

## “THE USEFULNESS OF THE WORD” – 2 TIMOTHY 3:13-17

Genesis helps us to see the power of God’s Word in creating the world and man.

Ge 1:3 - And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

Ge 1:11 - And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so.

Ge 1:20 - And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.”

Ge 1:24 - And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so.

Ge 1:26 - Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

Ge 2:7 - then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and **breathed into his nostrils the breath of life**, and the man became a living creature.

First Peter helps us to see how God created new spiritual life through God’s Word in us.

1 Pet 1:23 - since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;

David helps us to see how God’s Word can work in the believer’s life.

Ps 19:7-8 - The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;

As believers, it seems as though we often lose sight of the power and usefulness of God’s Word. Think about the power of sharing a passage of Scripture with an unbeliever, and seeing them being made alive and then trusting in Christ. Think about the power of sharing a verse with an believer, and having their life transformed through the power of the Word. Think of the power of Word as it is preached, and conviction of sin comes over the person, and a life is transformed.

Example: A drunk driver kills a teenager in a car accident. The Christian parents are filled with grief, and pain over the death of their child. Bitterness, and anger may begin to well up inside of them. But then they are reminded of truths from God’s Word. God’s peace floods their hearts through the ministry of the Word. More truths are brought to their mind... and forgiveness, and presenting the Gospel to this drunken driver become reactions and responses stimulated by the Word.

Heb 4:12 - For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

“It doesn’t much matter how much time you spend in prayer or fasting, in fellowship with other Christians, in ministering or in witnessing to others; If you’re not spending time in God’s Word (or to be more accurate—if God’s Word does not richly dwell in you), you are, for all intents and purposes, handcuffing the Holy Spirit.” (Lou Priolo p. 7 TTD)

**Context:** Paul has written a personal letter to Timothy. In the context, he has been warning him of false teachers, and those who are not walking in obedience to the truth. In verse 13 of chapter 3, Paul says these evil people and imposters are going from bad to worse and deceiving and being deceived. So they are living ungodly lives, and teaching error. The first thing I want to note about these evil people is that they are living defeated lives. They can’t overcome their addictions. They have no hope

Also, while imposters are deceiving others in whatever way they can, I would like to correlate their lies the truth I will be addressing in this text. For example, these imposters might suggest that God’s Word is not enough to deal the issues you are facing. Or, they might say that God’s Word was good for when it was written, but it has lost touch with today’s problems.

But Paul goes to tell Timothy the remedy to this ungodliness and lies. “Continue in the Word!” (v.14)

Jn 8:31 - So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,

### **Able** (v. 15)

which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

1 Cor. 2:14 - The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

Rom. 10:17 - So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

## **God-breathed** (v. 16)

God's Word is not a collection of wisdom and insights from man.

2 Pe 1:20-21 - knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 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. "Biblical inspiration is a mystery because it combines what is humanly sinful and fallible with what is divinely infallible and sinless. The Scriptures, as the finished product of this process, display a remarkable diversity of styles, interests and literary form. All this suggests that the act of God in breathing out his Word, in the thirty-nine writings of the Old Testament, and by analogy the twenty-seven writings of the New Testament, took place in such a way as to allow genuine freedom to the individuality and personality of the human writers, while guiding these same writers into all truth and preserving their writings from every kind of error. (Focus on the Bible)

Three implications for the Scriptures being breathed out by God:

- authoritative - "I'm my own authority."
- free from error
- sufficient - All that I need for life and godliness

**Profitable** – beneficial, productive, sufficient, and useful;

Are all the Scriptures profitable?

It seems to me that there are big questions today in Christianity about the Bible's usefulness.

Many are questioning its ability to directly and indirectly address and deal with issues we are facing.

Money?; Parenting?; Personal problems?; How to run the church?

Not only do we deny God's Word ability to deal with these things, we also deny Christ's body to minister God's Word to these situations.

2 Pet 1:3 - His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,

Yet, while the Scriptures don't tell you how to drive car, or play a sport, or even how to read. It does tell you how to be like Christ in any given situation. And isn't that the goal? I am here to be pleasing and honoring to God and to be transformed into the image of Christ.

## **So what is the God-breathed Word profitable for?**

*Teaching, reproof, correction, & training in righteousness.*

The order of these four uses of God's Word seems to be quite important. Now, this is not true of every passage of Scripture, but the order here seems to definitely be of significance to the process of making a competent believer.

Think about it for a minute. You can't reprove or correct someone unless they have first been taught what is expected.

Now as we approach these four uses of God's Word, we might ask the question, how can these things make a man or woman competent and equipped for every good work (v. 17)?

Or to put it another way, maybe we could say that the Christian who is incompetent and not equipped is due to the fact that they are lacking in these four things described in verse 16.

## **Teaching**

Teaching is counter-cultural. It means to give instructions, and because these instructions are God's Word the implication is that these are not optional. While others are just saying, "listen, don't give advice, and don't push your truth on me", God's Word tells us to teach and instruct what God has said in His Word.

Teaching is not merely verbal communication, but it is discipling. We learn by hearing and seeing. Therefore, teaching is being a model and example of truth. Teaching is not merely telling people what God says they must do, but it is also doing what He says and being an example that others can follow.

Notice, in this passage in verse 10 & 14...

2 Ti 3:10-11 - You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me

2 Ti 3:14 - But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it

Lk 6:40 - A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.

### Why and how is God's Word profitable for teaching?

Eph 4:14 - **so that we may no longer be children**, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

Lk 1:3-4 - it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have **certainty** concerning the things you have been taught.

Rom 15:4 - For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have **hope**.

### Historically:

Deut 4:5 - See, I (Moses) have taught you statutes and rules, as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it.

In Deut. 6, parents were to take these commands and teach them diligently to their children.

Part of Jesus' instructions for making disciples was, "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Mt28:20)

### And yet there is a warning concerning teaching:

Keep in mind that teachers will be judged with greater strictness (Jam. 3:1). We don't want to lead people astray.

### **Reprove or Conviction**

If teaching is counter-cultural, then reproof is really out of step with our culture.

Reprove or better "conviction" means proof or proving someone guilty; to convince;

Kittle's Theological Dict. says, "It means to show someone his sin and to summon him to repentance."

God's Word is useful for bringing people to the point of acknowledging their failure to meet God's standard.

Teaching and conviction may go hand and hand in that one may have to teach new material or re-teach in new ways to convince a person that their behavior is sinful.

The Word of God is like a surgeon with a scalpel cutting away the callous sin around the heart.

Heb 4:12 - For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Summary: Conviction means bringing facts to bear upon a case so as to prove someone guilty of a sin.

Conviction is important because sin is disrupting the believer's relationship with God.

True conviction will lead to repentance or the changing of one's ways willingly.

It will show itself true by humility and brokenness over sin.

### **Correction**

While conviction is the ministry of the Word tearing down sin, correction is the ministry of "standing something up" or "making something to stand again."

lit. "a restoration to an upright or right state", referring to improvement of life and character. (Vines)

The Word of God is able to set straight what has been knocked off base or out of line.

It is helping a person get back on their feet after having stumbled into sin.

How do we know if a person is actually being corrected by the Word of God?

If a person shows remorse outwardly through tears or sad face, does that mean they have been corrected?

Or on the other hand, if a person shows no tears or sad face, does that mean they have NOT been corrected?

Although all true repentance involves regret for having offended God, that emotional side of the process may not be manifested outwardly, or it might not be repentance as all.

In the Scriptures, the evidence of repentance is not regret, but "fruit" resulting from and appropriate to repentance.

1. A willingness to deny or say no (as Christ puts it) to selfish desires, either sinful in themselves or sinful as taking priority above Christ and His Kingdom.
2. An actual breaking with the past practice, situation, or persons involved in the sin.
3. Setting up a structure that will make it difficult to fall into the same sin again.

Jay Adams calls this radical amputation by which he references Jesus' command in Mark 9:43-48 to rid whatever in your life is tempting you to sin (hand, foot, or eye).

1. He eliminates anything, anyone, any influence, or any situation that may be a stumbling block to holy obedience to

God's Word.

2. He makes it very difficult to sin unconsciously or habitually; sin would take a much more deliberate effort, given the figurative removal of one's sin-prone foot, hand, or eye.

### **Training in Righteousness**

The fourth step can be summed up practically by showing the person from God's Word how to put on new biblical ways in place of the old ones that have been discarded. This training consists of learning the biblical alternatives to the acts, attitudes, and lifestyles that need to be replaced. Unless the new ways are learned the old ones will reappear. Training carries the idea of making righteousness a habit.

Examples:

Eph 4:25 - Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor.

Eph 4:28 - 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.

Eph 4:29 - 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.

Eph 4:31-32 - Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

1 Thess. 5:15 - See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.

These for uses of the God-breathed Word will enable the Man of God to be **Competent & Equipped** for every good work.

Believers when using God's Word in this manner will be capable to be what God wants them to be and to do what God wants them to do. They will be able to meet the standards of righteousness that God requires.

"If a man is inadequate, it is not because the Bible is inadequate but simply because he does not know his Bible adequately." (Adams p. 30)

"Our problem is not that we do not have what we need in the Bible, but that we do not have enough of the Bible in us, which we need!" Adams p.32

So I conclude by saying God's Word is very useful and relevant to making believers competent to the glory of God.