



**“Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them” (II Timothy 3,14).**

### **Standard of Truth**

**Central Truth:** Christians who live by biblical standards do not fall into the error of a corrupt society.

**L197. Date:** September 1995. **Text:** II Timothy 3:13-17; II Peter 1:19-21.

**Topic:** Bible: Inerrancy of; Truth: Of God.

Suppose I had a book which gave a sure remedy for every disease suffered by the human race. Its value would be beyond estimation. Medical personnel would seek it over the whole world. But I have no such book.

Suppose I had a book which gave the perfect remedy for every problem suffered in human society. What would be its value? Would it be sought and studied? I have such a book! It is called the Holy Bible. The tragedy of our generation is that it is not sought out, studied, and its precepts followed. On the contrary, the idea is widely held that there is no absolute standard of right and wrong which applies to every person in every situation. God says there is such a standard, and it is recorded in the Bible. Every person will be judged by the principles stated in the Bible, for it is the absolute Word of God.

### **Its Need (II Timothy 3:13, 14)**

**The Bible is needed to confront evil.** Christianity began in a pagan saturated society with all of its attendant evils. Wicked men and impostors, charlatans and deceivers, rogues and mountebanks were everywhere. They used deceit to prey on others. As bad as they were then, Paul warned that they would become even worse. The deceivers were themselves deceived. It was a case of the blind leading the blind.

Something or someone must confront such rampant evil. So God

intervened in human history and gave a written revelation of himself and His will for mankind. Everything necessary for a life of godliness is recorded therein. The Bible is not sought and read by the majority of people because it confronts them and convicts them of their sin.

**The Bible is needed to stabilize God's people.** While the world is tossed about with demonic doctrines and sinful practices, Bible-believing people have an anchor which holds them fast. They go on steadily because they hold to the truths they have learned from the Holy Scriptures. The Bible becomes a rock foundation upon which they are built. It is needed the same today as in those days, and it is still the guidebook for mankind.

### **Its Nature (II Timothy 3:16)**

The Bible is given by the “*inspiration of God.*” Consider that word “*inspiration.*” It is the translation of a Greek term which Paul used that literally means “God-breathed.” The written Word of God that we read is as surely God’s Word as if He had spoken it to our hearing by an audible voice. It is unique among all the books in the world. It is God's breath!

**The legal books are God-breathed.** God was with the mouth of Moses and gave him words to speak and write (Exodus 4:10.12). Moses did not add a word to what God said; neither did he take a word from it (Deuteronomy 4:2). That is true of all the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament. The legal portions of Scripture are God-breathed.

**The poetic books are God-breathed.** David testified, “*The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue*” (II Samuel 23:2). The five books of poetry Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon are inspired by the very breath of God's spoken words. Read them with reverence.

**The prophetic books are God-breathed.** (The Hebrews spoke of “the law, the prophets, and the psalms.” The historical books were called “the former prophets,” and the prophetic books were called “the latter prophets.”)

God showed by the mouth of all His prophets things that were to come (Acts 3:18). The word of God came “expressly” to all those writers (Ezekiel 1:3). “*The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*” (II Peter 1:21).

There is no distinction between the portions of the Old Testament. There is no distinction between the Old Testament and the New Testament. “*All scripture is given by inspiration of God*” (II Timothy 3:16). When you read any verse of any chapter of any book of the Bible, you are reading what God put there.

## **Its Ministry (II Timothy 3:15-17)**

**The Word of God converts.** It will “*make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*” (verse 15). Note that it informs — “Make you wise.” It rescues — “salvation.” It inspires — “faith.” It identifies — “Christ Jesus.” No wonder Paul wrote, “*Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*” (Romans 10:17). The salvation of God is revealed in the Word of God, which testifies of the Son of God.

**The Word of God instructs.** It is “*profitable for doctrine*” (verse 16). It tells you, “Here is what you are to believe.” The Bible actively imparts knowledge. Those elders whose ministry is teaching should be valued as worth twice the salary they receive (I Timothy 5:17). Every Christian lives under the divine imperative, “*Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them*” (Isaiah 34:16),

**The Word of God rebukes,** It is “*profitable for . . . reproof*” (verse 16). It tells you, “Here is what you did wrong.” The Bible exposes and refutes error. It exposes error in behavior and refutes error in belief. It is the guidebook for Christians, telling them what to believe and how to behave. Whatever agrees with it is right; whatever disagrees with it is wrong (Isaiah 8:20).

**The Word of God corrects.** It is “*profitable for . . . correction*” (verse 16), It tells you, “Here is what you do to set right the wrong.” All its ministry of converting, instructing, rebuking, and correcting is done with infinite love and care. It is not a book of condemnation and death but of justification and life.

## **Its Goal (II Timothy 3:17)**

**The Word of God sanctifies you by giving you “*instruction in righteousness*.”** The redemptive work of Jesus Christ was “*that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*” (Titus 2:14). The twofold purpose of Christ was salvation (“redeem”) and sanctification (“purify”). Are both purposes being realized in you day after day?

**The Word of God qualifies you by making you “*thoroughly furnished unto all good works*.”** The Bible is not intended just to make you happy but to make you holy and useful. It equips you thoroughly by making you complete in all parts and proportions. It equips you adequately for every

good work He intends for you to pursue. It is impossible to serve God fully unless you live by the principles of the Holy Bible, which is God's standard of truth by which all persons and actions are judged.

### **Its Trustworthiness (II Timothy 3:15; II Peter 1:19-21)**

#### **Consider the character of those who instruct you in the Word.**

*“Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them”* (II Timothy 3:14). Faithful Bible teachers are marked by faith, long-suffering, love, patience, and other fruit of the Spirit. You can trust people like that. Respect them and follow them.

**Consider the super-excellence of the sacred writings which instruct you.** *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God.”* That statement can be made of all sixty-six books of the Bible, but of no other book in the world. Think about that! However skilled the writer and however true the content, no other book ever written can compare with the written Word of God. We are not depending on books written about the Bible, but on the Bible itself. It is the Book of all ages.

**Consider the source of those writings in which you are instructed.** (Read II Peter 1:21 again.) The Bible did not come from the will or opinions of men — *“cunningly devised fables”* (II Peter 1:16). It came from the overshadowing ministry of the Holy Spirit upon the men who wrote. The text, therefore, was not their words but God's words. That is why it lives and abides forever (I Peter 1:23). The Bible is the same for all people, in all places, in all languages, through all time, and in all conditions. It is the Word of the eternal God who does not change; hence, it does not change. Read it. Believe it. Obey it.

### **Its Authority**

**The Bible is the standard by which all teaching is to be judged.** The prophet Isaiah warned against going to mediums, wizards, and fortunetellers. He called people to seek God instead. But what about those who teach things which do not agree with the Bible? Isaiah replies, *“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them”* (Isaiah 8:20). That settles the issue for Bible-believing Christians. The Bible is the standard of truth by which all teaching is to be judged.

**The Bible is the standard of truth by which all persons are to be**

**judged.** Jesus said, *“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day”* (John 12:48). Revelation 20:12 pictures the judgment when *“the dead, small and great, stand before God.”* It says *“the books were opened.”* Many Bible scholars consider those “books” to be the books of Holy Scripture, which set forth God's standards. Then *“the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books.”* Since you will be judged by the Word of God, you should study it, believe it, and live by it every day.

In a society which holds that the situation determines whether a thing is right or wrong, Christians must believe and teach that the Bible is the objective standard by which we must live and by which we will be judged.

### **Questions for Discussion**

1. How would you describe the Bible to one who had not seen it?
2. How is the Bible a protection against evil men and seducers?
3. What is meant by the statement, “The Bible is God-breathed”?
4. Why is there no difference in importance of Old Testament or New Testament books?
5. What does the Bible do, according to II Timothy 3:15?
6. How can you “continue” in the Scriptures?
7. How does the Bible equip you to serve God?
8. How can you be sure you can trust the Bible?
9. Why is the Bible the standard for eternal judgment?
10. How is the Bible the foundation of a stable society?