

STUDY GUIDE

NEW
VISION
SURVIVALIST
THE WORD
2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17
01/09/2017



NEW VISION

MAIN POINT

Scripture is trustworthy and authoritative for our lives, guiding us graciously into all that is good.

INTRODUCE

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is your favorite passage of Scripture? Why and how does it impact you?

How often do you read your Bible? How does reading the Bible affect your daily life decisions?

Being a Christian is not a passive endeavor. Paul calls us to *endure* the gospel life. His call ends with the famous declaration of the inspiration and usefulness of all of Scripture. The statement is foundational to understanding the inerrancy and sufficiency of Scripture. Volumes have been written on it. Scripture, itself actually serves to anchor Paul's overarching concern that Timothy endure in the gospel. Paul exhorts Timothy to give close attention to the Scriptures and to "continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 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" (vv. 14–15).

The fact that these gospel-testifying Scriptures are "breathed out by God" gives us confidence that Scripture is trustworthy and authoritative for our lives, guiding us graciously into all that is good. In other words, if we are trying to teach, correct, train, or encourage one another toward maturity in Christ, then the Bible is our only book!

READ AND REFLECT

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17.

What does it mean that Scripture is "inspired by God"? How does this fact shape the way you approach Scripture?

What are three words you would use to describe your general attitude about the Bible?

Of the characteristics mentioned regarding Scripture, which is most meaningful to you? Why? Why do we need to see the Bible as profitable in all these ways?

If God inspired the Bible, does that mean the human authors were merely just note takers of divine dictation? Explain.

The Bible was written by divinely inspired men. What does this mean? We commonly hear that a particular author like William Shakespeare was inspired. After an especially moving musical performance, someone may remark that the composer or performer was inspired. Is the Bible inspired in this same way? Of course not. The Bible's word for its inspiration is God-breathed. The Holy Spirit breathed this Word through human authors divinely chosen for this task. God used their personalities, writing styles, and personal experiences to accomplish His perfect purposes. These human authors were not passive stenographers; rather, the Holy Spirit worked through them, inspiring them so thoroughly that they were moved to write exactly what God intended—right down to the very words.

How can we be sure that the Bible really contains all the words God intended for us to have and that we shouldn't seek any further revelation?

As the Bible records, the will and initiative in the creation of Scripture were God's own, "because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, moved by the Holy Spirit, men spoke from God" (2 Pet. 1:21). The result of divine inspiration is that we have exactly the Bible God intended for us to have. Nothing is missing. Nothing is included that should not be there. For this reason, we affirm that the Bible contains the very words of God.

How is God's authority exemplified through Scripture?

What does it look like to submit to the authority of the Word of God? Do you do this? Why or why not?

Upon what basis should we obey the Bible? What makes receiving instruction from the Bible different from receiving instruction from any other book?

Because the Bible is the uniquely inspired Word of God, it is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. Every word is to be trusted and obeyed. Time and time again, God reminded His people that He gave us this Word so that we could have life and be faithful to Him. Speaking through Moses, God repeatedly instructed the children of Israel that His Word was to be obeyed for their good and that disobedience would lead to death and disaster. The Bible is our authoritative guide to God's truth and is the sure foundation on which to build our lives and stake our hopes. As the psalmist declared, "Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path" (Ps. 119:105). A Christian loves the Word of God and demonstrates this love by obeying it and by being faithful in personal Bible study. A church demonstrates a hunger for the Bible by its desire and support for true biblical preaching and teaching. Nothing less will do; no substitute can satisfy our hunger for the Word of God.

In 2 Timothy 3:15, Paul said the Scriptures would give Timothy "wisdom for salvation." How does Scripture teach us the path to salvation? Would it be possible to know about salvation without Scripture? Explain.

Read John 5:39. What did Jesus believe about the Scriptures? If we are seeking to follow Jesus, what must we believe about the Scriptures?

The Bible—God's written Word—fulfills God's redemptive goal by pointing us to Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word. Jesus is the ultimate focus of every verse of Scripture, and as He explained, "You pore over the Scriptures because you think you have eternal life in them, yet they testify about Me" (John 5:39). The Scriptures find their fulfillment in Christ and reveal the salvation that comes by faith in Him. Jesus Christ is the ultimate revelation of God, but we would have no authoritative knowledge of Him apart from the Bible. The written Word and the incarnate Word must never be seen in contradiction or competition with each other. A division between Christ and the Bible is a sure sign of false teaching. Christ is honored when the Bible is taught, preached, and believed.

APPLY

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

One way to show appreciation for and trust in the Bible as God's Word is to read it each day. What does this habit look like in your own life?

What responsibility do you have to trust and obey the Scripture? Does your life reflect a trust in the Scriptures? If not, what needs to change?

Why should we share God's Word with other people?

PRAY

Close in prayer, asking God to increase our appetite for His Word. Pray that our group will be better students of God's Word, not just to increase our knowledge but to conform us to His image. Also pray that we will have the boldness to share the Word with other people in our lives.

COMMENTARY

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

3:16-17 Inspired means "breathed out by God" (see textual footnote on 3:16). Because Scripture comes from God Himself, it is profitable in many ways, ultimately leading us to righteousness, maturity, and service. All Scripture refers to the OT, but by implication to the writings of the NT as well (1Tim 5:18; 2Pe 3:15-16).