

DROWNING OUT THE VOICE OF GOD

2 Timothy 3:16-4:5

Core Principle #1: The Church that Wants to Hear from God Must Listen to His Voice Through His Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Core Principle #2: The Church that Wants to Hear from God Must Not Project Our Image onto God (2 Timothy 4:1)

Core Principle #3: The Church that Wants to Hear from God Must Prioritize God's Message Rather than Our Own Interests. (2 Tim 4:1-4)

Core Principle #4: The Church Demonstrates Its View of God by How It Engages the Ministry of His Word. (2 Timothy 4:5)

Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Discussion

1. How do we recognize if our experience is leading us to drown out God's voice in the Word?
2. How do we recognize if a pastor or teacher is drowning out God's Voice in the Word?
3. How do we recognize when the demonic is using us to drown out God's Word? When He is using others?
4. Does "preaching the Word" mean a church must teach verse by verse in every sermon/small group?
5. Many have been hurt by those who abused them claiming God's authority when teaching His Word. How should we approach it when we know what God said but are afraid of it being used inappropriately again?
6. What should I do when I don't like what God says in His Word?

Randy Whitman, Jr, CBC Elder

This outline is provided to assist you in understanding and applying today's message. This message can be listened to or downloaded at cbcomaha.org.

An abstract background on the left side of the image, featuring a complex, low-poly geometric pattern. The facets are primarily black with sharp, reflective gold edges and some gold-colored surfaces, creating a crystalline or shattered effect.

Drowning Out the Voice of God

2 Timothy 3:16–4:5

How We Drown Out a Message

In our closest relationships, we have developed sophisticated ways of avoiding what someone is trying to say to us — without ever admitting we are doing it. We distract ourselves, minimize the concern, dismiss its importance, ignore it entirely, or reinterpret the message to suit what we prefer to hear. We reframe, reject, misunderstand, interrupt, or simply change the subject.



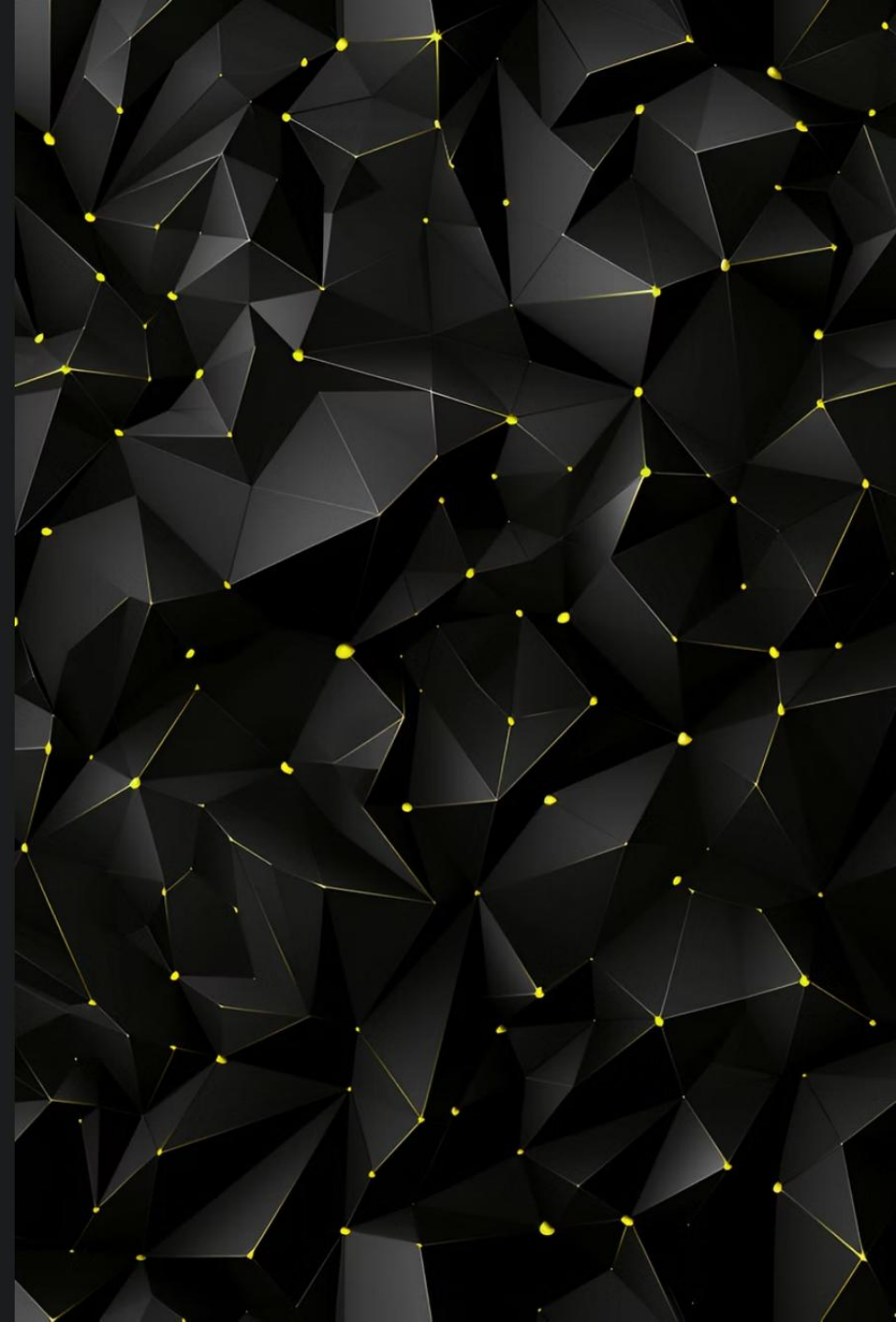
If we want to actually hear
God's Voice, we have to
carefully listen to His Message.

Listening to God is not passive. It requires deliberate, humble attention to what
He has actually said — not what we wish He had said.

CORE PRINCIPLE #1

The Church That Wants to Hear from God Must Listen to His Voice Through His Word

2 Timothy 3:16-17



God Has Spoken!

Through His Son

Hebrews 1:2 — In these last days God has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things.

Through the Bible

2 Timothy 3:16–17 — All Scripture is God-breathed

2 Peter 1:20–21 — Prophecy came by the Holy Spirit

1 Thessalonians 2:13 — Received as the Word of God

John 17:17 — Your Word is truth

Matthew 24:35 — Heaven and earth will pass away

Psalms 119:160 — The sum of Your Word is truth

Hebrews 4:12 — Living and active, sharper than a sword

What God Reveals Through His Word

God does not leave us guessing about His character or His priorities. He reveals Himself — and what He cares about — clearly and consistently through Scripture.

Moral Righteousness, Not Self-Righteousness

God is not impressed with religious performance. He calls His people to genuine holiness rooted in love for Him.

Obedience and Growth, Not Ministry Popularity

God measures faithfulness — not platform size, crowd approval, or social influence.

Spiritual Maturity That Enables Ministry

God's Word builds us up from the inside so that we are equipped for every good work He has prepared in advance.

CORE PRINCIPLE #2

The Church That Wants to Hear from God Must Not Project Our Image onto God

2 Timothy 4:1



God's Word Is Not Like Other Religious Texts

Mythology vs Revelation

God's Word Is Not Our Therapist

Modern culture prizes **guided self-discovery** — the idea that a counselor or coach simply helps you find the answers already within yourself. But God's Word operates by an entirely different logic. It does not merely reflect your journey back to you.

It Teaches

Establishing what is true
and right

It Corrects

Exposing what is false or
sinful

It Guides

Directing the path forward
in righteousness

God speaks as King and Coach — with authority and direction — not as a mirror for our own preferences.

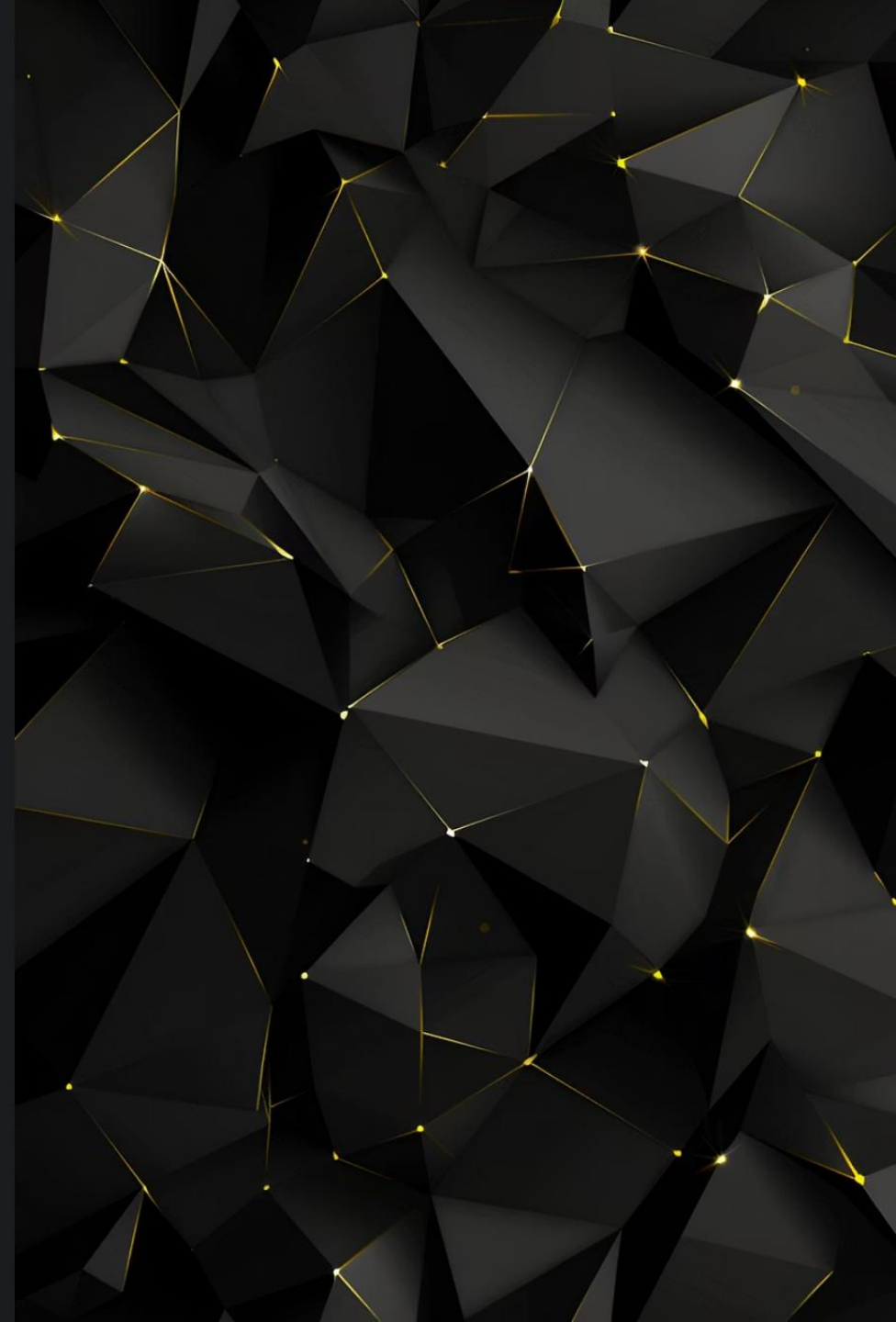
God's Word Develops Complete, Competent Christians

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." — 2 Timothy 3:16–17

CORE PRINCIPLE #3

The Church That Wants to Hear from God Must Prioritize God's Message Rather Than Our Own Interests

2 Timothy 4:1-4



Our experiences do not dictate what God must be saying.

Experience is real and valuable — but it is not authoritative. What God has said in His Word stands over our experience, not beneath it. We interpret our experience through Scripture, not Scripture through our experience.

Radical Contextual Theologies

⚠ These theological frameworks argue that our lived experience should lead and govern our practice of knowing and obeying God — inverting the proper relationship between Scripture and experience.

Contextual theologies, broadly defined, insist that who you are — your ethnicity, your gender, your economic class, your social location — should function as the primary lens through which you read and apply the Bible. Rather than Scripture shaping our identity, our identity shapes our reading of Scripture.

Contextual Theologies

Identity-Based and Liberation

Contextual Theologies: Identity-Based

Identity-based theologies elevate particular social-cultural categories as the interpretive key to Scripture and Christian practice.



Ethnicity-Based

Reading Scripture through the lens of racial or ethnic identity as the primary interpretive framework



Regional

Locating theological authority in the particular cultural experience of a geographic community



Gender-Based

Using gender identity or experience as the organizing principle for biblical interpretation and theology

Contextual Theologies: Liberation-Based

"The salvation of all persons from oppression is the goal of God's work in history and must therefore be the task of those who believe in him, utilizing every means possible, including political effort and even revolution if necessary." — Millard Erickson

Liberation theologies redefine salvation in primarily social and political terms, pitting groups against one another along lines of power:

→ **Economic and Political**

The poor versus the wealthy as the defining moral and theological divide

→ **Feminist / Womanist / Mujerista**

Women's experience set against patriarchal structures as the lens of liberation

→ **Ethnic**

Racial groups framed in opposition, with liberation as the supreme theological category

Liberation Theology: Economic & Political

Gustavo Gutiérrez — *A Theology of Liberation*

“

"It is a theological reflection born of experience." — pg. xiii

“

"A critical reflection on historical praxis based on the Gospel and the lived experiences of the poor and oppressed in Latin America, aimed at abolishing unjust social structures to build a freer, more human society."

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- ⊗ Notice the inversion: experience comes first, theology second. Scripture becomes a tool to validate what experience has already determined.

Liberation Theology: Feminist / Womanist / Mujerista

Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza — *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation*

“*“I seek simultaneously to destabilize the center and the margins of 'malestream' biblical studies by constructing the ekklesia as a feminist counter-public-sphere from which a feminist biblical rhetoric can speak.” — pg. 7*

“*“My Sisters — Have courage to be suspicious of biblical texts about women like me on pages dubbed GOOD NEWS and proclaimed as the WORD OF GOD.” — pg. 50*

1. This places a hermeneutic of suspicion over Scripture itself, treating God's Word as a male text to be interrogated rather than God's voice that is to be obeyed.
2. It uses God's Word as a tool to support Feminist aims, rather than subjecting feminist aims to God's Word and will.

Liberation Theology: Ethnic Liberation

James Cone — *A Black Theology of Liberation*

"Liberation is not consistent with the gospel but is the gospel of Jesus Christ." — pg. 1

James Cone has collapsed the biblical gospel into a program of social-political liberation, redefining who Jesus is and what salvation means through the lens of a specific ethnic struggle.

Liberation Theology Understands the Essence of God as Liberating. Therefore:

"God cannot be Queered unless theologians have the courage..."

- Althaus-Reid, pg. 88.

Five Flaws of Radical Contextual Theology

1 Experience-Led

Human experience functions as the primary authority, displacing the objective standard of Scripture

2 Parabolic Theology

Biblical language is treated as symbolic or culturally conditioned rather than propositionally true

3 Trajectory Hermeneutics

Scripture is read as pointing toward a trajectory the interpreter determines — not as authoritative in its plain meaning

4 Reframes History and Scripture

Biblical events and texts are reinterpreted to fit the framework rather than allowing Scripture to interpret itself

5 Conclusions Contradict Scripture

The end result frequently and directly contradicts clear Biblical commands — the ultimate test of any theology

Our experiences do not dictate what God must be saying.

God's Word stands as judge over our experience — interpreting, correcting, and redeeming it. We do not stand over God's Word as its judge. The moment we reverse that order, we have stopped listening to God.

Our interests do not indicate what God wants us to fixate on.

📖 Isaiah 55:8–9 — "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord."

Mythology in Paul's Letters

Paul consistently warns against the fascination with myths as a substitute for God's revealed truth. This is not a peripheral concern — it appears repeatedly across his pastoral letters.

1 Timothy 1:4

Myths associated with "endless myths and genealogies" that promote speculation rather than godly edification

1 Timothy 4:7

"Profane and old womanish myths" — irreverent, culturally popular stories that distract from godliness

2 Timothy 4:4

Myths are explicitly **contrasted with truth** — where myths increase, truth decreases

Titus 1:14

Jewish myths used to turn people away from the truth — false teaching wearing religious clothing

2 Peter 1:16

"We did not follow cleverly devised myths" — the apostolic witness stands in direct contrast

Fascination With Mysteries Can Drown Out the Voice of God.

When people grow bored they often reach for the exotic and mysterious.

Emerald Tablets of Thoth

Ancient esoteric texts circulating in Christian spaces as hidden divine wisdom — a form of modern Gnosticism

Book of Enoch

Extra-biblical literature elevated to canonical status, used to build elaborate speculative theologies

The Unseen Realm

Extra-biblical cosmologies can wield a dangerous level of control over the meaning of the Biblical text

Proclaim God's Word

Deuteronomy 29:29

The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

2 Timothy 4:1

"I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word...For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths."

Our Desires Do Not Dictate Our Focus

One of the subtler ways we drown out God's voice is by insisting that our personal preferences shape how the church operates. James says believers should be careful because often those desires are fueled by demonic wisdom.



Communication Preferences

Demanding a certain style of preaching or teaching that confirms rather than challenges — avoiding the discomfort of genuine conviction



Worship Preferences

Shaping corporate worship around emotional experience or aesthetic taste rather than God-centered, truth-saturated adoration



Community Preferences

Building the church around affinity and comfort rather than the diverse, cross-cultural unity the gospel creates

Our Priorities Must Not Be Projected onto God

God's Word Shapes Our Priorities

The Word of God does not conform to what we already want — it transforms what we want. Salvation is not God endorsing our priorities. It is God redirecting them entirely toward Himself and His kingdom.

God's Purpose Is Not to Fulfill Our Passions

We are called to align our passions with God's eternal purpose — not to recruit God into serving our personal vision of the good life. The church exists for His glory, not our satisfaction.

📖 Romans 12:2 — "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."



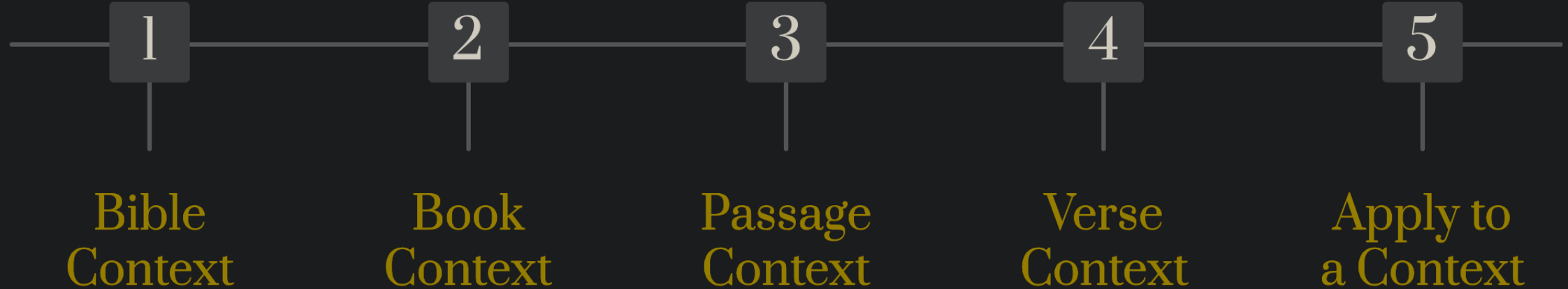
CORE PRINCIPLE #4

The Church Demonstrates Its View of God by How It Engages the Ministry of His Word

2 Timothy 4:5

Will We Be Self-Controlled in Our Approach to God's Word?

"A text without a context is a pretext for a proof text." - D.A. Carson's dad



Paying Attention to the Commands

Faithful preaching does not soften, skip over, or spiritualize away the commands of God in Scripture.

Positive Commands

"Go and do this." Direct, affirmative calls to action — things God requires His people to do. These must be declared and not minimized.

Prohibitive Commands

"Do not do this." Clear boundaries God has established. Faithful preaching names these explicitly and calls for obedience — even when the culture disagrees.

Prescriptive Commands

"No one / everyone should do this." Universal norms for the covenant community — binding on all people regardless of background or preference.

Paying Attention to the Consequences



Invited Consequences

The blessings, rewards, and outcomes God promises to those who obey, Received as the fruit of faithfulness from the hand of Jesus. These must be proclaimed with hope and joy



Unintentional Consequences

The natural and often painful results of sin that were not desired but were not avoided — the downstream effects that Scripture traces with honesty and grace.



Imposed Consequences

Divine discipline and judgment — the consequences God actively brings upon His people and the nations when His Word is persistently rejected. These must not be omitted from faithful preaching.

Three Questions for Every Faithful Church

Will We Be
Self-Controlled
in Our
Approach to
God's Word?

Will We Suffer
for Faithfulness
to God's Word?

Will We Hear
"Well Done"
from the Lord?