

Sola Scriptura
2 Timothy 3:15-16

Picture of Tyndale –

John Piper - At 37, William Tyndale had become the most wanted man in England and Europe. Stephen Vaughn was an English merchant commissioned by Thomas Cromwell, the king's adviser, to find William Tyndale and inform him that King Henry VIII desired him to come back to England out of hiding on the continent. In a letter to Cromwell from Vaughan dated June 19, 1531, Vaughan wrote about Tyndale (1494-1536) these simple words: "I find him always singing one note." That one note was this: Will the King of England give his official endorsement to a vernacular Bible for all his English subjects? If not, Tyndale will not come. If so, Tyndale will give himself up to the king and never write another book.

Henry VIII was angry with Tyndale for believing and promoting Martin Luther's Reformation teachings. So Tyndale had come under criticism by Thomas More. In fact More had a "near-rabid hatred" for Tyndale.

The thirty-seven-year-old Tyndale was moved to tears by this offer of mercy. He had been an exile from his homeland for seven years. But then he sounds his "one note" again: Will the king authorize an English Bible from the original languages? Vaughan gives us Tyndale's words from May, 1531:

I assure you, if it would stand with the King's most gracious pleasure to grant only a bare text of the Scripture [that is, without explanatory notes] to be put forth among his people, like as is put forth among the subjects of the emperor in these parts, and of other Christian princes, be it of the translation of what person soever shall please his Majesty, I shall immediately make faithful promise never to write more, not abide two days in these parts after the same; but immediately to repair unto his realm, and there most humbly submit myself at the feet of his royal majesty, offering my body to suffer what pain or torture, yea, what death his grace will, so this [translation] be obtained. Until that time, I will abide the asperity of all chances, whatsoever shall come, and endure my life in as many pains as it is able to bear and suffer.

In other words, Tyndale will give himself up to the king on one condition—that the king authorize an English Bible translated from the Greek and Hebrew in the common language of the people.

Nine years earlier, when he was twenty-eight years old in 1522, he was serving as a children's tutor in Little Sodbury Manor, the home of John Walsh, spending most of his time studying Erasmus' Greek New Testament which had just been printed six years before in 1516. Learned men, especially Catholic priests would come for dinner, and Tyndale would discuss the things he was seeing in the New Testament. John Foxe tells us that one day an exasperated Catholic scholar at dinner with Tyndale said, "We were better be without God's law than the pope's." In response Tyndale spoke his famous words, "I defy the Pope and all his laws. . . . If God spare my life ere many years, I will cause a boy that driveth the plow, to know more of the Scripture than thou dost."

To reduce the repercussions of his statement for the Walsh family, Tyndale left Gloucestershire, and moved to London where he approached Bishop Tunstall, the Bishop of London for permission to learn Greek and Hebrew and begin a translation of the Bible into English. Permission was denied and Tyndale moved to Worms where Luther had translated the Bible into German because of the Greek and Hebrew helps and the printing presses in that city.

Four years later Tyndale finished the English translation of the Greek New Testament in Worms, Germany, and began to smuggle it into England in bails of cloth. By October of 1526 the book had been banned by Bishop Tunstall in London, but the print run was at least three thousand. And the books were getting to the people. Over the next eight years, five pirated editions were printed as well. In 1534 he produced another version of the New Testament and it too was shipped into England. If Tyndale was “always singing one note,” this was the crescendo of the song of his life—the finished and refined New Testament in English.

Before he was martyred in 1536 Tyndale had translated into clear, common English not only the New Testament but also much of the Old Testament. All this material became the basis of the approved, *Great Bible* issued by Miles Coverdale in England in 1539 and the basis for the *Geneva Bible* published in 1557—“the Bible of the nation,” which sold over a million copies between 1560 and 1640.

In effect, William Tyndale gave us our English Bible... **Nine-tenths of the New Testament in the 1611 Authorized Version, the King James Version of the Bible, is Tyndale’s. The same is true of the first half of the Old Testament,** which was as far as he was able to get before he was executed outside Brussels in 1536.

Why the King James Bible? Henry VIII defied the Pope and annulled his marriage to his first wife in 1533, three years before Tyndale was martyred. Thereafter, he needed a Bible that wasn’t Catholic. Six years later, Miles Coverdale produced the *Great Bible* in 1539, three years after Tyndale’s death. It was the Great Bible because it was 14” tall and chained to church pulpits. After Henry died his daughter, Mary, a devout Catholic assumed the monarchy and Catholicism was restored in England. When she died, Elizabeth came to power. In all, there were 5 English translations between Tyndale and the King James Version. Elizabeth’s son, James, in an effort to promote the Church of England among the English people, commissioned a Bible that suited him but, again, 90% of the New Testament is Tyndale’s translation.

2 Samuel 18:33 – Tyndale - And the kynge was moved and went up to a chambre over the gate, and wept. And as he went, thus he sayde: my sonne Absalom, my sonne, my sonne, my sonne Absalom, woulde to God I had dyed for th[ee] Absalom, my sonne, my sonne! 42

KJV - And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

Five hundred years after his great work “newspaper headlines still quote Tyndale, though unknowingly, and he has reached more people than even Shakespeare.”

“No Tyndale. No Shakespeare.”

And God said, Let there be light, and there was light (Genesis 1)
And God shall wipe away all tears from there eyes (Revelation 7)
Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you (Matthew 7)
With God all things are possible (Matthew 19)
In him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17)
Be not weary in well doing (2 Thessalonians 3)
Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold of eternal life (1 Timothy 6)
Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12)
Behold, I stand at the door and knock (Revelation 3)
Am I my brother’s keeper (Genesis 4)
The Lord bless thee and keep thee (Numbers 6)
Ye are the salt of the earth (Matthew 5)
The signs of the times (Matthew 16)
Where two or three are gathered together (Matthew 18)
They made light of it (Matthew 22)
Gave up the ghost (Matthew 27)
Eat, drink, and be merry (Luke 12)
Scales fell from his eyes (Acts 9)
Full of good works (Acts 9)
A law unto themselves (Romans 2)
The powers that be (Romans 13)
Filthy lucre (1 Timothy 3)
Fight the good fight (1 Timothy 6)
The patience of Job (James 5)

And a myriad of words, the most famous of which are: “*Jehovah, Passover, atonement, scapegoat, mercy seat,*” and “*shewbread.*” The words that got him killed were:

- “*congregation*, instead of “*church*”,
- “*elder*” *instead of* instead of “*priest*”,
- “*repentance*” instead of “do penance” and
- “*love*” instead of “*charity*”

Interestingly, the King James translators chose to retain the traditional terms “church,” “priest,” and “charity,” but nowhere does one find the word “penance” in the King James Version.

(About these particular words, read <https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/prelude-restoration-apostasy-restored-church/words-fitly-spoken-tyndales-english>)

It is almost incomprehensible for us to understand how viciously opposed the Roman Catholic Church was to the translation of the Scriptures into English.

The dramatist John Bale (1495-1563) “as a boy of 11 watched the burning of a young man in Norwich for possessing the Lord’s prayer in English”. . . . John Foxe records . . . “seven Lollards burned at Coventry in 1519 for teaching their children the Lord’s Prayer in English.”

Tyndale watched a rising tide of persecution and felt the pain of seeing young men burned alive who were converted by reading his translation and his books. His closest friend, John Frith, was arrested in London and tried by Thomas More and burned alive July 4, 1531, at the age of twenty-eight.

Tyndale wrote his friend:

Your cause is Christ’s gospel, a light that must be fed with the blood of faith. . . . If when we be buffeted for well-doing, we suffer patiently and endure, that is thankful with God; for to that end we are called. For Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps, who did no sin. Hereby have we perceived love that he laid down his life for us: therefore we ought to be able to lay down our lives for the brethren. . . . Let not your body faint. If the pain be above your strength, remember: “Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, I will give it you.” And pray to our Father in that name, and he will ease your pain, or shorten it. . . . Amen.

Richard Bayfield ran the ships that took Tyndale’s books to England. He was betrayed and arrested, and Thomas More wrote on December 4, 1531, that Bayfield “the monk and apostate [was] well and worthily burned in Smythfelde.”

Teana and I have stood there.

Picture of Covenanter Memorial

We’ve also stood at the Covenanter Memorial in the Grassmarket in Edinburgh, Scotland the spot where over a 100 Covenanters were hanged for their Reformed Protestant beliefs between 1661 and 1668 during the reigns of Charles II and James VII, the latter becoming known as “The Killing Time”.

More: St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre occurred on August 24, 1572 – France’s leading Protestants were invited to the wedding of Protestant Henry III of Navarre (the future King of France) and the Catholic Margaret, the Catholic King of France’s sister; a marriage opposed by the Pope. It began when the leading Protestant, Admiral Gaspard, de Coligny, was assassinated in his bedroom. His body was flung into the streets, his head, hands and feet cut from his body and sent throughout France as a warning to Protestants and the remainder of his body was dragged through the streets of Paris. Conservatively, three thousand were killed in Paris alone. Eight thousand more died throughout France. (Wikipedia estimates 5,000-30,000 deaths).

This was after Tyndale’s death but what Tyndale witnessed was a precursor to it and sufficient to horrify him. The church was not just burning people. It was burning the word of God.

Tyndale fled his homeland in 1524 and never returned to England, first moving to Germany, then Antwerp, Belgium. He gives us some glimpse of those twelve years as a fugitive in Germany and the Netherlands in one of the very few personal descriptions we have from Stephen Vaughan's letter in 1531. He refers to

. . . my pains . . . my poverty . . . my exile out of mine natural country, and bitter absence from my friends . . . my hunger, my thirst, my cold, the great danger wherewith I am everywhere encompassed, and finally . . . innumerable other hard and sharp fightings which I endure.

He was ultimately betrayed by a fellow Englishman, arrested in Antwerp and held in a castle for 18 months. When winter arrived Tyndale wrote the warden of the prison:

I beg your lordship, and that of the Lord Jesus, that if I am to remain here through the winter, you will request the commissary to have the kindness to send me, from the goods of mine which he has, a warmer cap; for I suffer greatly from cold in the head, and am afflicted by a perpetual catarrh, which is much increased in this cell; a warmer coat also, for this which I have is very thin; a piece of cloth too to patch my leggings. My overcoat is worn out; my shirts are also worn out. He has a woollen shirt, if he will be good enough to send it. I have also with him leggings of thicker cloth to put on above; he has also warmer night-caps. And I ask to be allowed to have a lamp in the evening; it is indeed wearisome sitting alone in the dark. But most of all I beg and beseech your clemency to be urgent with the commissary, that he will kindly permit me to have the Hebrew Bible, Hebrew grammar, and Hebrew dictionary, that I may pass the time in that study. In return may you obtain what you most desire, so only that it be for the salvation of your soul. But if any other decision has been taken concerning me, to be carried out before winter, I will be patient, abiding the will of God, to the glory of the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ: whose spirit (I pray) may ever direct your heart. Amen

His requests were denied and Tyndale was eventually convicted of heresy and treason. On 6 October 1536, Tyndale was led out of his castle prison toward the southern gate of the town. The sun had barely risen above the horizon when he arrived at the open space, and looked out over the crowd of onlookers eagerly jostling for a good view. A circle of stakes enclosed the place of execution, and in the center was a large pillar of wood in the form of a cross and as tall as a man. A strong chain hung from the top, and a noose of hemp was threaded through a hole in the upright. The attorney and the great doctors arrived first, and seated themselves nearby. The prisoner was brought in and a final appeal was made that he should recant.

Brian Edwards – *God's Outlaw* in the library –

Tyndale stood immovable, his keen eyes gazing toward the common people. A silence fell over the crowd as they watched the prisoner's lean form and thin, tired face; his lips moved with a final impassioned prayer that echoed around the place of execution: *"Lord, open the king of England's eyes."*

His feet were bound to the stake, the iron chain fastened around his neck, and the hemp noose was placed at his throat. Tyndale was spared burning while conscious because he was a priest.

Piles of brushwood and logs were heaped around him. The executioner came up behind the stake and with all his force snapped down upon the noose. Within seconds Tyndale was strangled. The attorney stepped forward, placed a lighted torch to the tinder, and the great men and commoners sat back to watch the fire burn. Not until the charred form hung limply on the chain did an officer break out the nail of the chain, allowing the body to fall into the glowing heat of the fire. More brushwood was piled on top and the people continued to watch his body burn.

Tradition tells us that the authorities dumped Tyndale's ashes in a river near Vilvorde, hoping that if there were no remains of Tyndale—no physical evidence that he ever existed, no body to memorialize, no grave to visit—then he might become a distant, faded memory. The Bible you hold in your hand proves they were wrong.

TEXT

But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty.² For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy,³ heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good,⁴ treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,⁵ having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.⁶ For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions,⁷ always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.⁸ Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith.⁹ But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.

¹⁰ *You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness,*¹¹ *my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me.*¹² *Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,*¹³ *while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.*¹⁴ *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom^[a] you learned it¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*

What is the key to godly versus ungodly living?

¹⁶ *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,*¹⁷ *that the man of God^[b] may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

First: What the Scripture Is 16a

a) Scripture = *graphe* = *writing* = Old and New Testaments

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and

trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

b) Breathed out = *theopneustos* (theo pneustos) = *God-breathed* OH/NT

Genesis 2:7 - 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.

Hebrews 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.

We offer innumerable reasons why people don't read the Bible. This is the bottom-line reason why people don't read the Bible. It "pierces" and "discerns." It "hurts" and it "embarrasses."

Its source is God. It represents God's character. It has God's authority. Nowhere does it misrepresent God. If you want to know what God thinks, read the Bible.

Second: What Scripture Does 16b

- a) It teaches us – It tells us what is right
- b) It reproves us – It tells us what is wrong
- c) It corrects us – It tells us how to make wrong, right
- d) It trains us – It tells us how to keep right, right

It is "*profitable...for righteousness.*"

There are many ways we attempt to use the Bible. In the last decade unnumbered books have been written about Jesus and Leadership. We make it a manual for whatever point we want to make. But fundamentally – bottom line –

**God gave the Bible for righteousness' sake.
Any other use is a misuse.**

God's perspective is that if you know and love him, everything else will fall into place.

What could be more important than knowing how to be right with God and live right with God?

Matthew 6:33 - But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

All of the things we want (Matt 6 outlines them) – relationships, acceptance, wealth, material goods, honor and love, are a derivative of righteousness (6:33). If you make them your goal and not God your goal, that is idol worship, the idol being self.

We have taken Christianity and made it all about us.
We know it and are not saddened by it.

Can you love something that makes everything else well, and right? Yes. God!
Can you love something that makes everything else sick and wrong? Yes. Self!

Romans 1:21-23 - *For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things....***26** - *For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature....***28-31** - *And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. ²⁹ They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ³¹ foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.*

We have a tendency to build churches to appeal to people. The church should appeal to God. If it does, we will be blessed.

You should fear a (false) Christianity that makes you its center and God your servant.

Third: The Result of Its Right Use 17

that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

- a) *Anthropos = human being* (as distinguished from animals)
- b) *Complete = fitted – having special aptitude*
(root = “just now,” “at this time”)

Where are you in life? What are your circumstances? The Bible enables you to successfully live in that time; generally and specifically

- c) *Equipped = complete, finish* (as in, “to render the days complete” or “to finish out”)
- d) *for every good work*

The Bible doesn't cover every subject. It covers the essential subjects that then determine how we live in all areas of life.

Conclusion: God's redemption recovers all things toward goodness and ultimate perfection. As we apply it to our lives, it creates a world of goodness working toward ultimate perfection.

What do you want to be 'good' in your life? Apply the Bible.

Most importantly, it saves you forever. As a by-product, it saves you now, every day.

Romans 1:16 - *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes...*

William Tyndale and millions of others died to give you this Bible. That should give us an appreciation for the Scripture. But, more importantly,

Jesus, the living Word of God lives to breathe life into it by His Spirit, making it powerful, life-changing, transforming, as we apply it to our lives.

Community Groups:

- 1 – What was the “one note” that William Tyndale was always singing? **A Bible in English.**
- 2 – Why is it important to have the Bible in a translation people can read? **So we can know what God says and also know what God does not say.**
- 3 – What is the best version of the Bible? **The one you use!**
- 4 – What does it mean that the Bible is “God-breathed.” **Its source is God. It represents God’s character. It has God’s authority. Nowhere does it misrepresent God.**
- 5 – What are the four things Scripture does for us?
 - a) **It teaches us – It tells us what is right**
 - b) **It reproves us – It tells us what is wrong**
 - c) **It corrects us – It tells us how to make wrong, right**
 - d) **It trains us – It tells us how to keep right, right**
- 6 – Why doesn’t the Bible cover every subject in life? **Because God’s perspective is that if we know and love him, the Bible is sufficient to tell us how to live in all those other subjects of life.**
- 7 – What is the result of rightly understanding and applying the Bible? **We will know how to live life now, and as life changes, we will be able to live it well until it is finished.**

FYI:

For more information about Tyndale’s influence on the English Bible read: “THE AUTHORISED VERSION: The Influence of William Tyndale’s Translations” at http://www.tbsbibles.org/pdf_information/238-1.pdf