

Back to School
II Timothy 3:14-17
"Bible 101"

I. WHY WE TURN TO THE BIBLE

- A. The power we find in the Scriptures
- B. The person we find in the Scriptures

II. WHY WE TRUST IN THE BIBLE

- A. The Bible's historic authority
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III. WHY WE TEACH FROM THE BIBLE

- A. How relevant it is to our lives
- B. How rewarding it is in our lives

1. In my humble opinion, one of the greatest sermons preached in the last century was a message entitled, "A Baptist and His Bible".
2. The sermon was preached by Dr. Jerry Vines at the 1987 Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis.
3. At a time when some in his denomination were attacking the truthfulness and authority of the Bible, Dr. Vines preached a sermon that many feel was a turning point in the conservative resurgence of the convention.
4. In that message, Dr. Vines said, "To mess with the Bible is like poisoning medicine for a dying man. It's like polluting the bread of a hungry man. It's like corrupting the water of a thirsty man...Undermine the message of this book and you have done eternal damage to the souls of people."ⁱ
5. Dr. Vines' text for that sermon was taken from the closing verses of II Timothy 3. There, the Apostle Paul was writing to his son in the faith, the young preacher and pastor, Timothy.
6. One writer described the day in which Timothy lived as "a world of religious flux"ⁱⁱ. Paul described it as "perilous times" (v. 1) in which many would be "reprobate concerning the faith" (v. 8).
7. In order to strengthen and encourage the young preacher in his ministry, Paul urged him in verse 14 to, "...continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of..."
8. Specifically, Paul pointed him to the "holy scriptures", and reminded him of the truth that the Bible *is* the Word of God.

9. The days in which we live are certainly no less perilous than in Timothy's time. It is still a world of religious instability, and more than ever, we need to continue in the truths we have learned.

10. In this important passage we are reminded of what the Bible has to say about itself, and of the important place the Bible ought to hold in our lives as believers and followers of Jesus Christ.

11. Look at this text with me as we consider the Bible and its significance in our faith. First of all, we learn here something about:

I. WHY WE TURN TO THE BIBLE

1. The Muslim religion has an interesting title for Christians. They call us *Al-Kitab*, which means "people of the book".

2. While they do not use that term in a necessarily positive way, that is still a good way to describe true Christians. We are people of the *real* holy book, the Bible.

3. Everything we believe and hold dear in our faith is all connected back to the Word of God we call the Bible.

4. In verse 14 of our text, Paul reminded Timothy of his Bible upbringing. He said, "*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.*"

5. In this verse we are pointed to the main reason we turn to the Bible in the first place. There is a primary function that draws us to the Bible.

6. Why is that we are a people of the Book? Why do we turn to the Bible as the resource and authority for the Christian faith? Well, first of all, it is because of:

A. The power we find in the Scriptures

1. Paul reminded Timothy of the Scriptures he had been taught since he was just a boy, and he said that those "holy scriptures" were, "...**able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.**"

2. There is a unique ability found only in the Word of God. It is the power to make one wise to the truth of salvation.

3. Guy King said, "The Bible has many functions to perform; but first and foremost, fundamentally, this: to make plain to sinful men the Way of Salvation."ⁱⁱⁱ

4. Unlike any other writing in human history, the Bible is able to reveal to men the truth of their fallen, sinful condition, and point them to the love of God that seeks to redeem them from their sin.
5. Hebrews 4:12 says, "*For the word of God is quick (that means alive), and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword...*"
6. Other religious books exist. The Buddhists have the Tripitaka. The Sikhs have the Grantha. The Hindus have the Vedas. The Muslims have the Koran.
7. While these may instruct in their particular regional religion, none of them have the actual power to reveal to men the God who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.
8. Only the gospel found in the Word of God is the "power of God unto salvation." That is why we turn to the Bible.
9. Looking at our text, we see furthermore that we turn to the Bible, not only because of the power we find in the Scriptures, but also because of:

B. The person we find in the Scriptures

1. Paul reminded Timothy that the "holy scriptures" were able to enlighten men to salvation, "*...through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*"
2. The Bible does not just point us to salvation; it points us to the Savior! *He* is the wisdom that the Bible gives for true salvation!
3. The Bible is not an end in itself. It is the means to the true end, which is Jesus Christ! In John 5:39, Jesus said, "*Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*"
4. Why do we love the Bible? Why do we constantly turn to its pages? It is because in them we meet Jesus! In them we find Him whom our souls love!

*I find my Lord in the Book,
Wherever I chance to look,
He is the theme of the Bible,
The center and heart of the Book,
He's the Rose of Sharon, the Lily fair,
Wherever I open my Bible,
The Lord of the Book is there.*

5. During the Protestant Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church accused the Protestants of making an idol of the Bible and worshipping the Bible.
6. The truth is; we don't worship the Bible. We *do* love it, and turn to it, however, because the Lord we worship is revealed to us in the Bible.
7. We turn to the Bible, because it is able to make us wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus!
8. Look again at our text, and notice something else it tells us about the Bible. We see here not only *why we turn to the Bible*, but notice further, we are reminded of:

II. WHY WE TRUST IN THE BIBLE

1. II Timothy 3:16 is one of the clearest and most important Bible verses about the Bible itself. Paul said to the young preacher, "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God...*"
2. While the Bible as a whole testifies to this fact, in this verse it is spelled out in clear and wonderful language.
3. Consider with me what Paul says in this key phrase and what it means for our confidence and trust in the Bible. First of all, we are pointed here to:

A. The Bible's historic authority

1. Paul assured the young preacher's heart by saying, "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God...*"
2. I want to focus in on that word "scripture". It comes from the Greek word that gives us our English words "graph" and "graphic".
3. The word simply means "writings". In most places where Biblical writers used it, they prefaced it with a definite article which made it to read "*the writings*".
4. Some 1900 years ago when Paul used this word, both he and Timothy knew what he was referring to. Even though the New Testament was not yet complete, there were certain "writings" that were considered holy and sacred, and these were known as "*the writings*" or the Scriptures.
5. Throughout the history of God's people, there have been certain documents that by their own nature were considered to be holy and unique.
6. Almost two millenniums later, the people of God still recognize these sacred, holy writings to be distinct and authoritative above all other books and writings.

7. Though men have always tried to question and attack the veracity and authority of the Bible, still today it retains its esteem and integrity.
8. In the 18th century, a man named Voltaire used the new printing press to write books attacking Christianity and the church.
9. Back then, Voltaire said that in 50 years the church would be extinct and the only Bibles left would be on the shelves of museums.
10. Well, today Voltaire is dead, but the Bible lives on! In fact, after his death, Voltaire's own house became an office of the Geneva Bible Society, and his own printing press was used to print Bibles.
11. We trust the Bible because it lives on through time! It carries with it a historic authority.
12. Looking at the opening statement of verse 16, we see that our trust in the Bible is based not only upon its historic authority, but more importantly, it is based on:

B. The Bible's heavenly author

1. Paul said, "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God...*" The word "inspiration" is a beautiful and fascinating term.
2. It comes from a compound the two Greek words for "God" and "breathe". Literally, the Bible is "God-breathed".
3. Handley Moule said, "The breath of God was in each 'Scripture,' as man's breath is in his words, making them to be the vehicle of his thought."^{iv}
4. Think of it this way: though Paul's quill was moving on the parchment as he wrote this letter to Timothy, God's breath was moving His mind and his quill.
5. Though John's heart and emotion bleeds through in the books he wrote, it was the breath of God that moved that beloved disciple as he wrote it.
6. Yes, the Bible was penned with human hands, and uttered through the vehicle of human mouths, but behind all the humanity is the breath of divinity!
7. On rare occasions, a few people have asked me to sign their Bibles. Each time, I say the same thing. It's not original to me, but I've adopted it as my own. I always say, "I didn't write it, you know?"

8. There is a sense in which no man can claim authorship of the Bible, not even the men who originally penned it. Its true and ultimate Author is God Himself!

9. That is why we trust the Bible! It is God's Book and God's Word! He breathed it out to us, His people.

10. As we look back at this text, we see here not only *why we turn to the Bible*, and *why we trust in the Bible*, but we see thirdly the truth of:

III. WHY WE TEACH FROM THE BIBLE

1. In many churches, especially Baptist churches, the pulpit is placed front and center on the platform. This is more than a matter of décor or aesthetics.

2. The pulpit at the center of the stage symbolizes the central place that the preaching and teaching of the Word of God has in the life of the church.

3. In this church, I unapologetically proclaim that preaching is the central act of Christian worship, and that true preaching is the proclamation and exposition of the Bible.

4. We do not gather here to listen to philosophies of men, the news of the day, or the creed of a particular denomination. We gather to hear "what thus saith the Lord". It is the Bible that is taught in this place.

6. Why is this so strong a conviction for this church and to us as Christians? I think we see some of the reasons in our text. We teach the Bible firstly because of:

A. How relevant it is for our lives

1. Look again at verse 16. Paul said, "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*"

2. Notice that word "profitable". It comes from a word that literally means to be useful and helpful.

3. We preach the Bible, though it is an ancient book, because we believe that it has not lost its usefulness and helpfulness in the lives of God's people.

4. Paul says that it is useful and helpful for "doctrine". That is, it tells us what is true and right. In a world that is so full of doubts, deceptions, and disputes the Bible still reveals what is truly true.

5. It is helpful also for “reproof”. That means that it not only can tell us what is right, but it can also convict us of what is wrong.

6. It is profitable too for “correction”. That means that once it tells us what is right and what is wrong, it can then straighten us out, and get us in line.

7. Lastly, Paul says that the usefulness of the Bible is seen in its “instruction in righteousness”. The idea there is training and discipline. The Bible can train us and disciple us in how to live holy lives.

8. Though the Bible is ancient, it is by no means antiquated! The blade of the old sword is not dull. Its truth is still mighty, even in a modern world!

9. The evidence is seen in the fact that today millions and millions of people around the world, living in a digital age of technological advancement and human achievement will still gather to hear the words of a book originally recorded by herdsmen, tribal kings, slaves, prisoners, and lowly fishermen.

10. We preach and teach the Bible because of how profitable and relevant it *still* is for our lives. Furthermore, we teach the Bible because of:

B. How rewarding it is in our lives

1. In verse 17, the chapter ends as Paul assures Timothy that when the profitable, useful Word of God is applied, the result is, *“That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”*

2. In other words, Paul said, “Timothy, stick with the Book. If you do, you will find it profitable, and it will give you all you need to be all you should be for God.”

3. The word “perfect” in verse 17 doesn’t mean without flaws or sins. It carries the idea of completion.

4. That is also the picture in the phrase “thoroughly furnished”. It comes from a word that was used to describe a boat that was completely outfitted, and had everything it needed for its journey.

5. The reward of the Bible and its teaching is that when we read it and apply it to our lives we find in it all we need for this life and for the life that is to come.

6. That is why we preach this Bible! We believe it is enough! When you are *in it* and it is *in you*, you will find all you need!

The poet said:

*Thy Word is like a deep, deep mine;
And jewels rich and rare,
Are hidden in its mighty depths,
For every searcher there,*

*Thy Word is like a starry host;
A thousand rays of light,
Are seen to guide the traveler,
And make his pathway bright,*

*Thy Word is like an armory,
Where soldiers may repair;
And find for life's long battle-day,
All needful weapons there^v*

7. I assure you, brethren, you will never be disappointed by a sincere use of the Bible! It will abundantly and thoroughly reward your life.

1. If I may paraphrase what one old writer said after his comments on this text, "Let us return afresh to our Bibles, and let us never be done with it."

2. Understanding the significance of what Paul says in this text, we should fall in love again with the Bible.

3. It is in the Bible that we are pointed to Jesus, and we turn there to find Him and to know Him better.

4. When we turn there, we do so with complete trust that the ink on the page has come down to us from the breath of God Himself.

5. And as we once again love our Bibles enough to read them and "continue in" them, we will find the Bible ever new and eternally sufficient for every aspect of our lives!

*Holy Bible, book divine,
Precious treasure, thou art mine.*

ⁱ Vines, Jerry, "A Baptist and His Bible", *sermon transcript from sermonsearch.com*

ⁱⁱ Moule, H.C.G., *Studies in Timothy*, (Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, 1983), p. 119

ⁱⁱⁱ King, Guy H., *To My Son*, (Marshall, Morgan & Scott, London, 1944), p. 104

^{iv} Moule, H.C.G., p. 123

^v Hodder, Edwin, quoted by, Miles, F.J., The World's Best Seller and Why?, (Marshall, Morgan & Scott, London, 1938), p. 81