



## Functions of the Word of God

October 14, 2020

### Completing and Perfecting

**1 Peter 2:2** As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation.

**2 Timothy 3:16** All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, **17** That the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.

**Ephesians 4:11** And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers, **12** For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ.

**2 Corinthians 13:11** Finally, brothers, rejoice, be perfected, be comforted, think the same thing, be at peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

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#### To Complete the Man of God

In 2 Timothy 3:17 Paul says, “That the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.” We have seen that a man of God is one who partakes of God’s life and nature (John 1:13; 2 Pet. 1:4) and thus becomes one with Him in His life and nature (1 Cor. 6:17) and thereby expresses Him. This corresponds to the mystery of godliness, which is God manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16). Through the God-breathed Scripture, the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good

work. Complete here means complete and perfect in qualifications, and equipped denotes being fitted out, furnished, made ready.

Many Christians misuse 3:16 and 17. They point out that the holy Scripture is for teaching, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness and that it enables the man of God to be equipped, completed, and perfected. Although all this is true, it neglects the element of life in the Word. Those who regard the Bible as a book of teaching, reproof, correction, and

instruction often ignore the life essence of the Word. As human beings we have a physical body outwardly, but inwardly we have a spirit and a soul. Our person is composed not mainly of the outward part, the body, but of the inward parts, the spirit and the soul. The principle is the same with the Bible. The Bible has not only a “body” of letters in black and white; it also has a spirit, because it is God-breathed. If in reading the Bible we exercise only our mind to study it, we shall not receive the life supply.

Actually, the function of the Word in teaching, reproof, correction, and instruction is all related to transformation. The Bible corrects us not primarily outwardly, but inwardly in the way of transformation. This means that the word of Scripture works within us in a metabolic way. Just as the food we eat and digest nourishes us from within, metabolically changing and transforming us, so the Word of God transforms us by inwardly teaching, reproofing, correcting, and instructing us.

If we would be nourished by the Word, we should not only pray it, but also psalm it and sing it. In Colossians 3:16 Paul says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God.” By praying, psalming, and singing the Word we shall fan our spirit into flame. Furthermore, when we pray, psalm, and sing the Word, we inhale the divine breath and receive more of the element of God. In this way God dispenses Himself into us and infuses us with His element.

## **To Perfect the Man of God**

In order to be perfected, we must pay attention to life and to function. The way to be perfected is to grow in life and to become skillful in function. The Greek word rendered “perfecting” here also means completing, equipping, furnishing. To perfect a saint is to complete him, to equip him, and to furnish him. Only by growing in life can we be completed. Not until we become mature will we be completed. For example, a child of five is not a full-grown person. As long as, spiritually speaking, we remain underage, we shall not be complete. Mothers perfect their children by feeding them. Furthermore, parents equip their children and furnish them by training them to behave and to speak in a certain way. Thus, children are perfected by feeding and by training. The same is true with respect to perfecting the saints according to God’s economy. The saints need to be fed and they need to be trained so that they may function with the proper skill.

We have seen that in 4:13-15 Paul did not exclude himself. Rather, he said, “Until we all arrive...that we may be no longer babes...but holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things...” None of us should think that we have already been perfected. On the contrary, we all need more life supply and more training. We need to be willing to grow and to be trained. If we are faithful to practice what the Lord shows us, the Lord will have a way among us. The Lord’s way has never changed. His way is to perfect the believers to do the work of ministry for the building up of the Body of Christ. This is the way for the Lord to gain what He desires as the necessary preparation for His coming back.