

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD
Arlington Presbyterian Church (PCA)

The Value of the Scripture

2 Timothy 3:14-17 (596)

February 17, 2002

2 Timothy 3:14-17 ... *You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from who you have learned them; and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

There is a sense in which I was “primed” to become a Calvinist. One reason I so readily and enthusiastically embraced the idea that regeneration precedes and makes possible saving faith was on account of the character of my own conversion. I am one of those saved at a point in time which is as clear and real to me now as it was 29 years ago (May 15, 1973). **2 Corinthians 5:17** says, *Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.* There was, for sure, in my life a noticeable change in conduct and conversation. But accompanying my conversion was a profound change in my preferences. One of those *new things* was a love for and attraction to the Word of God.

Now, I was familiar with the Bible, having been taken to church since I was a little kid. The characters, the places, the names of the books, the stories, the language of the Bible were not unfamiliar to me. But upon my own conversion, I had a hunger and desire for the Scripture. I loved to hear it, to read it, to study it, to memorize it, and to meditate upon it. Even now I chuckle when I think about

walking around the campus of the University of Tennessee working on Scripture memory verses. That's the kind of thing that happens when God grants a man new life in Christ. After college God led me to a church where my pastor, Jim Henry, regularly preached verse-by-verse expository sermons. God gifted me with a mentor, Donnie Frensley, who taught the Bible verse-by-verse. As a result of all of this, I cannot disassociate being a Christian from being a man of the Word. I cannot comprehend a Christian without the Word anymore than, as a good Southern boy, I can comprehend biscuits without gravy. One of the first verses I ever memorized was 2 Timothy 3:16-17. These verses confirmed my observation. The big idea of these verses is simply this: **the Word of God is sufficient, indeed, essential for life and ministry.**

I want to consider the value of the Scripture under six features of the Word of God highlighted in these four verses. The first is the simplicity of the Scripture. *And that **from childhood** you have known the sacred writings.* The Scriptures, while beyond comprehension in one sense, are profoundly simple in another. The essential features of God's eternal purposes are clear enough for a child to understand. God has condescended to reveal Himself in ink on paper. The Infinite is revealed in a book which can be touched, heard, read ... in a book containing those stories which the Holy Spirit determined would accomplish the redemptive purposes of the Father; stories of Adam and Eve, of Abraham and Isaac, of Joseph, of Moses, of plagues and the Red Sea ... of Joshua, of Gideon, of Eli and Samuel, of Saul and David ... of slingshots and giants; stories of kings;

stories of prophets, fire from heaven, and lions' dens ... of Bethlehem, of Beatitudes, of miracles, of disciples ... of Gethsemane, of Calvary and an empty tomb; stories of missionaries, of distant places, of journeys, of conversions.

God displays His glory and power in the creation which is all around a child (**Ps. 19:1**). God displays His goodness in common grace that even a child can recognize (**Acts 17:25**). But His will is communicated in His Law – comprehended in Ten Commandments capable of being understood by a child – and in the Gospel – comprehended in the person and work of Jesus also capable of being understood and embraced by a child. The Bible tells a child that he is a sinner; that he has broken God's Law. The Bible tells the child that there is a penalty for sin - *the wages of sin is death*. The Bible tells the child of God's provision for him or her in Christ. And very simply does the Bible do so under the image of a goat on whose head sins are laid; under the image of a lamb killed in the place of the guilty sinner; under the image of filthy rags exchanged for a robe of perfection. O for parents and grandparents who believe these things and, like Timothy's mother and grandmother, would familiarize your children with the Scripture all the days of their lives.

The second feature is the uniqueness of the Scripture. If something is "unique" it is the only one of its kind. *And that from childhood you have known **the sacred writings*** (Gr. *heira grammata*). These *sacred writings* make up what we know as the Old Testament. *Sacred writings* is often translated, *the Holy Scriptures*.

I've read many books that are excellent, enjoyable, educational, and engaging but only one which is holy. Why is this book called *The Holy Bible*? Matthew Henry gives us six reasons: (1) The Scriptures come from a holy God. **2 Timothy 3:16**, *All Scripture is inspired by God*. (2) The Scriptures were delivered by holy men. These first two features are expressed in **2 Peter 1:20-21**, *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*. (3) The Scriptures contain holy precepts. **Psalm 119:128**, *Therefore I esteem right all Thy precepts concerning everything*. **Psalm 119:160**, *The sum of Thy word is truth, and every one of Thy righteous ordinances is everlasting*. (4) The Scriptures concern themselves with holy things. **Romans 14:17**, *for the kingdom of God is ... righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit*. **Romans 15:4**, *that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope*. (5) The Scriptures were designed to make us holy. **Psalm 119:38**, *Establish Thy word to Thy servant, as that which produces reverence for Thee*. **Psalm 119:104**, *From Thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way*. (6) The Scriptures lead us into happiness by way of holiness. **Psalm 119:1-2**, *How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord. How blessed are those who observe His testimonies*. Of the blessed man the Bible says, *his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of*

water which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers (Ps. 1:1-3).

The third feature is the central function of the Scripture. ***Which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation.*** With all of the praise which may rightly be ascribed to the best of human literature *these words* may apply only to the written Word of God. How is it that the Scriptures can lead to salvation? Because the Old Testament Scriptures in which Timothy was schooled by his mother and grandmother concern themselves with Christ. **Luke 24:27, 32, 44 ... 27** *And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, [the resurrected Jesus, on the Road to Emmaus] explained to [the disciples] the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures ... 32* *And they said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?" ... 44* *Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."* The Scripture itself does not bring salvation but points to or leads toward it. In **John 5:39** Jesus says, *"You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me."* In **Acts 10:43** Peter preached, *"Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins."* Of Paul's experience in Thessalonica, **Acts 17:2-4a** says, *And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures,*

explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ." And some of them were persuaded ... Later in that same chapter, of the Bereans it is said, these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so. Many of them therefore believed (11-12a).

Beloved, do you want that son or daughter to come to Christ? Get them into the Word. Do you want that granddaughter or grandson to come to faith? Get them into the Word? Do you want that co-worker or neighbor to trust Christ? Get them into a Bible study. *Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ (Rom. 10:17).*

The fourth feature is the essential character of the Scripture. *All Scripture is inspired by God.* The literal translation of the Greek here is *God-breathed* ["since it translates a single word, *theopneustos* : *theos*, 'God,' and *pneustos*, 'breathe' (Beacon, p.285)] This is "another way of saying that Scripture is God's word" (Knight). In **John 10:35** Jesus uses the terms "word" and "Scripture" interchangeably. " *to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken).*"

Now the inspiration in view here must not be confused with "the inspiration which prompts great hymns or great sermons" (Beacon, p.285). Paul is arguing "that the influencing and superintending of the Spirit was sufficiently dynamic and dominant to assure that what the Spirit *wanted* said was said, without distortion

or error ... that the words accurately express the Spirit-given thoughts” (*Beacon Dictionary of Theology*, p.286).

The fifth feature is the extent of the inspiration of Scripture. **All Scripture is inspired by God.** “All Scripture ... means everything which, through the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the church, is recognized by the church as ... authoritative” (Hendriksen, p.301). On one level this means “that this doctrine, as confessed by the Church of all ages, pertains as much to the New Testament as to the Old” (Warfield, *Selected Writings II*, p.618). On another level this means that not just parts of the Bible or certain passages are inspired but that every Book from Genesis to Revelation and every word in those Books is marked by this particular divine quality.

The sixth feature is the usefulness of Scripture. **And profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness.** Now if something is “profitable” it yields a practical benefit doesn’t it? If an investment is profitable you receive dividends don’t you? The Scripture possesses in and of itself a practical worth. Two things must be said here. **First**, while the Scripture is to be revered and obeyed, it is not some delicate piece of fine crystal that we dare not touch. The Scripture is portrayed as a *sword* to be wielded (**Eph. 6:17**), a tool to be used by the Christian *workman* (**2 Tim. 2:15**), a sledge *hammer* to *shatter rocks* (**Jer. 23:29**) [*bread* to maintain life (**Matt. 4:4**), *milk* to nourish growth (**1 Pet. 2:2**), and a *mirror* which shows us ourselves (**Jam. 1:23-25**).]

Look at your Bible. Does it show evidence of being used? Is it marked up? Are its pages worn and tattered from use? All of the tools in my shed which I use regularly show signs of that use. **Second**, in saying that Scripture is useful we must be careful to avoid the suggestion that it is optional. On the contrary, it is indispensable for the man or woman of God. The Scripture is to a Christian what an M16 is to a soldier; what a stick is to a hockey player; what a hammer or nail gun is to a carpenter. It is part of the equipment that makes you what you are.

Jules Verne wrote the science fiction classic *Journey to the Center of the Earth*. It is the story of the journey of German Professor, Otto Liedenbrock, and his student nephew, Axel, through an underground tunnel to the center of the earth. Years ago a movie of the same title was made starring James Mason as “Lindenbruck” and Pat Boone as “Alex.” In the movie version, an Icelandic explorer, Arne Saknussemm, had blazed the trail before them. Fortuitously, Saknussemm had marked the correct passage at critical points by chiseling three parallel grooves in the stone. As long as they followed the marks of Saknussemm they made progress in the right direction. At one crucial fork the grooves had been filled with dirt and were obscured from sight. Consequently, the travelers got perilously confused and in grave danger. So as we consider these four things consider your Christian life as a journey along a path much like Verne’s travelers or like Christian’s journey from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City in *Pilgrim’s Progress*. Scripture is useful for ...

Teaching. The Scripture shows you the path to walk on. In the words of **Isaiah 30:21**, the Scripture says, *“This is the way, walk in it,” whenever you turn to the right or to the left.* **Psalm 119:105**, *Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.* Scripture tells you what to believe and do. In other words, Scripture is profitable to instruct you in (1) doctrine and (2) Christian conduct. **Romans 15:4**, *For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction.* **1 Corinthians 10:11**, *Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction.* In keeping with our travel analogy, Scripture is like one of those big, green signs along the interstate highways giving the name of the city, the number of the highway to take, and a direction arrow to tell you which way to turn.

Reproof. The Scripture shows you where you have gotten off the path. The Scriptures reprove as it points out your sin and exposes it as error. Paul wrote of the Law in **Romans 7:7**, *I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, “YOU SHALL NOT COVET.”* The Scripture is often like those signs at highway interchanges that say “WRONG WAY.”

Correction. The Scripture shows you how to get back on the path. Let’s say that you are griped by anxiety to the point that your spiritual life and emotional life are suffering. The Scripture says, *Be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known to God (Phil.4:6).*

Training in righteousness. The Scripture shows you how to stay on the right path. **Psalm 119:9, 11** ... *How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy word ... Thy word have I treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee.* Whenever a man or woman neglects the Word, he or she will inevitably wander off into the weeds of sin.

That the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Whenever we need plumbing work done at our house we call Mr. Foreman. Mr. Foreman is a retired plumber. After a lifetime of such work, he has every tool, every gadget, and knows every trick to do the work of plumbing. And if he doesn't have it on his truck, he knows what he needs and where to get it. He is equipped to meet all the demands of his profession.

Adequate here means capable ... able to meet all demands. "The sense of the passage is that scripture is given to enable any 'person of God' to meet the demands that God places on [you] ... Since God created Christians for good works and calls on [you] to do good works (**Eph. 2:10; Tit. 3:1; 2 Tim. 2:21**), he has given scripture to instruct [you] so that [you] may know in principle what God expects of [you] and thus be equipped to do that particular 'good deed' called for in each situation" (Knight, p.450).

The Word of God is **SUFFICIENT**, indeed, **ESSENTIAL** for life and ministry.

Let's **read 2 Timothy 3:14-17** aloud together in closing.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CARE GROUPS

Pick two or three to go over in your groups

What *challenges* are placed before Christian parents by verse **15**? What *encouragement* does verse 15 offer these parents?

Give specific examples (situations and verses) of how the Scripture is useful for *teaching ... reproof ... correction ... training in righteousness (16)*.

What are the habits of a man or woman of God in terms of the Word of God in his or her life (**17**)?

Name some specific *good works* for which the Word equips the believer (**17**).

There are five ways in which we can integrate the Word of God into our lives – **hearing** the Word (**Rom. 10:17**), **reading** the Word (**Deut. 17:19**), **studying** the Word (**Ezra 7:10; Acts 17:11**), **memorizing** the Word (**Prov. 7:2-3, 22:18**), and **meditating** upon the Word (**Ps. 119:148**). Look up these verses. How can we encourage one another to be men and women of the Word?

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2 Corinthians 5:17 says, *Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*

Accompanying my conversion was a profound change in my _____ .
One of those *new things* was a **love for** and **attraction to** the _____ of God.

The big idea? ...

the Word of God is _____ , indeed, _____ for life and ministry.

I want to consider the value of the Scripture under six features of the Word of God highlighted in these four verses.

The first is the _____ of the Scripture.

*And that **from childhood** you have known the sacred writings.*

God has condescended to reveal Himself in _____ on _____ .

The Infinite is revealed in a _____ which can be touched, heard, read ...

The second feature is the _____ of the Scripture.

*And that from childhood you have known **the sacred writings** (Gr. *heira grammata*).*

Why is this book called *The Holy Bible*?

The Scriptures come from a holy _____ (**2 Timothy 3:16**).

The Scriptures were delivered by holy _____ (**II Peter 1:20-21**).

The Scriptures contain holy _____ (**Psalms 119:128, 160**).

The Scriptures concern themselves with holy _____ (**Romans 14:17, 15:4**).

The Scriptures were _____ to make us holy. (**Psalms 119:38, 104**).

The Scriptures lead us into _____ by way of holiness (**Psalms 119:1-2; 1:1-3**).

The third feature is the _____ function of the Scripture.

Which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation.

How is it that the Scripture can lead to salvation?

Because the Old Testament Scriptures in which Timothy was schooled by his mother and grandmother concern themselves with _____ (**Luke 24:27, 32, 44**).

The Scripture itself does not bring salvation but _____ to or _____ toward it (**John 5:39; Acts 10:43, 17:2-4a**).

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This is “another way of saying that Scripture is God’s _____ ” (George Knight).

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Paul is arguing “that the influencing and superintending of the _____ was sufficiently dynamic and dominant to assure that what the Spirit wanted said was said, without distortion or _____ ... that the _____ accurately express the Spirit-given thoughts” (*Beacon Dictionary of Theology*, p.286).

The fifth feature is the _____ of the inspiration of Scripture.

All Scripture is inspired by God.

“All Scripture ... means everything which, through the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the church, is recognized by the church as ... _____ ” (Hendriksen, p.301).

The sixth feature is the _____ of Scripture.

And profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness.

Teaching. The Scripture shows you the path to _____ (**Is. 30:21; Ps. 119:105**).

Reproof. The Scripture shows you where you have _____ the path.

Correction. The Scripture shows you how to get _____ the path.

Training in righteousness. The Scripture shows you how to _____ the right path (**Ps. 119:9, 11**).

That the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.
Adequate here means _____ ... able to meet all demands.

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