

1. Find your place on the continuum:

The Bible is
man's words
about God.

- Fallible, Untrustworthy, Unreliable
- Little Authority
- Legends, myths, fables
- Errors and contradictions
- Culturally Regressive, Primitive

The Bible is
God's words
to man.

- Completely reliable and trustworthy
 - Completely Authoritative
 - Writers inspired by God
 - Infallible
 - Without error
- Sufficient for faith and practice

2. The Intended Functions of Scripture.

2 Tim. 3:16...and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

• Teaching: Scripture contains the whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life...and we need the illumination of the Holy Spirit in order to understand it fully.

Luke 24:25-26; 32 And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"³² Did not our hearts burn within us... while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

• Reproof: Scripture is useful for rebuking us about our sinful selves, it exposes our particular sins and faults, along with all those dishonest reasonings that we use to rationalize our wrongdoing. (See this in action in David's life in 2 Samuel 12 and Psalm 51)

Eph. 4:20-24 But that is not the way you learned Christ!–²¹ assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus,²² to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

• Correction: Scripture is useful for correcting our lives by pointing out the right way to live, and by presenting supportive arguments and promises with which to implement the necessary changes. Scripture teaching strengthens us out with truth. Ps. 119:105

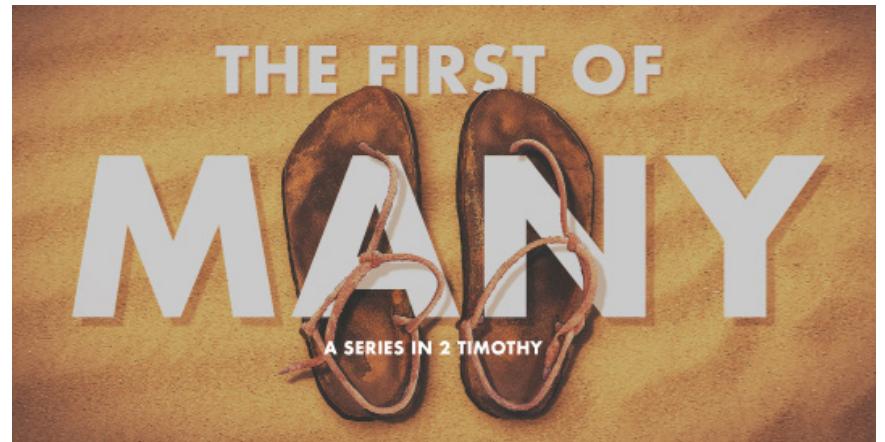
Heb.4:12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

• Training in righteousness: Scripture is useful for training us in righteousness by empowering us to recognize and choose what is good and to reject what is evil, so that we begin to live in ways that are pleasing to God and useful to others.

2 Tim. 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

3. The Goal of "Breathed out" Scripture.

2 Tim. 3:17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.



*2Timothy
3:14 -17 ESV*

*But as for you, continue
in what you have
learned and have firmly
believed, knowing from
whom 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.*

continue in what you have learned: Not only had Timothy "learned" God's Word from Paul and others, he had become convinced of it. The reason for this lies largely with the integrity of the people from whom he learned it, such as his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice (1:5). Paul advises Timothy to continue in what he has learned and firmly believed.

acquainted with the sacred writings: The "writings" refer to what we know as the Old Testament and what the Jewish people call the Tanach. Significantly Jesus, during the forty days between his resurrection and ascension, taught the disciples how the Scriptures pertained to him (Luke 24:32, 44-47).

make you wise for salvation through faith: Salvation does not come automatically from reading the Scriptures, but they "are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." Paul reminds Timothy that he is fortunate to have been "acquainted with the sacred writings" from his childhood. And that knowledge has had an influence in his heart and mind; it has made him wise for salvation. Scripture is something you learn, which has an affect in that it makes you inwardly prepared and open for the Gospel message of the Messiah in whom you place your faith.

Westminister Confession of Faith, Chapter 1, VI.

The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. II Tim. 3:15-17; Gal. 1:8, 9; II Thess. 2:2.

All Scripture: Verses 16–17 are the strongest statement in the Bible about the source and authority of the Bible. We understand that the word "Scripture" ("graphe") includes the New Testament, since 2 Peter 3:16 cites the writings of Paul among the "Scriptures" ("graphe"). "Biblical inspiration is a mystery because it combines what is humanly sinful and fallible with what is divinely infallible and sinless. The Scriptures, as the finished product of this process, display a remarkable diversity of styles, interests and literary form. All this suggests that the act of God in breathing out his Word, in the thirty-nine writings of the Old Testament, and by analogy the twenty-seven writings of the New Testament, took place in such a way as to allow genuine freedom to the individuality and personality of the human writers, while guiding these same writers into all truth and preserving their writings from every kind of error." (see Milne, page 169)

breathed out by God: The word translated "breathed out by God" (*theopneustos*) is more commonly translated "inspired," which is less awkward but also less accurate. The term 'inspired' is much too broad in its common usage today to convey the force of the Greek word *theopneustos*, which is formed from 'theo' (the root form of the word "God") and 'pneustos' (from a Greek root having to do with breathing). Verse 16 affirms that "all Scripture is God-breathed"; before and after that verse stand examples of what it can accomplish. It makes a person "wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus,"(15) and it has a series of functions—"teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness"—that thoroughly prepares one "for every good work." This encompasses the purpose expressed in Ephesians 2:8-10: salvation by grace through faith for good works.

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 may be
complete, equipped for
every good work.

profitable for: There may be a sequence intended by Paul as he lists what Scripture is "profitable" or useful for: first, refuting the false teaching that Timothy was confronting, and second, corrections that set ideas and thoughts right. Third in the sequence is providing an ongoing "training in righteousness". Structurally, "teaching" stands at the head of this series and the purpose of it all is "for every good work."

teaching: Scripture is useful for teaching about God, his creation, human nature created and fallen, and the way of salvation in Jesus Christ.

reproof: Scripture is useful for rebuking us about our sinful selves, for exposing particular sins and faults, along with all those dishonest reasonings that we use to rationalize our wrongdoing. Scripture is used by the Holy Spirit to convict us of sin.

correction: Scripture is useful for correcting our lives by pointing out the right way to live, and by presenting supportive arguments and promises with which to implement the necessary changes. Scripture teaching strengthens us out with truth.

training in righteousness: Scripture is useful for training us in righteousness by empowering us to recognize and choose what is good and to reject what is evil, so that we begin to live in ways that are pleasing to God and useful to others.

complete: God has put into our hands a complete guide to the meaning of life and the living of it. The Scriptures show us that we can have certainty about the ultimate issues of life. The God of the Scriptures never meant us to live without knowing, so he has given us his God-breathed Word which the men and women of the third millennium, like those of the first and second, can access and read to find the way of salvation through believing in Jesus Christ as he is represented in its pages.

equipped for every good work: The purpose and function of the Scriptures is clear; the learning and adopting of its teachings is for the purpose of Christians being prepared for the good works which God has set before them.

Resources used or adapted for this outline: Milne, D. J. W. (1996). 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus. Scotland; Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications. Duncan, Ligon. (2005) Sermon: Not Ashamed and Hold Fast, First Presbyterian Church. Liefeld, W. L. (1999). 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus (p. 279). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House. Jackson, Mississippi.

Special Revelation and the Bible

R.C. Sproul, *Essential Truths of the Christian Faith. Portions from page 15-16*

The Bible is called the Word of God because of its claim, believed by the church, that the human writers did not merely write their own opinions, but that their words were inspired by God (2Timothy 3:16-17). The word 'inspiration' is a translation from the Greek word meaning "God breathed."

Just as we expel breath from our mouths when we speak, so ultimately Scripture is God speaking.

Although Scripture came to us from the pens of human authors, the ultimate source of Scripture is God.

That is why the prophets could preface their words by saying, "Thus says the Lord."

The word 'inspiration' also calls attention to the process by which the Holy Spirit superintended the production of Scripture. The Holy Spirit guided the human authors, each with their personal vocabulary, perspective and literary style, so that their words would be nothing less than the word of God. This is not dictation but a communication of the Spirit through human writers.

Christians affirm the infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible because God is ultimately the author of the Bible.

His word is altogether true and trustworthy. The original manuscripts were without error.