



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

A Word About The Word--Sufficient

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Weekly Bible Study Schedule

- **Tuesday, March 15, 7 AM in HHR #5**
-Breakfast Provided
- **Tuesday, March 15, 8:30 PM in Room #225**
(Sen. Bob Dixon's office)

¹Take a moment and think about the following statement:

*"The Bible is antiquated in its sociological theory. You cannot go to an ancient document like this and expect to deal with twentieth-century social problems. The Bible ought to stay in its own environment. It needs to be updated with a contemporary understanding of psychological and sociological phenomena."*²

If you have been attending our Capitol Commission Bible Studies or reading these studies, then you should understand that this is a terribly insulting statement to God and His Word. In light of the Bible's instruction concerning its own revelation, inspiration, inerrancy and authority, the above statement is a serious assault on these teachings. It implies that the all-knowing, all-powerful, all-wise God could not and did not reveal eternal truth to mankind and is need of help from people as they progress in their knowledge. (Interestingly, the man making the above comment is not an atheist who despises all who believes in God. Instead, he is the head of an "evangelical denomination").

As we continue to examine the Bible's exclusive claims, may the truth of Scripture be shown to be relevant, sufficient and necessary for our lives—even in the 21st century?

INTRODUCTION

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible. It is a song written extolling the greatness of God's Word—which is called throughout the song as His precepts, law, commandments, word, testimonies, etc. The songwriter proclaims a number of reasons why God's Word is to be praised:

- It keeps a young person on a pure path--*How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word.* (119:9; cf. 119:30)
- It keeps one from sinning against God-- *Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.* (119:11)
- It restores one's soul-- *My soul cleaves to the dust; Revive me according to Your word.* (119:25)
- It is a source of comfort in the midst of affliction-- *This is my comfort in my affliction, That Your word has revived me.* (119:50)
- It a lamp to guide one's steps-- *Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.* (119:105)

Even though these are just a few of the praises lifted up by the songwriter, overall he sums up his thoughts with this:

Psalm 119:72 The law of Your mouth is better to me Than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

In another song, King David proclaimed the greatness of God's Word. One of the attributes David lifts up is the sufficiency of Scripture. Just like the songwriter of Psalm 119 extolled the many virtues of the Scripture and made it clear that it was that which kept him before God, David gives a similar refrain.

Psalm 19:7a The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul...

The Hebrew word translated "perfect" in our English Bibles is *tamim*. It is the common word meaning "complete," "whole" or "sufficient." John MacArthur writes, "It conveys the idea of something that is comprehensive, so as to cover all aspects of an issue."³ Thus, "Scripture is comprehensive, embodying all that is necessary for one's spiritual life."⁴ And since God's Word is whole and complete, it is able to restore one's soul. Nothing else is needed; nothing else needs be mixed in or added to compliment or aid the Scripture—it is sufficient to restore and to make one wise (Psalm 19:7b).

In the New Testament, Paul gives the same consideration to the Scripture in his letter to Timothy.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS & STAFF: TUESDAYS @ 7AM, HEARING ROOM #5

LEGISLATORS: TUESDAYS @ 8:30PM, ROOM #225

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE: THURSDAYS @ 7AM, BROADWAY BUILDING 3RD FLOOR CAFETERIA

PROCLAIMING THE GREATNESS AND GLORY OF GOD IN THE MISSOURI STATE CAPITOL

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We examined the first part of this passage when we discussed the inspiration of Scripture.⁵ Today, we will examine the remainder of these two verses as Paul describes the sufficiency and profitability of God's inspired word for every aspect of the life of the believer.

A. SUFFICIENT FOR TEACHING

The book of 2 Timothy is Paul's instruction to his young disciple in ministry, Timothy. In chapter three, Paul is warning Timothy that difficult days are ahead; difficult days in which there will be much rebellion and sin toward God (3:1-6), false teaching and deceptions (3:7-9), and persecution of followers of Jesus (3:10-13). In spite of these things, though, Timothy is exhorted by his mentor to continue in the things Timothy had been taught and in turn, teach them to fellow believers (3:11-4:5).

In 2 Timothy 3:16, Paul instructed Timothy that the Scriptures are the very words of God, and they are profitable, sufficient for being taught. In other words, one could ask "What is Timothy to preach or teach?" Answer: "The Scripture!!" He is not to teach the writings of Socrates, Plato, or the Jewish traditions. He is not to give discourses on his ideas, thoughts and opinions. Instead, Paul restates it in 4:2a—"PREACH THE WORD" (emphasis mine).

The minister of God is not to present and explain the musings of his own mind or favorite philosopher but the very God-breathed oracles of God. It is the Scripture that is profitable for teaching. A minister fails in his duties if he does not teach God's Word to the people God has brought to him. Only the Scriptures are sufficient in the instruction of God's people.

B. SUFFICIENT FOR REPROOF

Again, Timothy is about to be confronted with sin, false teaching and persecution, so how is he going to be able to wade through all this muck and not be drawn in by the deceptions? By understanding the Scripture is sufficient for discerning truth and error.

When one is taught in the profitable teaching of the Scripture, he or she will be ready to recognize and respond to false teaching when he or she sees it. For example, someone says "Jesus was a good man and teacher but is not God" is that true or false and why? Another is that one prominent person stated "9-11 is God's judgment on the USA for its tolerance of homosexuality;" was that true or false and why? The Scripture is profitable in recognizing false teaching and wrong ideas. It alone is sufficient to give answers to these and other types of questions and philosophies.

A benefit closer to the heart is when one is taught in the sufficient teaching of the Scripture, he or she will be ready to recognize and respond to sin in his or her life. How do you know if what you are doing, saying or thinking is right or wrong? The judgment of society and culture? Your friend's thoughts? Your own heart? (Jeremiah wrote "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it? (Jeremiah 17:9)) The only sure standard is the inspired Scripture; for it is the inspired Word of our Creator and Redeemer who tells us what is right and what is wrong.

Proverbs 6:23 For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life.

Please read closely: Christians have no right, in themselves, to tell the drunkard, adulterer, homosexual, liar, thief, or gossip that they are living in sin. Their only base for stating such things comes from the Scripture. Believers have the obligation (which again comes from the Scripture) to inform people that their lifestyles are sinful in the eyes of God (but not in the style of Fred Phelps and his type) and to call them to repent and be reconciled to God. This is the gospel message—again coming from and solely based upon the teaching of the inspired Scripture.

C. SUFFICIENT FOR CORRECTION

Paul paints a couple of word pictures here in the word translated "correction." The first is the restoring of something to its original and proper condition. This can be seen in the restoration of cars, furniture, buildings, and even old photographs. That which is in bad shape is made new again.

THE ONLY SURE STANDARD IS THE INSPIRED SCRIPTURE;
FOR IT IS THE INSPIRED WORD OF OUR CREATOR AND
REDEEMER WHO TELLS US WHAT IS RIGHT AND WHAT IS
WRONG.

The second word picture is setting something up after it has fallen over. Again, this can be observed in everyday life—especially if one has children. After something is knocked over or falls on its own accord, it is righted and made to stand again.

Scripture is sufficient for reproof, showing where people stumble and fall; but it is also sufficient for restoring or setting these same people back up. For in Scripture the Creator's plan of restoration and reconciliation is revealed. In Scripture, we see God's action that can restore His people

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back to Him. It is the Scripture that informs us that we are fallen, it is also the Scripture that informs us how God sets us back up (2 Corinthians 5:21).

It is the reading, believing and obeying the Scripture that one remains upright (Psalm 119:9, 11, 30). But when the believer does fall (and all do), it is the Scripture that teaches “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

D. SUFFICIENT FOR TRAINING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

Baseball is currently in spring training; everyone getting ready for the season. But one will not see any of the players or teams practicing with shoulder pads and football helmets or doing tackling drills or kicking field goals. That equipment and those exercises would do the players no good. In fact, it could possibly do them much harm.

IT IS THE SCRIPTURE THAT INFORMS US THAT WE ARE
FALLEN; IT IS ALSO THE SCRIPTURE THAT INFORMS US HOW
GOD SETS US BACK UP.

In the same way, the Christian looks to the Scripture to be fully trained in righteousness or in right living. This word for training is also found in Paul teaching for fathers in Ephesians 6:4 “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the *discipline* (or training) and instruction of the Lord” (cf. Psalm 119:9-11). The believer would be foolish and would do much harm to his or her life if one trained with a workout of differing philosophies and worldviews. Paul writes that the inspired Scripture is profitable and sufficient to be trained in living a life that is pleasing to God.

E. SUFFICIENT FOR EQUIPPING

This is the logical outcome for the believer who has been instructed, reproofed, corrected and trained in the Word of God. It is the inspired Scripture⁶ that equips and makes “adequate” (2 Timothy 3:17). Paul sets this equipped person in opposition to those back up in 2 Timothy 3:7 who are *always learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*. When the people of God sets their hearts upon the Word of God to study it and apply it, they come to a knowledge of the truth and are able to do the things which God has redeemed and called them to do.

And this is the purpose for which God redeemed men and women—to do good works so His name may be glorified. Paul writes in Ephesians 2:8-10, *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.* And Peter follows that in 1 Peter 2:12, *Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

CONCLUSION

It is true that the Bible is not sufficient for understanding nuclear science or doing brain surgery, but it was not written for those purposes. The Scripture is God’s written revelation of Himself to mankind. In it, He also reveals what He has done and why He has done. Through this revelation we find that all mankind has sinfully rebelled against our Creator. And through this revelation, we also find what God has done to reconcile His people back to Himself.

Paul’s instruction to Timothy, as well as to all pastors and to all believers, is to hold fast, teach and obey the Word of God. For this written revelation is sufficient for the life of one who desires to live a life pleasing to God, abounding with good works, filled with peace, contentment, forgiveness and purpose.

¹ This study was written while author was serving with Capitol Ministries™.

² A statement made to Dr. John MacArthur quoted in his article “The Sufficiency of Scripture” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 15/2 (Fall 2004): 171.

³ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ See “A Word About the Word—Inspiration” (found at www.capitolcom.org/ministries/Missouri/Studies.aspx).

⁶ I desire to remind the reader with repeated use of the term “inspired” that the Bible’s sufficiency is due to it being the very creative breath of God. If the Bible was not inspired, again we are back to the understanding that these words are just the words of men and the book has no inherent truth, authority or sufficiency. As we stated in our study on authority, if the Bible is only a book written by men, it is a deceptive book and not even worthy to be considered a good religious book that has values we can draw from.