

God's Word

2 Timothy 3:14-17



Bearing Fruit

- ❑ Jesus says, “If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit” (*John 15:5, NIV*).
- ❑ Jesus connects remaining in him with “his words remaining in” us (*15:7*). Jesus’ words are his teachings – life-giving truths that transform our thinking, attitudes, and actions. This means we must receive his words, internalize them, and act on them. What Jesus says about “his words” applies to God’s Word in general.

God's Word

- ❑ In his 2nd letter to Timothy, Paul talks about God’s written Word. Read 2 Timothy 3:14-17.
- ❑ Paul tells Timothy to “continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of” because Timothy’s teachers have been loving and trustworthy, and the holy Scriptures “are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” (*3:14-15*)¹
- ❑ As Paul says, “All Scripture² is ‘God-breathed,’”³ which means that God is the source of all Scripture. If God is the source of Scripture, it must be true, and it must be useful!
 1. In what ways is the Scripture useful to Timothy (*3:16-17*)? In what ways is the Scripture (the Bible) useful to us? How can we get the most benefit?



Getting the Most out of God's Word

- ❑ Commit to both understand & appropriately respond.
 - 📖 *Jesus said, “My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. If anyone chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.” (John 7:16-17, NIV84)*
 - 📖 “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” (*James 1:22, NIV*)
- ❑ Humble yourself.
 - 📖 “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” (*James 4:6, NIV84*)
- ❑ Pray.
 - 📖 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you” (*Matthew 7:7, NIV*)

¹ Since Timothy has known them from childhood, the ‘holy Scriptures’ (*hiera grammata*) must be the Hebrew Scriptures, that is, the Old Testament (OT). However, since Timothy had also heard the gospel, he saw how the OT points to Jesus Christ. The OT laid the foundation. Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of the Scriptures – as the Promised One, Prophet, Messiah, High Priest, and Sacrifice, through whom the promised salvation and blessing would come. In this way, the holy Scriptures ‘make one wise for salvation,’ through faith in Jesus Christ

² What is included in ‘all Scripture’ (*pasa graphē*)? In verse 14, ‘the holy Scriptures’ refer to the Old Testament Scriptures, and that is the primary meaning in verse 16. However, Paul sees the Scriptures as being fulfilled in ‘the gospel,’ which is ‘the word of truth’ (2:15). In addition, there is evidence that Christians were accepting some New Testament writings as equal in authority to the Scriptures (1 Timothy 5:18; 2 Peter 3:15-16). Thus ‘all Scripture’ applies to all the writings eventually accepted as Scripture, including the New Testament.

³ ‘God-breathed’ (*theopneustos*) is used only here in the Bible. A similar point is made in 2 Peter 1:20-21: ‘Above all, you must understand that no prophesy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophesy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.’

- ❑ Understand the spiritual nature of God’s Word.
 - 📖 “What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. . . . The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 2:12, 14, NIV)⁴
- ❑ Be regular in “feeding” on God’s Word (we should “feed” daily).
 - 📖 Jesus said, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” (Matthew 4:4, NIV)
- ❑ Internalize God’s Word through memorization, meditation,⁵ and practice.
- ❑ Seek to understand the basic purposes, themes, and teachings of the Bible.
- ❑ Seek to understand individual passages *in context*. It may be helpful to read more than one translation, including your first language. Learn to “study” the Bible.



Ways of Studying the Bible

- ❑ There are various ways to study the Bible, including the ways listed below.
 - Listening to Teaching – listening to a “teacher” explain and apply the Bible. Of course, the teacher must study the Bible in order to teach. Listening can occur in large or small groups (or even alone), and involves lecture, questions and answers, and/or interactive discussion (which may involve the students in interpreting and applying the Bible).
 - Small Group Inductive Study – a systematic method of examining the Bible text to determine the meaning intended by the author, and how it applies to our lives today.⁶ This method includes three steps:
 - 1) Observation – What does the Bible passage say?
 - 2) Interpretation – What does the passage mean?
 - 3) Application – How does the passage apply to my life, and the lives of others?
 Under these basic questions, more specific questions are asked about the text. In group studies, these questions are often provided in a Bible study booklet.
 - Personal Inductive Study - similar to small group inductive study, but done alone. Though personal study may use a Bible study booklet, the student often develops his/her own questions. Personal study may also involve greater use of Bible study resources.

Reflection/Application

- As a Christian, are your beliefs and way of life firmly based on the Bible? Make a specific commitment to regularly read and study the Bible, allowing God’s word to teach, rebuke, correct and train you. Seek to be thoroughly equipped for “the fruitful life.”
- If you are *not* a Christian, what do you think about the Bible? The Bible is a truly unique book that *must* be seriously considered. Commit to read and study the Bible. Ask questions, and be open to the “possibility” that the Bible presents the Truth that is directly relevant to your life’s meaning, purpose, and fulfillment.

⁴ The nonbeliever is limited in understanding the Bible because he is ‘without the Spirit.’ In any case, God uses the Bible to speak to nonbelievers too! However, the nonbeliever should realize that true understanding is spiritual understanding. Thus the nonbeliever should be open to the Holy Spirit’s work in her life, which is primarily to help her understand her spiritual need and ‘see’ that salvation is found only in Jesus Christ.

⁵ Biblical ‘meditation’ refers to reflecting on, or contemplating, the truths of a particular Bible passage, with the purpose of changing [or reinforcing biblical] thinking and behavior. The Navigators (and others) provide useful resources for Scripture memory and meditation.

⁶ See Jay’s *How to Study the Bible* on the ICF website for a detailed description of this Bible study method.