

Message #13

II Timothy 3:14-17

On February 25, 2014, Ricky Wagoner, a bus driver in Dayton, Ohio, was trying to fix his bus when 3 men surrounded him and said they were going to kill him. They stabbed him with a knife and took out a gun and shot him in the legs and two times in the chest. When the EMT's arrived they discovered that Ricky wasn't dead. In fact, when they examined his chest, they discovered that two bullets were buried in a pocket Bible, which he carried in his shirt pocket. A police officer said had it not been for that Bible, Ricky would have been dead. In some ways, we can all say that. If it weren't for the Bible, we would all be dead.

Now the Apostle Paul was about to die and it meant he would soon leave Timothy behind. Timothy's assignment was to carefully guard the teachings of Paul and the doctrines of Paul and he needed to teach them to faithful men who could teach others (II Tim. 2:2). The difficulty was that Timothy was living in a world of religious thieves who were trying to rob people of the truth.

Many of these teachers were attacking Paul and his teaching and Paul knew as soon as he was gone, they would turn their focus to Timothy. So Paul wanted to drive home the key point that could keep Timothy spiritually alive in a world of dead religion. The one thing that could sustain Timothy at all times was the Bible. Paul knew that the Bible was the key to survival. The one thing that can strengthen a believer during various attacks and warfare and hostility is the Word of God. That is a major theme Paul wanted Timothy to know as he started to conclude this, his final letter.

What Paul tells Timothy here is this:

THE KEY TO CONTINUAL LIFE AND GROWTH AND MINISTRY IN A RELIGIOUS WORLD OF HERESY AND HARDSHIP IS A CONTINUAL FOCUS ON GOD'S INSPIRED WORD.

God's Word will keep you from sin. God's Word will keep you sane. God's Word will keep you stable. God's Word will keep you healthy and solid in a world that is unhealthy and unstable. The inspired Word of God is critical to our survival and that is what Paul wanted Timothy to know.

Now there are five God's Word related realizations that we are to have:

WORD RELATED REALIZATION #1 – God's people are to continue in the Word of God. 3:14

The conjunction "however" is a sharp contrasting conjunction in Greek. So what this means is that in sharp contrast to the evil religious men, who are imposters and seducers, Timothy is to stay focused on the Word of God.

There are three facts brought out here about the Word of God:

Fact #1 - God's people are to continue in that which they have learned. **3:14a**

Timothy had been instructed in the Word of God and had learned the doctrines of Paul from Paul himself (II Tim. 2:2). Timothy was to remain in the doctrinal system that he had been taught. He was to abide in it and continue in it.

Now the specific system that had been taught to Timothy was the Pauline system of grace. That system included some major doctrines—justification, propitiation, sanctification, imputation, redemption, predestination and election. Paul's teaching develops these critical doctrines and Timothy had been well-trained in these doctrines and Paul wanted Timothy to continue in that which he had learned and had been taught.

Fact #2 - God's people are to remain in that which they have become convinced. **3:14b**

God's people do not need to fall for some new-fangled religious idea or teaching. When you are taught the truth something happens in your soul. God does a convincing work in your soul. Now once you have experienced God's Word that has changed your life, you need to stay in that system of what is true.

D. Edmund Hiebert said this phrase "points to that inner conviction concerning the truth and reality of these things which have come to him."

When you hear truth, it rings in your soul and you know you are hearing truth. You become assured of it. Paul says to Timothy, you stay in that teaching you know to be true. Stay committed to it because this is the key to stability.

Fact #3 - God's people are to remain in that which the godly source taught them. **3:14c**

The relative pronoun "from whom" may grammatically refer to the key people who had taught Timothy and it also may refer to the Bible that was taught to Timothy by those people. Both are legitimate options and both are true.

Paul wanted Timothy to remain steadfast in the things he had learned from the Scriptures, realizing who taught him those things—his grandmother, his mother and Paul. All three had been instrumental in teaching Timothy the Scriptures.

There should be a loyalty to those we know taught us the Scriptures properly. We should remember the faithfulness of those who taught us the Word of God that changed our lives.

The most famous dog sled race in the world is the 1100 miles Iditarod which runs from Anchorage to Nome. Probably the greatest woman dog musher to ever live was Susan Butcher, who died in 2006 from leukemia at the age of 51. She won the Iditarod four times (1986, 1987, 1988, 1990). For nearly two weeks she and her dogs faced frigid temperatures and hours of loneliness. She was once asked, what do you think about all of those hours of the grueling race? She said I think about the fact that “others have made it, I can too.”

That is what Paul wanted Timothy to do. That is what God wants us to do. He wants us to remember others have made it by focusing on God’s Word and so can we.

WORD RELATED REALIZATION #2 – God’s people are to know the influence of the Word of God. **3:15**

Now Paul says to Timothy that you have known these things “from childhood.” That may refer to one’s childhood physically or spiritually. Perhaps in this case it refers to both. Timothy had been instructed in the Scriptures from an early age. The term “sacred writings” refers primarily to the O.T. Scriptures, but not exclusively. All other writings of Paul were in existence when he wrote II Timothy. Do you see what Paul calls Scripture—“sacred writings.”

Now what Timothy specifically knew about the Scriptures is that **they had the power to make one wise and they had the power to make one wise in leading to salvation.** Now this can mean several things.

First, the Bible, and specifically the Old Testament, has the power to point sinners to the salvation that is found in Jesus Christ. Undoubtedly many are very confused about the O.T. In fact, in Paul’s first letter to Timothy (I Timothy 1:7), Paul brought out the fact that many of them were very confused about the O.T. Law. They did not know that the O.T. Law showed us our guilt and our need of Jesus Christ.

Second, the Bible has the power to give us wisdom as we live our lives heading to the finale of our own salvation. It is very clear from this verse that wisdom comes from the Word of God. Wisdom does not come from a text book, a psychology book, a philosophy book or a study of sociology. It is the Bible that is able to make one wise.

Most colleges and universities and most high schools and grade schools have lost total sight of this fact. In fact, most of them have taken God out of their curriculum and it is no wonder that we are living in a world filled with fools. They are neglecting the one book that can make them wise.

WORD RELATED REALIZATION #3 – God’s people are to know the inspiration of the Word of God. **3:16a**

Now Paul wants to cement the importance of the Word of God in the mind of Timothy so he tells him that that he needs to remember that “All Scripture is God-breathed.”

This is one of the most incredible statements in all of the Bible. “All Scripture is “theopneustos,” God-breathed.”

Paul is telling Timothy **that the thing you need to know for the rest of your life is that “all Scripture” contains the very life and breath of God.** In contrast to any other book or writing in existence, which have been written by finite sinful men, the Bible contains the very life and breath of God in all of the words that are written. There is no other book in the world that makes this kind of claim.

Paul wants Timothy to realize that when you study the Bible, you are not studying the words of men, you are studying the very words of the living God and those words are very much alive. Now to truly understand these living words, we must carefully see the words in the context in which they sit.

Here is the situation. Timothy was about to lose Paul, who was about to be executed. Timothy was surrounded by a religious world that was filled with all kinds of teachings from all kinds of teachers. Where could Timothy turn to for help and encouragement and refreshment and life? He could not go to Paul anymore because Paul would be gone. He could not turn to other apostles because they too would be gone. To whom could he turn for help? He could turn to the Word of God.

It is the God-breathed Scriptures that have God’s life in them. The Bible is a living book. The Bible is an active book. The Bible is a God-inspired and God-breathed book. Now here is the critical question for you—do you really and truly believe that?

Do you really believe that the Bible actually contains living words that have been breathed there by God? Do you really believe that God’s Word is truly inspired by God? Do you actually believe that every word in the Scripture is inspired by God? Frankly most people going to churches today really don’t believe that because if they did, they would demand that every book of the Bible is carefully taught at church, verse by verse and word by word. If every word is God-breathed, then every word needs to be accurately taught and understood.

How about you? Do you believe this? Do you believe that every word of God is inspired and God-breathed? Do you believe it enough to read it every day? Do you believe it enough to come to church as often as you can to hear it expounded? Do you believe it enough to turn to it for your counseling needs?

God’s people need to know that there is one book and only one book that is inspired by God. There is one book that is God-breathed. There is one book that has the very life of God in it and that book is the Bible. That is something all need to remember all the way through life.

WORD RELATED REALIZATION #4 – God’s people are to know the profitability factors of the Word of God. **3:16b**

Now having established that the Bible is inspired by God, Paul also wants Timothy to realize that it is profitable for us.

This fact wars against Deism that says God just created the world and then backed off and lets it go its own way. The Bible is given by God and it has some wonderful and useful and beneficial instruction in it. There are four areas of profitability for the Bible:

Profitability Area #1 - The Bible is profitable for teaching. **3:16b**

The Bible is written by God and it needs to be taught. There is great value in teaching the Scriptures and there is great value in being taught the Scriptures. The Bible is not written for entertainment but for instruction. One commentator said no one can ever be right with God and sound in doctrine unless he is a student of the Bible. God gave His Word to be taught to the people so they could learn it.

It is expected by God that the Bible will be seriously studied and seriously taught. It needs to be taught carefully and systematically. This is what is able to bring people into a proper relationship with God and into a proper understanding of God.

Profitability Area #2 - The Bible is profitable for reproof. **3:16c**

Another reason for the written Scriptures is a negative reproof reason. The idea behind this word reproof is the idea of reproofing or rebuking someone in such a way that it brings one under conviction. The Bible has the power to bring a person under conviction when there has been a deviation from God’s Word.

No one will ever read a book more convicting than the Bible. It will cut open your soul. The more you gaze at the pages of the Bible, the more the Bible will gaze into your soul. It will expose sin, words, attitudes, and actions which are wrong and it will convict us in a way that is profitable for us.

Profitability Area #3 - The Bible is profitable for correction. **3:16d**

The idea of correction is to reveal to a person they are going the wrong direction so they may be restored to going the right direction. The Word of God does correct us when we have been in error and then is able to bring us to a place of restoration.

There is a difference between a detention center and a correctional facility. A detention center primarily detains someone who has done something wrong until they are placed by the court somewhere else. A correctional facility has, as its goal, the idea of correcting someone of their problem with the idea of restoring them to a very productive member of society.

The Bible is a massive correctional facility book. Its pages are designed to correct us and show us our wrong so that we may be restored into a productive relationship with God. He has given His Word to do that.

Profitability Area #4 - The Bible is profitable for instruction in righteousness. **3:16a**

God wanted us to clearly know that the Bible is not just another book of instruction; it is designed to instruct, educate, school and train us in righteousness. In other words, the Bible is written to teach us the righteous standards and righteous ways of God. Those not developing in true Biblical righteousness don't spend much time in the Bible.

Warren Wiersbe said the Bible is profitable for teaching what is right; for revealing what is not right; for showing how to get right and for instructing how to stay right.

It is quite obvious that the more we know of the Word of God, the more profitable, the more righteous and more useful and beneficial we will be.

John Calvin said that when he expounded the Scriptures, it was a must that he be guided by a consideration that his teaching and doctrine must be profitable and useful for the people because that is what God's Word is intended to be. That kind of mindset forces one to carefully study the Scriptures to expound them.

WORD RELATED REALIZATION #5 – God's people are to know the development purposes of the Word of God. **3:17**

Now **verse 17** gives us the desired result of the inspired Word of God that is to be taught. When the Word of God is accurately taught and it reproves and corrects and trains in righteousness, the end result is it takes one from childhood (**v. 15**) to manhood (**v. 17**), and enables the man of God to be adequately equipped for "every good work" by classification of God.

The Word of God is given to make us a finished and completed product who reflects the glory of God. Because God has given us His precious written Word, there is no acceptable excuse for not developing into a mature and useful man or woman of God.

As we meander through this world, the most important thing for us to have and know is the inspired Word of God. So in a world of weird religion and vain philosophy, stay focused on the Word of God. The Bible will save your life and it will save your soul.