

Inspired by God

2 Tim 3:16-17

7/19/09

Intro

The apostle Paul is in a prison in Rome and writing his last letter to his trusted co-worker Timothy, a young man who is a pastor/leader at the church of Ephesus. Paul senses that the time of his execution is near and pours out his last instructions to inspire and strengthen Timothy for the road which lies ahead.

From this letter come these two verses which summarize one of the great foundational truths that every Christian needs to know: the Bible is the Word of God. The confidence we have in the inspiration and authority of God's Word is essential for our growth as believers. Yet we see this truth being challenged in the culture all around us: in our schools, media, entertainment industry, and even those who claim to be Christians.

The challenge for us today is to answer the question: Are there good reasons to believe that the Bible *is* the Word of God? As we explore these verses in greater detail I hope to accomplish three things that Paul was also trying to accomplish in Timothy: to increase your confidence in the Word of God, to inspire you to become a deeper learner of God's Word, and challenge you to become a more effective doer of God's Word.

- 1 The Greek word for "Scripture" here is a term used not just for Old Testament Scriptures, but also includes the newly revealed Word which eventually became the New Testament as we know it. In 2 Peter 3:15-16 Peter used this same word for Scripture to describe Paul's letters.
- 2 "Inspired by God" literally means "God-breathed". God used the various personalities, minds, hearts, and emotions of human writers, but breathed into them the words He desired. The words came from God and were written exactly as He intended.

I. Be Confident IN the Word of God

A. Because of its Accuracy

- 1 **You can be confident the Bible is the Word of God because of its scientific accuracy.** It is not a text book with equation and formulas, but it does contain all of the basic principles upon which true science is built.
- 2 Science (which literally means knowledge) is changing all of the time.

Illus – The Louvre, one of the largest and most visited museums in the world, has an estimated 3.5 miles of science books spanning hundreds of years. Most are obsolete.

- 1 As late as 1492, when Columbus sailed, people still believed the earth was flat. Yet

Isaiah wrote these words 750 years before Christ.

Isaiah 40:22 It is He who sits above the circle (sphere) of the earth

- 2 The Law of Gravity was not known until Isaac Newton (who was a dedicated Christian and Bible scholar for his time) published his paper in 1687. Yet the author of the book of Job, believed to be the oldest book in the Bible, wrote this:

Job 26:7 He (God) stretches out the north over empty space and hangs the earth on nothing.

- 3 Ptolemy, an early scientist, counted the stars in about 100 AD and declared there are 1056 stars. That was the latest science. Until Galileo invented his first telescope in 1400 AD and concluded they could not be counted. But Jeremiah wrote this in 600 BC:

Jer 33:22 “The host of heaven cannot be counted ...”

- 4 Ptolemy could have saved himself a lot of time and trouble if he had only read the Scriptures. But isn't that true of us as well? Many times we try to solve problems without consulting God's Word, when we could have saved ourselves a lot of time and trouble.
- 5 **You can be confident the Bible is the Word of God because of its historical accuracy.** Our faith is grounded in real events and places in history. If the Biblical accounts of those events are not accurate, then not all of Scripture is inspired by God. Thankfully, there is overwhelming evidence to support that it is accurate.

Illus – For hundreds of years scholars thought the Book of Daniel was in error because it referred to Belshazzar as the last king of Babylon, when all of the archeological evidence at that time only mentioned Nabonitus.

Daniel 5:16 “Now if you are able to read the inscription and make its interpretation known to me, you will be clothed with purple and wear a necklace of gold around your neck, and you will have authority as the third ruler in the kingdom.”

- 1 In the 1870's archeologist discovered what is now called the Nabonitus Cylinder, which mentions Belshazzar as his son.

B. Because of its Fulfilled Prophecy

- 6 Biblical scholars estimate Jesus fulfilled more than 300 Old Testament Prophecies, but critics claim he arranged to have them fulfilled. How can you arrange where you are born?

Micah 5:2 But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel

- 7 Crucifixion was not used as a method of execution until the Romans hundreds of years after Psalm 22 was written.

Psalm 22:1,8,16-18 My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him. They pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots.

C. Because of its Unity

- 8 Yet another reason to have confidence that the Bible is the Word of God is because of its wonderful unity. It was written over 1500 years, ~40 different authors with various occupations (fishermen, butler, soldiers, prime minister, priest, physician, etc), 3 languages, 3 continents, yet has amazing unity. One theme: Redemption. One message: Salvation. One hero: Jesus Christ. One purpose: glorify God.

Illus – Software people will tell you how is hard to get different pieces of software working together with a small group of people who work next to each other 8 hours a day and speak the same language.

- 1 Why is it so important to have confidence? Without it we cannot expect to walk victoriously. With it, we have our faith strengthened, assurance in time of trial, and become a more effective witness.
- 2 We have just scratched the surface. There are many other reasons to have confidence in the Word of God. But are you expected to remember all of this? No, but know that when you are faced with challenges there is overwhelming evidence and answers.

II. Be Equipped BY the Word of God

- 3 God's Word is profitable. It has great benefit. But just like we can't expect to make a profit without first investing, we can't expect to get the benefit of God's Word without first investing the time to know it.

A. Invest the Time to Know

- 1 Teaching refers to content, substance. Some versions translate it Doctrine. It is that which we need to know.
- 2 You can't expect someone to believe, understand, and follow that which they do not know.

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing

of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Matthew 4:4 Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

3 How many of can find 10 minutes in our day that are pretty much a waste of time and spend that time in God's Word? Just 10 minutes.

B. Accept the Hard Lessons

1 Reproof and Correcting are hard lessons. In sum, we need to have teachable hearts, and the true test of teachability is accepting the things that are difficult, we don't feel like, or even disagree.

2 Reproof is conviction of sin.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

3 But God's purpose is not to point out our faults, it is to restore us.

4 Correction is setting something right, or putting something back in its right place.

5 We often don't like to be shown when we are out of place, especially in areas of our weaknesses

Illus – A lesson I am still learning is the difference between parenting teenage boys vs. teenage girls. Boys are ok with rules and consequences. Girls want more information and explanation. One is not better than the other, just different. I am by nature impatient, and God is still correcting me.

Col 3:12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience

C. Train to be Doers

9 God desires to use us. We want us to be doers of the word.

James 1:22-25 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

10 I once read a great quote: “Experience is the hardest teacher, because she gives the test first and the lesson afterwards”. We might also say experience is the best teacher.

Illus – Katie wanted me to do some trim in part of our house. I got all sorts of books and tools about it, but it wasn’t until I actually started doing it that I fully understood what I was reading. I learned from my mistakes and got better and faster.

11 Be balanced in your training. Read the whole counsel of God. That is why we teach book-by-book, chapter by chapter.

12 We see ourselves and see us as being inadequate, but God has a purpose for every one of us and sees what we can become. He desire is to equip us, but we need to invest the time in His Word for that to happen.