

## **Why You Can Trust the Bible, Pt. 2**

2 Peter 1:21/2 Tim 3:16-17 (07/06/14)

Ernie Godshall  
Faith Bible Church  
Evansville, Indiana

2 Timothy is Paul's last letter. He's about to be executed up in Rome, and he writes to Timothy exhorting him to do one thing – continue in the Word. Stay in it. Don't stand down! You are going to need to hold firmly to your Bible. Last week Peter told us to pay attention to the Word. It is God's light in a dark place. Here Paul is saying the same thing. You face dark times, even in the church! He calls them difficult or dangerous times. He gives us every reason under the sun to be absolutely faithful and committed to the Word of God.

### **You face a culture of growing selfishness – 3:1-4.**

*1 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,*

Verse one is like a red flashing warning sign, "Church Alert!" Be ready. It's a war out there and you must be armed. You're going to see increasing selfishness. Self-love heads the list and is the fountain for all the rest of what we certainly see today all around us and even in the churches. There are godless characteristics of people devoted to living for their own pleasures rather than God, even though they claim to be Christians.

### **You face culture of growing apostasy – 3:5-7.**

*5 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. 6 For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

Paul focuses on galloping apostasy in verses 5-7. Today we see churches and denominations fall away from the faith and follow false teaching and myths. When Darwin and Freud carry more weight in churches than Moses and Paul we've got major problems. They hold to a form of godliness, claiming to be Christian, but without the power of the gospel, without the power of the Word of God! They are those "Lord, Lord" people in Matthew 7 whom Jesus warned us about. These churches may have all kinds of support groups and soup kitchens and social entertainment, but have no life-transforming powerful gospel message. Os Guinness in his book warning Americans about our decaying freedom says it's not the wolves at the door, but the termites in the floor that destroy a nation. This is also true of the church. People who stand up as spokesmen for Christianity but deny Scripture, deny creation, deny justification by faith alone, deny final judgment. The religious leaders who deny the very things the Bible clearly teaches are the termites! And churches are falling like ten pins under the onslaught of this culture.

### **You face a culture heating up for persecution – 3:12-13.**

*12 Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. 13 But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.*

Verse 12 assures us that in this darkness there will be persecution. It has come in many forms and in waves throughout church history, and we know it is happening today in many countries with physical attack and persecution. Look at verse 13 – Evil men and imposters, deceivers will be spouting out their heresies and soul-poison more and more. You'll have preachers assuring their vast audiences they are all God's children, all going to heaven, God wants them to have their best life now, and He wants them to be healthy, wealthy, and happy. And people love it! Listen to this from Jeremiah 5:30-31 "An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land: 31 the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule on their own authority; and My people love it so! But what will you do at the end of it?" Sadly, this is the majority of churches in America.

This brings us to the meat of the message today, Paul's charge to Timothy, his son in the faith. In the onslaught of all this darkness and religious danger, Paul seeks to enflame Timothy's heart with a never-dying passion for the Word.

### **Be a man of biblical conviction – vv. 14-15**

*You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

**DON'T STAND DOWN** - Your Bible is God's answer to this 2 Timothy 3 world. Paul couldn't have highlighted the importance of your Bible any more than he does here. "Timothy! You are a man of biblical conviction. You stand out here. God has His hand on your life." ESV says, "But as for you!" So, you, young man sitting here this morning, listen up! Regardless of the culture, the peer pressure, the misled majority, you need to do one major thing, and that is to continue in the Word. Stay strong right there. Don't stand down. Don't fold and give up and be inactive. Don't be blown around by every wind of doctrine, like children running after this promise of goodies or that promise of the latest church growth scheme. Don't let nice people with poisoned hearts beguile you. And know this, the battle will not cease. You must continue to stand strong.

**CONVICTIONS GRIP YOU** - In what should you continue to stand strong? In the things you have learned and been convinced of. As you learn your Bible you are convicted, gripped by its truths. Al Mohler in his book *Leading by Conviction* says, "Convictions are not merely beliefs we hold. They are those beliefs that hold us in their grip." Convictions are what led Martin Luther to refuse to stand down against the entire religious and political world of his day with his, "Here I stand!" We need strong convictions or we'll cave.

**GODLY MOMS AND GRANDMAS** - How did you get here Timothy? Who taught you this stuff? For Timothy, it wasn't his godly father. He didn't have a godly father. He learned it from his mom and his grandma. And of course, he learned from the apostle Paul. But here Paul is reminding him of his early training in the Old Testament, even before he really understood the entire meaning.

Maybe you are a single mom, or in a mixed marriage where your husband isn't saved or spiritually motivated. Don't be discouraged. Don't slack off or use your situation as an excuse. You can do exactly what Timothy's mom did! I'm amazed at how many single moms raised godly men. George Whitefield may have been the greatest preacher of the church age. His dad died when he was two and his mom raised him. R. A. Torrey was in a family where only his mother was a true believer. D. L. Moody's dad died when he was four and his mom raised nine children. And Harry Ironside, a wonderful Bible teacher of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was left fatherless when he was two. His single mom had him memorize Scripture when he was three and he remembered his mother's prayers for him as a child, "Father, keep my boy from ever desiring anything greater than to live for Thee. Save him early, and make him a devoted street-preacher, as his father was." He came to Christ when he was fourteen. He was at a party and God used Proverbs 1, which he had been memorizing, to convict his heart of his empty life and send him to the Savior. His mother had taught him to go to Romans 3 and John 3 for salvation, which is exactly what he did.

**CHILDHOOD TEACHING** - Paul says, "From a child." The word is "brephos" which means infant. When is it too young to teach children the Bible? It's never too young. Timothy's mom and grandma knew their Old Testament and taught little Timothy Genesis 1, 2, 3, all those great stories of God's work in Israel, and all those prophets. God uses all the foundation truths imparted in early childhood. They can't get away from it. It is important to stick the Word in their little brains, like a burr under their saddles to prick their hearts to be sensitive to God. Spurgeon exhorts those who teach children, "Don't say your office is in any degree inferior to those who teach adults." Then he says, "Mothers, the godly training of your offspring is your first and most pressing duty. Christian women by teaching children the Holy Scriptures are as much fulfilling their part for the Lord, as Moses in judging Israel, or Solomon in building the temple!" Stick with it, you Loises and Eunices of the Lord!

THE POWERFUL MESSAGE OF THE BIBLE - You have known the sacred Scripture! Let me ask you, how well do you know the sacred Scriptures? Let's take a test right now, a pop quiz. Jot down the book and for extra credit, the chapter. Don't worry about verses. OK, here goes. Where do you find the following topics in your Bible: the fruit of the Spirit? the rapture of the church? the four rules of communication? marriage between a man and woman? marriage compared to Christ and the church? trials and suffering? divorce? homosexuality? anxiety? dealing with temptation?

Now, it is great to know scripture, but be careful not to exchange Bible knowledge for salvation. Bible knowledge will only puff you up if you don't submit to it and allow it to bring you to Christ and true salvation through faith in Christ alone. The gospel is God's power to save and transform lives. Louie Zamperini died this past week. Some of you have read the book *Unbroken* telling of his WW2 odyssey. During one interview he tells about how his life and marriage were almost ruined with alcohol, but then he says, "I came to Christ and my whole life was revolutionized in a moment!" What a story!

So here's Timothy, born to a Jewish mom and Greek unbelieving dad. He was taught Scripture at an early age. At some point the Spirit of God completely changed his heart and he becomes a young man of conviction, and Paul says, "Timothy, above all, stay in the Word. It's your weapon for these treacherous days." Then Paul highlights three convictions for Timothy and for all of us about the Scriptures:

### **THREE MASSIVE PILLARS OF CONVICTION ABOUT YOUR BIBLE – Vv. 16-17**

<sup>16</sup> *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;* <sup>17</sup> *so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

As you hold that book in your hands, why should you trust it? Why should you love it? Tyndale lived and died, strangled and burned, to get it to us in English! Kiss your Bible. Appreciate it. Love it. There are people who don't have it. At Queen Elizabeth's coronation she called for the Bible, kissed it, and lifted it high with both hands. In 1842 a judge interviewed 91 year old Captain Preston who had fought in the War of Independence. "What great books were you reading?" the judge asked and then suggested three famous authors, including John Locke. "Never heard of 'em," answered the captain. "We read only the Bible, the Catechism, Watt's Psalms and Hymns, and the Almanac."

President George Washington, "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and Bible."

Abraham Lincoln, "I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good of the Savior of the world is communicated to us through the Book."

Ronald Reagan, "Of the many influences that have shaped the United States into a distinctive nation and people, none may be said to be more fundamental and enduring than the Bible."

### **First, the conviction that your Bible is absolutely INERRANT – v. 16a.**

*All Scripture is inspired by God (breathed out by God)...*

You can trust everything written in your Bible because, just like 2 Peter 1:21 where the Spirit "carried" those authors as they wrote God's Word, here the Spirit "breathed out" the Scriptures through human authors. That's what we call the "inspiration" of the Bible. It would be better called "expiration" of the Bible, but that means the wrong thing. This Book is God speaking to you. It's fresh and alive. The ink is still wet. If the Bible is "God-breathed," then each and every word is true since God cannot lie. Therefore your Bible is without error in the original writings, inerrant. And if it is inerrant, then it is infallible. It will never fail, fall, or need an update. Jesus declared, "The Scripture cannot be broken." (John 10:35) We may not understand everything in the Bible, but here's the key: Whatever the Bible says is so. Your Bible is absolutely trustworthy.

### **Second, the conviction that your Bible is absolutely AUTHORITATIVE – v. 16b.**

*and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;*

God is the ultimate authority, and your Bible carries His authority. He doesn't rule by majority vote or statistical research. Here Paul says God's Word is profitable or useful – we need it. That means He gave his Word to transform your life. And here are the four ways God rules through His Word.

Your Bible tells you everything you need to know – it is God's Classroom. Here God teaches you about creation, marriage, sin, redemption, and coming judgment. These aren't just suggestions, these are truths. You can ignore what your Bible says, but only to your own peril.

Your Bible tells you where you are wrong – it is God's Courtroom. God uses His Word to rip away all the falsehood and deception and self-righteousness and to expose our wicked hearts. The Bible drags you into court and brings you to a verdict. Guilty as charged! You come to church to be inspired and now you feel miserable. This happens for believers, too. Here you are at church still fuming over your wife's inability to get the kids ready on time, and someone gets up and talks about husbands loving their wives by helping them with the children, and you're thinking God must have a video camera in your car. Or last night you yielded to the temptation to pull up pornography on the internet, and someone gets up and talks about the sin of uncleanness and lusting after a woman in your heart, and sweat beads up on your forehead. Your Bible shows you where you are wrong, all the way into your heart.

Your Bible tells you how to correct your course – it is God's Hospital. The word correction means "to straighten up again." God never leaves us just convicted in our sin. He offers hope, always. And for the unbeliever, He calls you to the cross where your sins can be forgiven and you can have eternal life. For believers, God doesn't just convict us of our gossip and slander, but he says in Ephesians 4:29, "You need to use building words, encouraging words." Put off the bad stuff, put on the good stuff. It's like that insecticide in my garden shed. It both kills the insects and fertilizes the flowers.

Your Bible tells you how to build discipline in your life – it is God's Fitness Center. Training is the word "child training." How do you train children? How do you potty train children? It takes time, right? Lots of repetition. Lots of reminding. That's what God's authoritative Word does, continually disciplines you for godliness.

Don't you love God's authority in His Word? It is sure. It is perfect. Everything He teaches, He teaches with absolutely authority because He is our Creator and has every right to command and to enforce! It gives us assurance. It gives us stability. We love it. We rejoice in it. We live under the authority of the Word of God knowing it is the best thing that can ever be in our lives. Before we ferret out false teaching, we ourselves must be humbled and changed by this authoritative Word.

### **Third, the conviction that your Bible is absolutely SUFFICIENT - v. 17.**

*so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

Listen Timothy, and every other man and woman of conviction. Here in this library of 66 books you have all you will ever need to more than adequately love and serve Christ and live to His glory! Here's the picture of a soldier fully equipped for battle. He's got everything he needs for the most severe skirmishes with the enemy. And God assures that you lack nothing if you are armed with the Spirit of God in your heart and this God-breathed book in your hands. To go to battle without equipment is suicide.

So Paul commands Timothy, "Continue in the Word of God." Refuse to stand down and give in! Then Paul in chapter four commands Timothy to preach the Word and keep on preaching until you can't preach anymore! Most people don't want the Word of God. They'd rather have their ears tickled. But one thing I love about you people sitting in front of me, about these young people in the front rows, you don't want your ears tickled. You want to know what does God says. You want the truth explained so you may live it out in your lives. What a marvel! How I praise God for His work in your lives!

SO WHAT? Timothy, you young guys, moms, grandmas, and all the men too, continue in your Bible. Don't stand down! The battle is heating up. The darkness is thickening. Evil men and imposters are

increasing. Love this book. Kiss it with your heart. Learn it. And apply it to your life. It is God's authority over your life.

And if you don't know Christ, now's the time to know Him. Let's take a few moments in private prayer. If you've never submitted to Jesus Christ and the Word of God, do it right now.