

2 Timothy Pastor Lou DeVizia

2 Timothy 3:16 - 4:5 Fellowship Bible Church; Woodbridge, NJ

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Introduction: The Apostle Paul went to great lengths to encourage Timothy to endure difficult times by reminding him of the example of suffering and service he set for his young protégé. This is essentially what this letter has been entirely about up to this point. There were deserters, false teachers, detractors, etc., everywhere it seemed. But Paul had faithfully pressed through it all without turning aside from the ministry, even to the point of imprisonment and impending death. This example of endurance should have strengthened Timothy, even as it should strengthen pastors and their congregations today.

Towards the end of this writing, Paul adds another critical factor to Timothy's encouragement: in addition to being reminded of Paul's example, he was also to remember where Paul got the doctrine he was suffering for from. Thus he reminds Timothy that he had been taught from his youth the Holy Scriptures. Paul's example of endurance would be arbitrary and meaningless if not based on some authoritative source for his message and teaching. And indeed he had such an authoritative source: the Scriptures. *Godly examples of faith and service* and *knowledge of the Bible*: these two factors should encourage us to press on today. The latter has the spotlight on it for this study.

First, Paul names the source of Scripture with one simple statement: it is *God-breathed*. Then in the same sentence he presents the powerful truth that the Scripture is *all we need* for theological knowledge and practical instruction in godly living. The Bible: it is wholly sufficient to train the Christian. And so, as the passage continues, what should Timothy do in leadership of his church? What should pastors be doing today? *Preach the word*, that word being the words of all Scripture! This, combined with living that faithful example in a congregation's eyes, will produce fruit among Christians who themselves participate in this discipleship process.

Timothy, and pastors today, however, should not be deluded into thinking that their faithfulness means automatic desired results. And so the pastor is called to patience. And he is warned that indeed, the lure of pleasing story-telling will overwhelm some. Nevertheless, he is to endure, to continue, to maintain his ministry of preaching.

1. Verses 3:16-17 - The *source* and *purpose* of Scripture.

- v.16a - **All Scripture...** The Old Testament is what Paul meant when he wrote, though by this time some of his writings had undoubtedly gained significant circulation and were viewed by churches as authoritative. **...given by inspiration of God** is one word in Greek: *theopneustos* (or, *God-breathed*). Here the Bible makes perhaps its clearest self-claim that it is the written word of God. God Himself is the source of all Scripture.

NOTE: 1 Timothy 5:18 is, in part, an apparent quotation of Luke 10:7; and Paul calls it "Scripture." Also, Peter refers to Paul's writings as Scripture in 2 Peter 3:15-16. Both are references to the God-breathed nature of the New Testament. The earliest of

Christian writers after the NT period frequently and freely cite NT writings as authoritative. *The NT is God-breathed.*

- vv.16b-17 - Having identified the *source* of Scripture, now we see the *practical purpose* of Scripture. Essentially, it is to train Christians in the right beliefs, that they might live a practically righteous life, that they might grow to maturity and be properly equipped for service. THE BIBLE. It is sufficient for all of that.

2. Verses 4:1-5 - The great task of the pastor: *preach all Scripture.*

- v.1 - *...therefore* in other words, because of who gave us the Scripture and what it is to be used for... Note the weight of authority put behind this charge too.

- v.2 - A command, an imperative. **Preach! ...the word** is "All Scripture" from 3:16. When and how: always, and with conviction, to rebuke and correct, to encourage, and with complete patience.

- vv.3-4 - Why must Timothy not be persuaded to get off from preaching all Scripture? The lure of need/desire-motivated teachings which please the ear would be strong. The true disciples must be fed even if the false walk away in favor of moralistic or entertaining stories (*fables*).

- v.5 - In contrast to false teachers and the droves who flock to them, Timothy is to be careful about his doctrine, **endure** trouble, and keep preaching the Gospel if he is to **fulfill** his *ministry*.