

How to Align Your Life

Series: Fan the Flame (2 Timothy)
Brad Bailey – February 11, 2024

Intro

We are continuing is a series... allowing God to speak to us from the Biblical Book called 2 Timothy... chapter 3... verses 10-17.

As we begin...I'm reminded of a particular type of scenario that has been a part of a few movies... there is a group of lives that find themselves in the midst of a dangerous wild terrain...often a mountainous jungle...something treacherous or dangerous ...whether **animal or enemies of some type...**and they **have to find their way to safety.**

And there will be **one leader who tends to dominate...** who insists they must follow a particular path...such as the river.... But **then another...perhaps the one local** among them...who says that's a mistake... they must go north...and the only way is to go over the mountain pass.

The majority choose...albeit passively...to follow the domineering authority...but a **small few... believe that the local is saying the hard truth** ...that the mountain is the due north course which is the direction they must go.

And what follows ... begins to unfold the tragic fate of the larger group.... While the smaller group faces hardships... but finally reach safety.

> Akin to what the Apostles Paul writes to Timothy and for all to hear. Paul sees how lost and disoriented the world is...as was describes in the previous section we engaged last week.

2 Timothy 3:1-4

Mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. ² People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴ treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

In the last days... the whole of the time between God's revealing his power to defeat death and provide a means for his love to win... and the culmination... this is what will flow from our human hearts apart from God's working...

Now he continues.... And speaks to **HOW TO ALIGN YOUR LIFE amidst such a disorienting world.**

2 Timothy 3:10-13

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.

He begins..." You, however, know..."**You**"... he is addressing him personally. We each have a choice to make.

You know all about what is true and good...
You have what you need... to choose well...

know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, ¹¹ persecutions, sufferings

He begins by saying...

1. Follow those you know... who reflect what God has said is true and good... not corrupted and vain.

I have seen how people can come influence the masses...but you have known better... you have known what is truly right and good.

They had met when Paul was on his second missionary journey. Timothy became his successor in leading the church in Ephesus and joined him on his travels....

my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, ¹¹ persecutions, sufferings

Paul's teaching ... something Paul had been encouraging Timothy to pass on throughout this letter. [1]

but continues...

His way of life...that is...how I actually live... make decisions... and relate to people

His manner of living was so unlike the false teachers he warned Timothy about (vv1-9). Paul didn't have a love of self, as many of the false teachers had. Instead, he always shared that his only purpose was to make Christ known... Paul didn't have a love of money, as many of the false teachers had. Instead, he showed he would live in whatever circumstances he faced.

His purpose... By this, Paul is referring to his goal in life. Was it notoriety... attention... financial gain? Paul's life spoke so clearly of a man with one purpose... to make Christ known.

His faith – He was able to give himself to a greater purpose ...because he lived so rooted in eternal reality... of things greater than this world held. Paul didn't seek trouble...he wasn't trying to test God...but he would trust God when that purpose required risk.

His patience and love – Paul had compassion... grace...he not quick to be triggered by selfish anger.

Nowhere is your patience tested more than when you are wronged. And Paul was wronged on many occasions. Even though Paul was the bearer of good news... he was ridiculed... beaten... persecuted....and now once again imprisoned him...yet he endured with patience... and was driven by love not hate.

Timothy knew of Paul's "endurance, persecutions, sufferings." Paul doesn't suggest that we should look for this world's ideas of success... he describes how he has lived through hard times.

What Paul is describing... is actual relationship. **Timothy didn't just know about Paul...he knew Paul.**

We do well to ponder the significance such real relationship.

Because we live in an **age of pseudo relationship.**

Mass media...and Social media... have **become a means** of pseudo connection.....of being influenced by those we don't actually know.

I say a **"means"**...because the medium is not the problem... it can serve a purpose....but rather it is how easily **we allow it to become more than it is.**

> Compare what Paul describes to the massive shift in the past 10 years... in which we follow those we don't really know...and who don't know us.

I was reading about...Milla Sofia... a 19 years old social media influencer from Finland...who has gained who has over a 130,000 followers on [TikTok](#).... Because people value her travels and connections to various celebrities. The twist is that she doesn't actually exist. She's actually a virtual influencer and fashion model" generated by artificial intelligence. [2]

Back to the group in the jungle... some may have been drawn to the confidence of the dominant leader... but the wise few knew that the local had a grasp of which direction to go.

You can find inspiration from a voice on the internet... but don't lose sight of the value of knowing an actual life and being known by them.

I know that there are 3 or 4 authors who have **influenced my views**...but I have 3 or 4 people who have really **shaped my life**. And many people within this community have sharpened my life as well...because of what I have experienced in your life.

Paul says... align with the life you know... imperfect but real....and our culture is shifting to the perfect that is not real.

That includes those who may be set apart to pastor a community....but this is a principle that is about all of life on life growth ... it means we should get to know some people...and get known by some people... **who you see Christ in.**

Only in the context of a local community...can we learn from other through life-to-life experience.

What is true and good is not found by looking only to the experts or the perfect...but by those who have grown through experience sharing what they know. Even a beggar who has found some food has something to offer another if the food is real.

He is affirming Timothy for having followed him...and he is telling us to follow those we know who reflect what God has said is true and good... not corrupted and vain.

It's important to recognize that this requires some discernment.

Who do we follow? What do we look for?

Today we have **become so use to having apps for driving through less familiar places...** to tell us exactly where and when to turn.... It will **generally help with basic driving.**

But there's a challenge. I realize that **my innate sense of direction has declined.**

Take a step back... if we are amidst a wild terrain... without any sense of direction. What will guide us?

We **need a compass**... a true north...because it transcends every change.

In navigating life... **we have lost a sense of true north**...especially as we rely on whatever the current culture decides.

So the first point is this...

Follow those you know... who reflect what God has said is true and good... not corrupted and vain.

He continues...

2 Timothy 3:14-17

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.

This is a foundational declaration regarding the Scriptures.

The Scriptures bear God's authority... they are the source from which we should be guided. [3]

As a community... we embrace that authority. I believe that this verse speaks to the **authority** and **sufficiency** of the Scriptures...**but I also believe** that it **speaks more dynamically than it is often used.**

But is important we don't flatten this verse...and flatten the process... and it is used to imply something like...

"All Scripture was dictated directly from God to provide a Book that provides a source of academic knowledge... in which such knowledge provides righteousness in itself."

When we flatten what Paul says in this way... it **allows a subtle but significant loss** to what is said.

We can begin to **relate to the Bible as something God left for us**... as a **substitute for Himself... as God becoming bound in language.**

Pauls said something more dynamic...

All Scripture is God breathed. = Inspired.

I believe that God, as the infinite creator of all, is able to communicate to finite and flawed human life... through the limits of human culture, understanding, and language ... that which he deems essential for the redemption and restoration of all things.

The fundamental nature of what it means to "believe" or trust in the Bible, is to believe and trust in God's ability to accommodate human understanding.

I don't believe in the Bible itself ...I believe in God...and the power of God to communicate through the human minds... human language...and that he has done so...and equally important... He still chooses to speak. [4]

I am not afraid to let God speak through the Scriptures that include the nature of context... genre... language.

The mind and heart of God speak through these living testimonies... some historic... some poetic...some prophetic....some apostolic.

**And what Paul emphasizes...is that the Scriptures bear what we need.
What is that?**

you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

2. Rely on the Scriptures to lead you to the way of salvation.

This is the **incomparable nature** of what we call the **Scriptures**.

The Bible **may share some things in common** with other **so called "holy scriptures"** ... but step back...and they are a revelation of **something very different**...they speak **not of moral codes**... of **spiritual practices**.... but of **being lost... and the potential to be saved**.

The Scriptures are "able to make you wise for salvation ***through faith in Christ Jesus.***"

Rely on the Scriptures to lead you to the way of salvation.

3. Come to the Scriptures not simply as a source of information...but of formation.

He expands on the purpose of the Scriptures... they are useful. [5]

"useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

He is describing how the Scriptures have the power to further align our lives.

The word used for correcting... is actually a word that carries the positive idea of correcting. It shares the same **Greek root of orthosis** which shows up in our English words **orthopedic and orthodontist**. These doctors straighten and heal.

The Word of God is useful for **realigning our lives to the way they were meant to be**. [6]

And the ultimate goal of being "thoroughly equipped for every good work."

He draws upon a Greek term that is **rich in meaning**...and one will find various English translations may use different words to convey... it's **basic meaning** is that of **becoming complete**... in this case... becoming more complete in the nature we were created to have...**and therefore able to live the way we were meant to live**... and in this way... equipped for every good work. [7]

Eugene Peterson paraphrased this as saying:

“Through the Word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us.” - 2 Timothy 3: 17 (MSG)

In **American church** we often **use the term “Bible Study”**... good... the Scriptures even include speaking of studying to show ourselves approved. But we do well to realize that we are part of a modern western culture which has created a type of academic knowledge that can be entirely about information in itself.

In Jewish culture... it was a sacred giftthe only thing that will last.

"Your word, Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens." - Psalm 119:89

You cannot say that of anything else that you can put in your hand. Of all things on earth, God's Word will last forever.

In Jewish culture... it is what saves us from being fools.

As David said,

"The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple" - Psalm 19:7

Nothing else on earth is able to give you the wisdom that the Word of God can do. It is able to change the soul.

"The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul" - Ps 19:7

Nothing else on earth is able to change and heal a soul like the Word of God can do.

It was all about the formation of life. To follow a rabbi... was to follow how they lived out the knowledge of God.

“Don't be mere hearers of the Word... but doers.”

There is no exam... no grading... apart from the life you developed.

Desire and choose to actually do good works.

It means I align my life by what God is saying.

So we should ask ourselves...am I allowing the Scriptures...to be God's Word... to form me... to rebuke me and restore me...?

Closing:

The point that Paul is making...is that he wants Timothy to know... that in a world that is disoriented... not only can you align your life... but...that”

You have what it takes.

In fact I almost named this series that...because that is a part of the underlying message that is being imparted to Timothy. “My end has likely come...but you've got what you need. You can do this.”

You may feel the world is in a disoriented... even devolving state...but **there is a true north**...and **you can follow it.**

You have what it takes.

PRAY

Notes:

1. Steve Brandon in message "Continue in the Things You Have Learned"... expounds well on each of the ways in which Timothy would have known these elements of Paul's life. In regards to Paul's teaching, "he likely emphasizing the gospel which he preached. Timothy had embraced this gospel. Timothy had come to love this gospel. Timothy was now called to teach and propagate this gospel. This is one of the main themes of 2 Timothy. Back in chapter 1, verse 13, Paul had already commanded Timothy to, "Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus." In chapter 2, verse 2, Paul told Timothy, "the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." This will be the main thrust of Paul's exhortation in chapter 4: "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction" (4:2). "Timothy, you followed my teaching; continue on."

His manner of living was so unlike the false teachers of verses 1-9. Paul didn't have a love of self, as many of the false teachers had. Instead, he did not consider his life of any account as dear to himself ([Acts 20:24](#)). Paul didn't have a love of money, as many of the false teachers had. Instead, he said, "I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need" ([Phil. 4:12](#)).

He wasn't boastful or arrogant or ungrateful or unholy or unloving (3:2-3). No, he lived a life of integrity. His conduct was in harmony with his teaching. "Timothy, you followed my conduct; continue on."

His purpose...

Over the years as Timothy spent time with Paul, it was evident. He wanted to follow Jesus and carry out the mission that Christ gave him "to bear [the name of Christ] before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel" ([Acts 9:15](#)). He didn't shrink back from anything.

His patience and love

By this, Paul is referring to his endurance through the trials that he faced. In [2 Timothy 2:24](#), he had already told Timothy, "The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition." Nowhere is your patience tested more than when you are wronged. And Paul was wronged on many occasions. Paul was the bearer of good news! Instead of receiving the red carpet treatment, he was despised and rejected and persecuted. They ridiculed him. They beat him. They stoned him. They slandered him. They imprisoned him. Yet, through it all, he calmly trusted the Lord. And here he is in prison, calmly awaiting his unjust execution. "Timothy, you followed my patience; continue on."

2. WHO IS MILLA SOFIA? 19-YEAR-OLD VIRTUAL INFLUENCER CREATED BY AI HAS OVER 100,000 FOLLOWERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Article by [Katie Mather](#), Thu, July 27, 2023 - <https://www.intheknow.com/post/milla-sofia-ai-virtual-influencer/>

3. When these verses speak of the Scriptures, the term would have applied to only the Old Testament writing...and perhaps already there was authority being given to the initial Gospel accounts and letters of Paul. In 2 Peter, chapter 3, we're told the apostle Peter looked on the writings of Paul and acknowledges some of them are a bit difficult to understand but says some

people like to twist those writings, as they do the other Scriptures, which already presupposes in Peter's time, Paul's writings are being viewed in the church at large as Scripture, in line with other Scriptures. Ultimately, the canonizing of the whole of the Old and New Testament books would be completed....not based on men's preferences...but on a consensus of what was genuine testimony what God was making known and subsequently speaking through.

The word "inspired" comes from the Greek compound word, which means "God" and "breathed." Literally, we translate, "All Scripture is God-breathed." Peter said it this way: "Men, moved by the Holy Spirit, spoke from God" (2 Peter 1:21). The Scriptures are a product of men. Men wrote them. But the Scriptures are ultimately the product of God, as He moved men to write them. Therefore, all Scripture has authority in our lives.

4. My intent here is not to diminish the authority of Scripture in any way. I hold to an orthodox conviction regarding such authority. The intent is to help us understand the dynamic nature of what we trust such authority and what such inspiration means. For a more complete engagement with the role of the Bible, one can engage a series from 2017 entitled: Getting to Know THE BOOK that Knows Me, or a message in 2018 entitled How Can I believe the Bible.

5. It's been noted that the reference to "servant of God"...more commonly "man of God" is a term that is used more than 70 times throughout the Old Testament. Every time it is used, it describes God's man, the prophet who proclaimed God's word. Moses was called "the man of God" (Deut. 33:1). Samuel was called "the man of God" (1 Sam. 9:6). Elijah was called "the man of God" (1 Kings 17:18). Elisha was called "the man of God" (2 Kings 1:9, 11, 13). These men, along with a handful of other lesser-known prophets.

The phrase "man of God" is used only twice in the New Testament. Here and in 1 Timothy 6:11, where again Paul uses it of Timothy. You can't escape the conclusion that this term has reference primarily to God's man, God's messenger, God's minister, God's pastor. The application here is that the Scripture is authoritative and it is powerful for everything needed in pastoral ministry, "that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:17). However, it is a truth that has no reason not to apply to all lives as well.

6. "The Greek word has the idea of standing something up again or making something stand up again. . The term *epanorthosis* has the same Greek root of *orthosis* which shows up in our English words orthopedic and orthodontist. These doctors straighten and heal. Whereas *rebuking* has the idea of speaking negatively about a wrong habit or attitude, this Greek word has a positive connotation of restoring and rebuilding.

For example, "The airplane corrected its course." Or "They messed up my order, but we got it corrected." In those instances, we do have a positive connotation while using the word correct. In summary, the Greek word actually has a positive meaning, but because of the way we use *correct* with people, we hear the word negatively. We miss the real, intended, positive intent. Numerous Greek resources including BDAG, Kittle, and Thayer list *restore* as one of the possible translations of *epanorthosis*. In English, to restore something is to put it back to where it should be.

From: A Second Look at 2 Timothy 3:16-17 - [here](#)

7. Complete (ἄριστος); only here in the New Testament, but common in classical Greek. "Complete, perfect of its kind" (Liddell and Scott).