

FOUR FUNCTIONS OF GOD'S WORD

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2 Timothy 3:10-17

1. How we view the Bible is vitally important.
2. Some believe that the Bible contains the Word of God while others believe it is the Word of God.
NOTE: Those who believe that the Bible contains the Word of God subjectively decide for themselves what is and what is not authoritative.
3. My view is that the Bible is the Word of God and that it must be viewed and valued as God's definitive, authoritative, and powerful message to mankind.
4. In verse 13 Paul declared, "But evil men and imposters will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived."
5. What is true in the spiritual realm is true in the secular world as well.
6. The fact is we all face the same dilemma Pilate did when he asked Jesus, "What is truth?" (What's really going on here? Who am I to believe?)
7. Pilate's question was a valid one when you think of all the various points-of-view, philosophies, theories, religions, and confident assertions that we are confronted with.
8. For example how do you and I determine the truth in relationship to the various political candidates that are asking for our votes?
9. Do we believe what the various candidates say about themselves and their opponents?
10. Do we believe what we read in newspapers and news magazines or see and hear on TV or the internet?
11. The bottom line is we must all do our best to make an informed decision while, in reality, our decision may be based on faulty information.
12. Wouldn't it be wonderful if a website existed where you and I could type in any question and know that the answer you received was the absolute truth?
13. As Christians we have an advantage over the secular world because we have a relationship with the Truth.
 - a. John 1:14-15
And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, **full of grace and truth.**
 - b. John 8:31-33
So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and **you will know the truth**, and the truth will make you free."
 - c. John 14:6
6 Jesus said to him, "**I am** the way, and **the truth**, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.
 - d. John 18:37
37 Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. **For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.**"

14. Paul told Timothy that every teacher's words must be evaluated based on whether or not they "agree with sound words, **those of our Lord Jesus Christ.**" 1 Timothy 6:3

15. In this morning's Scripture passage Paul told Timothy to continue in the truth contained in the Scriptures because "All Scripture is inspired by God."

NOTE: It is important to understand that all Scripture is inspired by God through the activity of the Spirit of Christ on the hearts and minds of those chosen by God to record the truth.

a. 1 Peter 1:10-12

10 As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, 11 seeking to know what person or time **the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.** 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things into which angels long to look.

b. 2 Peter 1:19-21

20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, **but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.**

16. Since all Scripture is of God we know it is true because God is true.

"The sum (total) of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting." Psalm 119:160

17. After declaring God's word to be reliable and true Paul states four functions of God's word-to teach, to reprove, to correct, to train in righteousness.

I. For teaching.

A. All Scripture is profitable for teaching or instruction.

B. Here I believe Paul is talking about doctrine-the spiritual truth upon which our faith is founded and our spiritual lives are built.

C. Paul told Timothy that the time would come when professing Christians would not endure sound doctrine, and subsequently they would turn away their ears from the truth and turn aside to myths. 2 Timothy 4:3-4

D. Sound doctrine is our defense against false teaching.

E. Paul's letters to the Romans and Ephesians are divided into two parts.

F. The early chapters are devoted to teaching doctrine, and that doctrine is the basis, or foundation, for Paul's reproofs, corrections, and instructions in righteousness.

G. Unfortunately, not many modern day Christians are capable of doing what the people in Berea were able to do. Acts 17:10-12

The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11 Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, **examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.** 12 Therefore many of them believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men.

NOTE: Being noble-minded refers to being receptive to, and willing to hear and consider Paul's message.

II. For reproof.

- A. Paul told Timothy, “Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.” 2 Timothy 4:2
“Herald and preach the Word! Keep your sense of urgency [stand by, be at hand and ready], whether the opportunity seems to be favorable or unfavorable, whether it is convenient or inconvenient, [whether it is welcome or unwelcome, you as preacher of the Word are to show people in what way their lives are wrong] and convince them, rebuking and correcting, warning and urging and encouraging them, being unflagging and inexhaustible in patience and teaching.” (AMP)
- B. Reproof carries with it the idea of confronting and convicting people of wrong behavior.
- C. This aspect of the preacher’s responsibility is not embraced or received with much enthusiasm for the time has come when most will not endure sound doctrine because they want their ears tickled. 2 Timothy 4:3
- D. The writer of Proverbs had a rather harsh view of those who are not open to needed reproof. Proverbs 12:1
“He who hates reproof is stupid.”

III. For correction.

- A. Rebuking people for wrong thinking and wrong behavior is not enough in itself.
- B. The goal of our preaching needs to be right behavior based on right thinking.
- C. Some Christians do not need rebuke, but they do need to adjust their thinking or behavior—they need a course adjustment.
- D. A child with a can of gas and a box of matches needs to be rebuked; while a child fiddling with the TV remote needs correction.
- E. In writing to the Corinthians Paul reproved them for not dealing with sexual sin and the abuse of the Lord’s Supper but used correction when it came to their misuse of spiritual gifts.

IV. For training (instruction) in righteousness (righteous living).

- A. The Bible not only tells us what to believe, but it also tells us how to live a holy life that conforms to God’s plan and purpose.
- B. Much of the Bible simply states what we are to do and what we are not to do.
- C. The Bible tells us practical truth and truths that are related to being the people God wants us to be.
- D. For instance:
 - 1. What is prayer and how should we pray?
 - 2. God’s promises and why He gave them to us.
 - 3. How should I relate to my wife, my children, my church, and my world?
 - 4. What should my priorities be?
- E. Training in righteousness prepares us and equips for every good work.
- F. Peter stated the following in 2 Peter 1:2-4.
Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; 3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

APPLICATION

1. Whenever we read, study or hear God's Word preached or taught we need to understand that God expects us to respond appropriately to what it says and teaches.
2. "In humility (we are to) receive the word implanted, which is able to save (our) souls, and we are to prove (ourselves) doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves." James 1:21-22
3. It is never too late to become a true student of the word of God.
4. We should take Paul's admonition to Timothy recorded in 2 Timothy 2:15 seriously, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth."