

Subject: *God's Greatest Gift*
Scripture: *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

When the Bible says that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, this describes the greatest gift that God has ever given. Some would say that Jesus Christ is His greatest gift, and I'm not going to argue that point, but how could we know about Jesus apart from the Scriptures? In this message I want to explore the supreme value of God's inspired Word. We will look at three things:

- The authority of Scripture
- The ability of Scripture
- The application of Scripture

THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

The authority of Scripture is based on its Author. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, literally "God-breathed," which means Scripture is the breath or the very words of God. The Bible says that "all scripture" is given by inspiration of God. That means everything that is written from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22. When the Bible speaks, God speaks. The Bible teaches verbal, plenary inspiration of Scripture.

- Verbal plenary inspiration of Scripture
- Verbal = every word is inspired
- Plenary = all Scripture is inspired

God inspired every word and therefore His absolute authority stands behind it. It is perfect and without any flaw. How do we know the Bible is God's inspired, infallible Word? It makes that claim in verse 16. Even if we didn't have that statement we would know the Scriptures are inspired by God. Consider these proofs that Scripture is inspired by God:

1. Christ's statement about Scripture

Matthew 4:4 *But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

2. The names and titles of Scripture

Psalms 19:7-9⁷ *The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.*⁸ *The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.*⁹ *The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.* Notice the repeated phrase "of the LORD." He is the source of all Scripture.

3. The scientific accuracy of Scripture

The Bible is not a science textbook, but whenever it speaks on science, it is 100% accurate. The truth we find in Scripture was way ahead of its time.

- ✓ Earth is suspended in space (Job 26:7)

- ✓ Earth is round, not flat (Is. 40:22)
- ✓ The stars cannot be counted (Jer. 33:22)
- ✓ Earth has a cycle of evaporation and condensation (Ps. 135:7)
- ✓ The blood sustains life in the body (Lev. 17:11)
- ✓ The universe is running down (Ps. 102:25-26)
- ✓ The stars are a great distance from earth (Job 22:12)
- ✓ The stars differ in brightness (1 Cor. 15:41)
- ✓ The chemical composition of man and the earth is the same (Ps. 103:14)

4. The historical accuracy of Scripture

Archeological evidence has proven time and time again that the Bible is accurate.

5. The fulfilled prophecies of Scripture

The Bible is the only religious book that contains prophecy because only God knows the future. Many prophecies about Christ were fulfilled when He came to earth the first time: His virgin birth, His birthplace in Bethlehem, His forerunner, John the Baptist, His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, His betrayal by Judas the details of His crucifixion, His resurrection, His ascension. **1 Corinthians 15:3-4**³ *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;*⁴ *And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.*

6. The complete honesty of Scripture

The Bible tells some things that men would have left out if they had written it on their own. The Bible is a book that man could not have written if he would because it surpasses him, and it is a book that he would not have written if he could because it exposes and condemns him.

7. The amazing unity of Scripture

In spite of being written by 40 writers over 1,500 years, the Bible tells one story and has one unifying theme.

THE ABILITY OF SCRIPTURE

All scripture is profitable (useful) especially for these four things:

- Doctrine – what is right (what we should believe and how we should behave)
- Reproof – what is wrong (what is wrong about us and the world – it's like a mirror)
- Correction – how to get right

- Instruction in righteousness – how to stay right

The Bible tells us the right way and the wrong way. **Proverbs 14:12** *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*

THE APPLICATION OF SCRIPTURE

The Bible is the book you never outgrow. Timothy learned it from the time he was an infant (“from a child”). Children are never too young to learn God’s Word, and adults are never too old to learn it. We need to learn it, love it, and live it. The best translation of the Bible is the one that takes the words on paper and translates them into everyday life.

Paul closes this chapter by reminding Timothy (vs. 14-17) that the holy scriptures are sufficient for salvation and living the Christian life because they are inspired by God. In the heart of this practical section is verse 15, where Paul reminds young Timothy that the scriptures are “able to make us wise unto salvation.”

- Scripture gives us wisdom to know we are sinners

Romans 3:20 *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

- Scripture gives us wisdom to know the only true God and Jesus Christ, the only Lord and Savior

1 Timothy 2:5 *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

- Scripture gives us wisdom to repent of our sin and trust Christ as Lord and Savior

2 Timothy 3:15 *And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

- Scripture gives us wisdom to know how to live for God and serve Him

2 Timothy 3:17 *That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

To be thoroughly furnished means to be fully equipped to live for God and do what He wants.

Romans 12:2 *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

In 1775 John Rippon started serving as Pastor of Carter’s Lane Baptist Church in London and he served in that church for 63 years. Now that’s a long time to be pastor of the same congregation. How he could serve faithfully for that long? The answer must be that He trusted God for his own needs and the needs of the church and He depended on God’s Word to guide his own life and the life of his church. I say that because he wrote the words to this great hymn:

How Firm a Foundation

*How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say, than to you He hath said,
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?*