

FINISH STRONG

"Right Tool for the Job" 2 Timothy 3:10-17

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Authority of the Bible I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

"All Scripture is Godbreathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17





Why is the Bible essential and sufficient for the Christian life? How can we remain faithful to God despite the serious challenges we face in these "last days" (2Ti 3:1)? What does Paul say?

Paul's concern is that that Timothy continue, the central imperative of verse 14a: "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of." The appeal to continue faithfully is based on: (1) recalling Paul's teaching and example (vv.10-13); and (2) giving heed to the Scriptures, which can lead to salvation through Christ and are useful for all tasks of life/ministry (vv. 14-17).

I hope that you have people whose teaching and examples encourage you to faithfulness in your Christian walk and ministry (and are such a godly influence on others!).

However, let us focus here on how Scripture helps us to continue faithfully.

The first article in the *Statement of Faith of Central Bible Church* is, "We believe literally in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as inspired of God, inerrant in the original writings, and of supreme and final authority in faith and life (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21)."

What does it mean that the Scriptures are inspired? According to 2 Timothy 3:16a, "All Scripture is God-breathed" [or "inspired"]. "The inspiration of Scripture refers to that act whereby the Holy Spirit came upon the authors of Scripture, causing them to write exactly what God intended, while simultaneously preserving each author's writing style and personality" (Matthew Barrett, God's Word Alone: The Authority of Scripture, 229 [italics added]). Humans can make mistakes, but the Spirit of God "carried along" the human authors of Scripture so that God's truth was not corrupted - for example, "For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

The doctrine of *inerrancy* is that the Bible is true, that it does not err in what it affirms.

Why is inerrancy essential? Michael Kruger (www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/why-its -essential) summarizes: "When it comes to the importance of belief in the truthfulness of the Bible, it is hard to overstate one's case. If the Bible really makes false claims, then at least its mistaken portions cannot be the voice of our Lord. And if the Bible is a mix of truth and error, how do we identify which is which? Our only recourse is to rely on our own opinion about such matters, allowing us to edit the Bible according to some other standard (whatever that might be). In the end, we are left not with God's Word, but our word – a Bible of our own making. If we are to proclaim with confidence the message of the Bible to a needy world – a message that is often met with scorn and ridicule – we can only do so if we are convinced that this message is, in fact, true. Therefore, in the end, inerrancy proves to be a practical issue for every believer. All complexities and debates aside, it gives the foundation for why we can trust and obey God's Word. It is a sure rock on which Christians can build their houses in the midst of a hostile world (Matt. 7:25)."

The Bible is both essential and *sufficient* (cf. vv. 16-17)! "The sufficiency of Scripture means that all things necessary for salvation and for living the Christian life in obedience to God and for his glory are given to us in the Scriptures" (Barrett, 334). This does not mean that we cannot learn from other sources such as church tradition, reason, science, and experience, but that what Scripture teaches is primary in authority.

"Scripture is the school of the Holy Spirit. Just as nothing is omitted that is both necessary and useful to know, so nothing is taught but what is expedient to know" (John Calvin, quoted in Barrett, 332).

2 Timothy 3:10-17

10 You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, 11 persecutions, sufferings – what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. 12 In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 13 while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15 and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

READ in another translation (2 Timothy 3:14-17)

14 But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you. 15 You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation which comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. 17 God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work. (NLT) After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Box "You, however" (v. 10) and "But as for you" (v. 14) indicating *contrast*.
- Put consecutive numbers starting with 1 for "my teaching," "my way of life," "my purpose," "faith," patience," "love," "endurance," "persecutions," and "sufferings" in vv. 10-11.
- Circle "Antioch," "Iconium," & "Lystra" in v. 11.
- Bracket occurrences of "persecutions" in v. 11, "sufferings" in v. 11, and "persecuted" in v. 12.
- Underline "from bad to worse" and "deceiving and being deceived" in v. 13.
- Double underline "continue" in v. 14.
- Box "because" indicating *reason* in v. 14.
- Circle "Holy Scriptures" (v. 15) and "All Scripture" (v. 16).
- Number what Scripture can do/is useful for in vv. 15-16.
- Highlight vv. 16-17.
- Box "so that" indicating *purpose* or *result* in v. 17.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (For example, stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



- 1. How does the passage starting in verse 10 connect to the previous passage? What is the focus of those verses?
- 2. How was Paul persecuted at Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra? What does Paul mean that "from them all the Lord rescued me?" (See Acts 13:14, 50-51; 14:5-6, 19-23.)
- 3. In verse 12 Paul says, "all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." Jesus said, "If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20). What does this mean? What if we don't experience persecution?
- 4. What should Timothy do, knowing that he would be persecuted (v. 14)?
- 5. From whom had he "learned it" (v. 14)? Why was this important?
- 6. Paul tells Timothy that Scripture is able to make us "wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (v. 15). What do you believe this phrase means?
- 7. How do you think Timothy would have understood "all Scripture" (v. 16)? How should we understand these words?
- 8. What does inspiration of Scripture mean? What does the term "God-breathed" tell us about the source and authority of Scripture? Why is the doctrine of inspiration of Scripture important?
- 9. Point out four practical benefits of Scripture for our lives from verse 16. Can you think of an example of how a passage of Scripture has benefited you in one of these ways?
- 10. Verse 17 tells us that the result of the (potential) work of Scripture in our lives is that we are equipped for every good work. How has God's Word helped to equip you for the ministry God has for you to do?
- 11. Discuss: How well do you know the Bible? What are some resources and practices that you have found helpful in trying to set aside regular time to read and study God's Word? If the Bible is as important for our lives as God through Paul says it is, what will you do to increase your intake of His Word?



Commentary On The Text

After discussing the challenge of false teachers in 2 Timothy 3:1-9, Paul goes on to encourage Timothy by referring to the example of Paul's own life (vv. 10-11). He contrasts the reality of persecution for those who want "to live a godly life in Christ Jesus" (v. 12) with the apparent progress (actually downward) of "evil men and impostors" (v. 13). Paul then charges Timothy to continue to be faithful in his own gospel ministry, pointing to the influences that have shaped Timothy's life (vv. 14-15). This leads Paul to explain the nature of the Scriptures and how they play an essential role in the believer's life and ministry (vv. 16-17).

Both verse 10 and verse 14 begin with *su de*, literally "but you," contrasting Timothy with the false teachers. As discussed in the notes, the verb translated in v. 10 by NIV as "know all about" refers to knowing/following as a committed disciple.

In contrast to the characteristics of the false teachers mentioned earlier (vv. 2-5), in verses 10 and 11 Paul lists nine items that Timothy has observed in Paul's life. "Paul begins with the most important items in that they offer the most visible and significant contrast to his opponents. Timothy knows Paul's doctrine and his manner of life, his conduct; the truth of a message can be connected to the character of the messenger (cf. v. 14). From these two flow Paul's purpose in ministry, his patience, and the three virtues of faith, love, and steadfastness. The final virtue, steadfastness, is especially important in view of Paul's frequent persecutions and sufferings" (William D. Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 46, *Pastoral Epistles*, 556).

Paul reminds Timothy of persecution he endured "in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra" while encouragingly noting that "the Lord rescued me from all of them" (v. 11). Paul notes in v. 12: "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." "Timothy needed to realize, as all Christians do, especially those for whom 'prosperity theology' appeals, that when a person determines to 'live' a 'godly' life, he or she will suffer persecution. With his or her commitment to follow Christ faithfully, the Christian sets the course of his or her life directly opposite to the course of the world system. Confrontation and conflict become inevitable (cf. Matt. 10:22-23; Luke 21:12; John 15:20; Acts 14:22; 1 Thess. 3:4)" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on 2 Timothy," 2021 ed., 47, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/ notes/pdf/2timothy.pdf).

In contrast, "evil men and impostors" will enjoy success, though of a dubious nature – they "will go from bad to worse" (v. 13b). In fact, not only will they deceive others, their sin and other deceivers will deceive them!

Paul's central concern that Timothy "continue" faithfully in what he had previously learned, the basis for his own Christian life and ministry, is seen in the imperative "continue" in v. 14. Mounce (561) comments: "In contrast to the deceiving opponents (v 13), Timothy is to remain steadfast in the gospel, the gospel he has learned in the past and the gospel that experience has taught him is true. As Guthrie explains, 'In contrast to the false teachers with their constant endeavor to advance to something new, Timothy may be satisfied with what he has already received' (162). Both objective learning and experiential validation are necessary parts of Timothy's growth as a believer."

Timothy is encouraged to remain faithful to the gospel based on its two sources: the people from whom he had learned it (v. 14) and the Scriptures (vv. 15-17).

The appeal based on the first source, "because you know those from whom you learned it" (v. 14b), "amounts to the argument 'the teaching is as good as its teachers'; that is, Timothy should 'continue in it' because he knows that the character of those who taught the faith to him verifies the trustworthiness of the contents" (Philip H. Towner, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 581). We know that Timothy's grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice, had sincere faith (1:5) and apparently taught him the OT Scriptures from an early age (3:15). Certainly, Paul would also have taught and mentored his "dear son" (1:2) in the faith.

One great value of Scripture is that it reveals saving truth unavailable through general revelation by pointing to Christ so we can place our faith in Him (v. 15).

Verse 16 reveals the divine source and usefulness of Scripture. Concerning the source, "All Scripture is Godbreathed." Scripture originated in the mind of God.

In verse 16 Paul lists four more ways in which Scripture is "useful": for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. Stott suggests that the four form two pairs, the first pair dealing with belief ("creed") and the second pair with behavior ("conduct"), with each pair having both a positive and a negative. Thus, the functions are teaching truth, correcting falsehood/error, correcting improper behavior, and training proper behavior. We must recognize the connection between belief and behavior, unlike the false teachers (cf. John R. W. Stott, *The Message of 2 Timothy*, 103). These four functions of God's Word are key to Timothy fulfilling Paul's charge to preach the word, correct, rebuke, and encourage (2 Timothy 4:2).

The purpose or result of the usefulness of Scripture is that "the servant of God" might be "thoroughly equipped for every good work" (v. 17; cf. Ephesians 2:10). The late Prof Hendricks used to say that, "The Bible was not given to make us more intelligent sinners, but to change our lives!" I would add, and Prof would agree, the Bible was given so that we could better glorify and serve God, serving others for His sake.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 10 *You, however* "Timothy's past conduct and character stood in stark contrast to that of the false teachers to whom Paul had just referred" (Constable, 46).

v. 10 *know all about* Better, "followed" (NASB) or "have followed" (ESV). "The verb used (Gk. *parakolouthein*) literally means 'follow' in the sense of accompanying, but although Timothy has been Paul's constant companion this meaning is in the background here. It is also a technical term defining the relation of a disciple to his master, and can be paraphrased 'study at close quarters', 'follow in spirit', 'carefully note with a view to reproducing', and so 'take as an example' (J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, 198).

v. 10 *my teaching, my way of life* These "head the list as the two most significant aspects of Paul's ministry relative to Timothy's historical situation. The opponents' errant teaching (1 Tim 1:6-7) and aberrant behavior (2 Tim 3:6-9) are the main causes of Timothy's problems in Ephesus, and, as Paul repeatedly states, they are closely intertwined" (Mounce, 557).

v. 11 *Antioch, Iconium and Lystra* Cities in Asia Minor (modern Turkey) in which Paul was persecuted. Timothy was from Lystra and was well-known by believers in Iconium (Acts 16:1-2), so he would be well acquainted with Paul's previous persecution in these three cities.

v. 11 *Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them* Literally, "Out of them all the Lord delivered me." Paul has been delivered "out of" these persecutions, not "kept from" them. " Even when death comes, the Lord will still deliver; see 2 Timothy 4:18.

v. 12 *will be persecuted* "Thus, as a general rule, all Christians 'will be persecuted 'as Paul was This principle was already stated by Jesus (cf. Mt. 10:22-23; Lk. 21:12; Jn. 15:20) and by Paul, both on his first missionary journey (Acts 14:22) and in his earliest correspondence (1 Thes. 3:4)" (George W. Knight III, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary: The Pastoral Epistles*, 441).

v. 13 *impostors* The Greek word "ranges in meaning from the technical sense of a 'sorcerer' (who deceives by practicing magic and witchcraft) to the broader sense of 'deceiver, cheat, charlatan" (Towner, 578). The false teachers are frauds and posers.

v. 14 *But as for you, continue* In contrast to the false teachers, Timothy is to continue (literally, "remain") in what he has learned and believed.

v. 14 *in what* "In the next several verses Paul is discussing what Timothy has learned. In some places it appears that he is referring to the OT; in other places it appears that he is referring to the gospel message....It appears that Paul does not talk about the OT in distinction from the gospel message, or the gospel apart from its heritage in the OT.... 'in what,' the first of these references must include at least the gospel message. Paul would not call upon a Christian evangelist to depend solely on the OT, ignoring the specific gospel message of Jesus Christ" (Mounce, 561-562).

v. 15 *and how from infancy* "Jewish parents were expected to teach their children the Law from the age of five onwards (Kelly, 201).

v. 15 *the Holy Scriptures* Literally, "sacred writings." This was a technical term for the Old Testament in Greek-speaking Judaism.

v. 15 *which are able to make you wise for salvation through Jesus Christ* "So, since the Bible is a book of salvation, and since salvation is through Christ, the Bible focuses its attention upon Christ...in order that by faith we may be saved" (Stott, 103). The Bible has a Christocentric focus.

v. 16 All Scripture Grammatically, this could also be translated "Every (or each) Scripture." "The question is whether Paul is thinking of Scripture as a cohesive whole ('all') or as the sum total of its parts ('every')....Elsewhere in this passage it appears that Paul is viewing Scripture as a whole, and therefore the translation 'all' is given. In its entirety Scripture comes from God" (Mounce, 566). "We understand that the word 'Scripture' (graphe) includes the New Testament since 2 Peter 3:16 cites the writings of Paul among the 'Scriptures' (also graphe)" (Walter E. Liefeld, The NIV Application Commentary: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, 279). Paul "directs that his letters be read publicly in Christian assemblies, no doubt alongside Old Testament readings (e.g., Col. 4:16; 1 Thes. 5:27)....and calls his message 'the word of God (e.g. 1 Thes. 2:13" (Stott, 101).

v. 16 *God-breathed* The literal meaning of the compound Greek word *theopneustos*, sometimes translated "inspire." The word "indicates not that Scripture itself or its human authors were breathed into by God, but that Scripture was breathed or breathed out by God" (Stott, 101).

v. 16 *useful* Scripture yields practical benefits, including (1) "teaching" (what is right), (2) "rebuking" (wrong teaching), (3) "correcting" (wrong behavior), and (4) "training in righteousness" (right behavior). See also Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 10:11.



CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Follow godly models, trust in divine deliverance from inevitable persecution and suffering, and continue in the Scriptures, which can fully equip you to serve God through good works.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)

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3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

I had precious little exposure to God or church when I was a young child; however, I do remember several things about my grandmother that led me to wonder about religious things. My Meme constantly had a rag in her hand and kept busy cleaning her house while singing *How Great Thou Art*. A cross-stitched "Serenity Prayer" was posted on her wall, but I always thought it was a sarcastic joke. I had a terribly sassy mouth, and she would regularly sing to me, "O be careful little tongue what you say . . ." when I mouthed off. What exposure to a trusting faith do you remember from childhood? Paul encouraged Timothy to continue in what he learned, namely, the Holy Scriptures impressed upon him since infancy by his grandmother and mother. We as parents inherently know that it's a good thing to teach our kids the Bible, but sometimes we miss the why, the reason behind the importance of this teaching. In this passage we learn that the Scriptures give us the wisdom that points to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. We don't want our kids to just know about salvation; we want them to experience the unbelievable freedom that comes from trusting Jesus Christ and the abundant life found only in abiding in our Savior. What does discipleship look like in your home? How often are you guiding your children toward wisdom that leads to salvation? Would you be willing to read to your family from a children's Bible or enjoy a five-minute worship song together? You don't need a plan; you just need to start. We're praying for you!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read 2 Timothy 3:10-17.

1. What does Timothy know about Paul?

2. What does Paul tell Timothy all Christians will face?

3. What is Scripture used for and why?

What Do You Think?

What does it mean for Scripture to be "God-breathed"?

What Do You Do?

What's the difference between teaching, rebuking, correcting and training? Look these words up in the dictionary and put the definition in your own words. How does the Bible help with each?

CORE COMPETENCY: Authority of the Bible

I believe the Bible is God's book that tells me what to believe and do.

MEMORY VERSE: Proverbs 4:13

"Hold on to instruction, do not let it go; guard it well, for it is your life."



OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17) *I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.* **Church** (Ephesians 4:15-16) *I believe the church is God's primary way to*

accomplish His purposes on earth today. Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God. **Humanity** (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12) I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4) *I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.*

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9) *I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.*



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12) *I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.*

Joy (John 15:11) *I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.*

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29) *I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.* **Kindness/Goodness** (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13) *I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.*

Grace (Colossians 3:13) *I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.*

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5) *I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.* **Humility** (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12) *I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.* **Biblical Community** (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4) *I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.*

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2) *I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.*

Evangelism (Acts 1:8) *I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.*

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11) I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20) *I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.*

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33) I focus on God and His priorities for my life. Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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