through this study on these two verses in II Timothy and this is the third of eight studies, what are the two ways Satan gets the saved and unsaved disconnected from the Word of God in order to attack the glory of God? In these studies I hope to answer this question as clearly as possible but first of all I want to remind you of what we've done so far.

We have established the importance of God's Word. John 17:17 says *[17] Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.* We have put our weight behind this knowing that all Scripture is inspired by God. II Timothy 3:16–17 are vitally important about God's Word. I have acknowledged that John 3:16, Romans 3:23, 6:23, 8:1, Ephesians 2:8–10 and others are all important but why are they important? It is only important in this Book if there is something important about this book. It's the Word of God. The reason it is important is because it is in the Scripture and the Scripture is God's Word and God's Word is truth. Therefore everything in the Scripture is crucial. That's why He says *Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.*

That's why Jesus said to Satan in Matthew 4:4, *[4] But he answered, "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."* So the Scripture is that which has proceeded out the mouth of God and how do we find that out? We took time to look at the origin – *theopneustos*: God-breathed, i.e. inspired by God. Some of you are graphic majors. That is where the Word comes from *graphé*: a writing, scripture. It is something that is written down. All Scripture, that which is written down, that comes from the breath of God (*theopneustos*). This is the only time that *theopneustos* is used (in II Timothy 3:16).

The concept you will find in other places but the only place this word is used is in II Timothy 3:16 where Paul created this word to get a concept across to us. *Theo* means God-breathed, the breath of God. God has breathed out His Word to us. That Word is Scripture written down. Let me put it this way. I am speaking words and I could not speak these words unless I was exhaling my breath. This Scripture is here because of the breath of God coming through the lips of Apostles and Prophets, not as He dictated but as He dynamically spoke through them in their full humanity. He prepared them for that moment.

That's why the Bible says the Word of the Lord came to me. You don't find the Apostles and Prophets saying the Word of the Lord came from me. The Word of the Lord came to me, through me and from Him is what you see. The breath of God comes in the Word of God, the Scripture. It is not a Book that is the word of man about God or contains the Word of God or becomes the Word of God but it is the Book that is the Word of God. Thy Word is truth. Smell God's Word for it is always sweet. It is always an aroma of life.

So how do you smell it? Why should you smell it? We just looked at the origin of it. What is the nature of God's Word? As II Timothy 3:16a says, *All Scripture is breathed out by God.* When I am breathing out my breath carries to you the Word that I am preaching. The same thing happened with the Bible over 1600 years and 40 plus authors with all of them being called before they existed and prepared. They were born when they were supposed to be and had the genetic structure God wanted them to have. They had the vocational background they were supposed to have. God wanted

shepherds, planters, farmers, fishermen, priests, kings and men of the law and He spoke the Word of God to men and through men for you. Therefore you will now have this Word of God, this sacred Scripture.

How did you get it? The Holy Spirit carried along holy men as we see in II Peter 1:21 which says [21] *For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.* The Holy Spirit carried holy men to give you the Scriptures. So that is the importance of it and the origin of the Word of God.

What is the nature of the Word of God? II Timothy 3:16a says, [16a] *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable...* Profitable is an interesting word. This word is all over the Bible and you can find it three times just right here in Timothy. It is rightly translated here but I want to tell you how else it can be translated. It could also be translated as beneficial – bene means good, fide means word, it is a good word of faith. God's Word is beneficial to you. It is practical for you. Here is an even better word, I think, that you could use here and that is useful which is how you see it translated a number of times in your Bible. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful. Even the book of Numbers is useful. All Scripture is there for a purpose. Sometimes it is so purposeful that He will repeat it two or three times in this limited Book that is here. It is useful.

Here are three questions I want to answer. The first is why is the Scripture profitable or useful? We have already tried to answer that in the last two studies. It is because God has declared its importance. It is the Word of God. Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth. It is profitable because it is God-breathed. Not all truth is in the Bible. All the mathematical formulas and scientific insights are not in the Bible but everything that is necessary for a world and life view is in the Bible. Not all truth is in the Bible but all that is in the Bible is truth and all the truth that you need to know God increasingly, savingly, accurately, intimately, personally and maturingly is there. That is why it is the final rule of our faith and practice and it is sufficient to bear up our life. So that is why the Scripture is profitable.

Secondly, what is the Scripture profitable for? Before people start contacting me I realize that in our English language you are not supposed to end a sentence with a preposition but I'm doing it this way so that this question looks similar to the previous question. Just like the text told you why it's profitable (God-breathed) but this text tells you what it is profitable for. There are five things that it is profitable for. Number one is it is profitable for teaching doctrine so that you know God's truth revealed. God is also revealed in the creation but you don't know that God exists as a Trinity without His Word. You don't know how to trust Him, be saved or the Gospel without His Word. General revelation holds us accountable, is sufficient to inform us of this God, His eternal power and might but it can't save us or tell you how to be right with God for someone who is lost. For the lost to know they need a Savior, they can't save themselves and that God sent His Son to die on the cross so you could be saved is doctrine (teaching). We are people of the Book because the Book reveals what we must know. So all Scripture is profitable for teaching and that's the first thing on the list.

Secondly, it is profitable for reproof which is a negative aspect. Reproof is referring to the fact that when God's truth hits us it breaks us. It convicts us and

confronts us. Why? It is because we don't start off in neutral. We are sinners. It brings to us the reality of sin, its guilt and its shame but praise God it doesn't end there.

Thirdly, it corrects us. So all you orthodontists and orthopedists here is the word that gave you your vocation for this word correct is where we get the meaning to set it straight. What has sin been doing? Sin has been making us crooked, perverse and destroying us. Sin leads us to destruction. When God brings conviction through Jesus and breaks us, the purpose of brokenness is not brokenness. Brokenness is what the Gospel does to get to the purpose and the purpose is transformation. Brokenness is what has to happen because the brokenness shows us sin, guilt and its shame to send us to Jesus who eradicates our guilt and shame. He also emancipates us from sin's power. In other words, it breaks us, reproves us to set us straight with Jesus, in Jesus, for Jesus.

Remember when people wanted to get their teeth straight they would get braces. Now people don't really want the braces look so the orthodontists came up with Invisiline where their teeth get straight and no one can really tell that it's being done. God does both. Sometimes when God straightens us out it is obvious but many times God straightens us out and we don't even know it. His Word is doing it inside of us. We will be aware of it for faith is not a mystical flight but He is doing some things within us that we don't even know. He is setting us up, getting us ready and working in our lives. So one He teaches us, then reproves us because we're sinners and as it sends us to Jesus then He starts straightening us, corrects us.

Fourthly, He trains us in righteousness. He literally puts you in the gymnasium. He starts training your soul, your life by training your heart and your soul. This training of righteousness does not mean a training in self-arrogance that we put in place of grace but He is talking about the righteousness that is the product of God's grace – not only the legal righteousness that clothes us and that is perfect in Jesus but growing righteousness that He is leading us to pursue because we love Him. It is not a one-time training. This is life until you go to be with Jesus. For life He will keep reproving, correcting and training.

How will He train you? II Timothy 3:16–17 says *[16] All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, **equipped** for every good work.* He does this by equipping you and I like this part because this is my job as a pastor. My job is to pull the trigger on this by the power of the Holy Spirit through preaching. Ephesians 4:11–12 says *[11] And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers (pastors), [12] to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.* I get to do this as I preach because God's Word is equipping you in how you serve Him and follow Him. As He trains us we are living out that Word so we are now God's Word incarnate in life.

Fifthly, He is completing us for every good work. He is maturing us. Ephesians 2:8–10 says *[8] For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast. [10] For we are his workmanship (His masterpiece), created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.* He has revealed this to you in His Word. You are not saved by good works but you're saved for good works.

What is a good work? Let's look at the Bible. The way to do a good work as a husband, father, wife, mother, neighbor, citizen, woman, man, employer or employee is

the Bible will tell you. The Bible will give you a Christian world and life view to fuel a Christian world and life love in order to live a Christian world and life style for Christ. A teacher of mine used to say ‘know – be – do.’ Know who we are from God’s Word in Christ. Be who you are from God’s Word in Christ. Do what God’s Word has called you to do for Christ. Many of us try to do – be – know but you can’t do that for it’s know through the work of Christ who we are, then be who you are from God’s Word by the power of the Spirit in Christ and now do what you do for Christ. So teaching, reproof, correction, training and completing through equipping, are what the Scripture is profitable for. I don’t need the Bible plus something else for I just need to know and understand God’s Word to do every good work.

How is the Scripture profitable? I will go more into depth on this in the next study but I will start you thinking about this in this study. II Timothy 2:14–15 says *[14] Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers. [15] Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.* So how is the Word of God useful and beneficial?

This is so important. The Bible is useful only when you use it. The Bible is useful when you handle it. I made the comment last week that I was all for iPhone and iPad Bibles and there is nothing sinful about them but I do think you need to get a Bible you can hug, embrace and kiss and all. I gave the example that reading the Bible on an iPhone is kind of like kissing your wife through a screen door. I recently heard that one of our members told a person visiting the church that I said that when they got out their iPad to look up a Scripture and the one with the iPad said ‘Where’s your Bible?’ He said ‘I left it in the car.’ And the person said ‘At least I’m kissing my wife somehow.’ He also said ‘How does that pastor know what it’s like to kiss their wife through a screen door?’ There is a reason why your school teacher would tell you to go look it up. Learning is not only audio and visual, but it is also tactile.

It also requires touch. II Timothy 2:15 says *[15] Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.* I’m not talking about just holding a Bible in your hand. For the Bible to be useful you have to use it and that means you have to handle it. To handle it means you have to study it. The Bible is not just to have and hope its presence will make you holy. It’s not a rabbit’s foot. God had it written because He wants you to read it. He had it written a certain way because He wanted it preached. It was designed to be preached and given to be read and that’s why He said ‘have you not read?’

We are to study the Bible accurately, intentionally, regularly and shamelessly. Read your Bible every day accurately. When I read the Bible I go back 2,000 to 4,000 years for it was written in an historical setting, a political setting, with a grammatical structure and in a geographical setting. I can’t read today into that text. I have to go read that text as it was written in that day and then bring it back 2,000 years to you. That’s what you are called to do in your Bible study. Read it accurately and intentionally. See the doctrine of the Trinity. See the Father authoring creation, the Son accomplishing creation, the Holy Spirit hovering and applying creation. See the Father author your salvation in the text, see the Son accomplish your redemption and see the Holy Spirit apply your redemption. See the glory of a Triune God in the preeminence of Christ as Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. See the Father who gives you all good gifts even in a

broken world and know Him, love Him and serve Him in the midst of adversity. See the Son interceding for you in the Father's gifts to you. See the Holy Spirit who comes to convict, comfort and encourage you. That is what you are looking for as you read and study your Bible. So you examine the Word in its context and then say to the Lord 'Show me how this text leads me to Jesus' as He manifests the glory of our Triune God to you.

Here is the takeaway. The Word of God is not a work product of human reason but a "useful" gift of Divine revelation designed for life transformation in belief and behavior. If you want to know what someone believes then look at their behavior. That betrays their belief. Do you want to know how our behavior is to change? It is not by trick behavior modification but by the truth of God at work in our heart and our soul. Perhaps you are reading this seeking and you heard that Jesus went to the cross to die for you and you need a Savior because you can't save yourself. You just heard the truth. You just heard teaching. You also heard the idols of this world that lead to the addictions of life which is a behavioral term that describes the idols in our life. You are not the victim of a genetic structure. We have a heart and soul and when sin becomes addictive it is because of the idolatry in the heart which leads to death. This truth is teaching you.

You also heard the truth that there is a God who loves you who gave His Son to eradicate that sin, guilt and shame and He will emancipate you from its power. So He is reproving and correcting you so come to Jesus. Then He will start training you for the rest of your life. For some of you this has already happened to you but you have some embedded and entangling sins in your life. Your God is ready to let you know that He forgives you and will set you free as you focus upon Christ. That is where the reproof leads you – to Christ who is at work within you.

It is no secret that Satan doesn't want you to get to this Word. He doesn't want you to learn how to put off the old man (reprove) and put on the new man to correct in training and righteousness. He doesn't want you to hear that you are saved in Christ. Therefore, [29] *Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.* (Ephesians 4:29) Satan doesn't want you to hear this; [28] *Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.* (Ephesians 4:28) Work for the Christ in you, not for yourself. Satan wants to disconnect you who haven't come to Christ and those who have, from God's Word and its truth.

How did Satan do it in the garden? When Satan said, 'has God said?' he had them question the veracity of God's Word and then the intention of God. Satan would say that He really doesn't want you to be like Him. All they had to do was say they don't have to worry about being like Him because they were made like Him. Satan will try and get you away from God's Word by trying to get you to doubt the importance, veracity and trustworthiness of God's Word. Or he wants you to get disconnected from God's Word because there are other things are more useful and important than God's Word.

So I ask you, have you found the usefulness of God's Word? You haven't if you are not using it. Are you using it? I'm not just speaking about quantity of time in it but the time you actually spend in it. Are you studying it accurately, intentionally and regularly? Are you embracing God's Word directly? Satan also wants to disconnect you by getting you to doubt its usefulness, benefit, and its profitableness to you.

Here is one of the great and glorious truths about this. I can tell you how useful God's Word is and how gloriously useful it is but I need you to use it. We will go more into how to use it in the next study but will you use it? The answer is who you are living for. Study to show yourself approved unto God, handling accurately the Word of God. Study it shamelessly. I am not perfect and I cannot exhaust God's Word but I do want to handle it with integrity, regularly, rightly because I'm under God's eye.

In 1636 a college was established. "Et Christo Veritas Ecclesiae" Christ's truth for the Church. They even invented a Veritas truth shield with the two books of learning open and facing outward and the foundational book upon which all learning takes place open but turned the other way because it's unfathomable. That book was the Bible, the foundation of all learning. Within 50 years Harvard University, the college I was just speaking about, had become Unitarian Universalists. Today there is no allowance for Christ's truth and speaking only of secularism and humanism apart from Christ's truth. How did that happen? The approval of the world and academics became more important than the approval of God.

I don't know where you are but I do know this. If the world's approval in your guild becomes more important than God's approval you will get disconnected from God's Word. You have a Savior who loves you. Study the Word as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, cutting it straight, handling it accurately, approved unto God. Oh how He loves us when we love Him, by the Spirit of God, through the Word of God, in the triumph of the suffering of God. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You that Your love cannot be improved upon and cannot be built upon by our faithfulness but it can be known more deeply and more intimately. So Father send us to the Word of God that we may be sent to the God of the Word and for the God of the Word to this world. Allow us to profit from it. Those who are reading this today because You are moving them, may they be reprovved of idolatry and sin and come to Christ who loves them and will take them where they are to grow them where You want them to be. For those who know You, so easily the approval of the world and its values have sent us away from the Word for it has disconnected us. Bring us back to study it accurately, handle it intentionally, regularly and shamelessly because we do so under Your eye and we thank You that in Jesus the smile of God is upon us for I pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

THREE QUESTIONS

- I. Why is the Scripture Profitable?
- II. What is the Scripture profitable for?
- III. How is the Scripture profitable?

LIFE TAKEAWAY

The Word of God is not a work product of human reason, but a "useful" gift of Divine Revelation designed for life transformation in belief and behavior.