

The Scriptures

By David L. Allen

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Turn to the comments related to 2 Timothy 3:15-16 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: How is the Bible able to make us "wise unto salvation"?

Assignment Two

Turn to the comments related to 2 Timothy 3:15-16 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answer to this question: What are the things for which the Bible is "profitable" to the believer?

Assignment Three

Turn to the comments related to Acts 17:11 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answer to this question: In what ways can the believer "receive" the Bible as the Word of God and "examine" it?

Scripture to Memorize

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit - by the end of this session, disciples will understand the nature and importance of the Bible as the Word of God and why it is vital to their Christian life and growth.

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He is the author of *Hebrews* in the New American Commentary series; *Lukan Authorship of Hebrews*; *1-3 John: Fellowship in God's Family* in the Preaching the Word series; and *Preaching Tools: An Annotated Survey of Commentaries and Preaching Resources for Every Book of the Bible*. David also is the coeditor and contributor of *Whosoever Will: A Biblical Theological Critique of Five-Point Calvinism*, *Text-Driven Preaching*, and *The Return of Christ: a Premillennial Perspective*. You can follow David on Twitter @drdavidlallen and on Facebook at David Lewis Allen. His website is www.drdavidlallen.com.

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Imagine you have a friend who is not a Christian and does not believe the Bible is a special book. Your friend thinks the Bible is no better than any other religious book. How would you go about explaining to your friend just how the Bible is different from all other religious books?

The Nature of Scripture

Read 2 Timothy 3:15–16 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Do you have a burning desire to know the Bible, a thirst to get into the Bible for yourself and a desire to use it for daily living? If so, you are embracing the one thing that really makes the Christian life tick more than any other. You must have an understanding of the purpose and place of the Bible in your life if you are to really grow as a Christian.

No other book in all of history is like the Bible. It was written over a period of sixteen hundred years by more than forty authors from many walks of life. It was written on three continents and in three languages (Hebrew for the Old Testament, Greek for the New Testament and a little Aramaic in the Old Testament). Its subject matter includes hundreds of controversial topics, yet the Bible speaks with one voice about God's one unfolding story of redemption through Jesus Christ.

Verse 15. able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Scripture is essential. The Bible contains the gospel: the good news of salvation through Christ. The gospel is the most important thing in your life.

Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now share with the group how the Bible is able to make us "wise for salvation."

Verse 16. All Scripture. In Greek, this means every part of Scripture is inspired by God. From the first verse of Genesis to the last verse in Revelation, the Bible is God's Word. **breathed out.** The Greek word here means literally "God breathed." All Scripture is God's Word, inspired by the Holy Spirit. Though God used human authors to write the Bible, He supervised their writing in such a way that the resulting text of the Bible is the Word of God.

The result of this inspiration is twofold. First, the Bible is without error (inerrant). Though humans make mistakes, God never does. Though the Bible is not a science book, yet when it speaks on science, it does so with 100% accuracy. Though the Bible is not a history book (it contains lots of history!), its historical accounts are completely accurate. The Bible is a book by God that teaches us spiritual truths (doctrines). These truths are totally accurate and without error because of inspiration.

Second, because of this inspiration, the Bible is totally sufficient for your life. Everything you need to live a godly life, a successful life and a happy life is found in Scripture. Everything you need to know about God, creation, humanity, sin, salvation, the church, the Holy Spirit, the end times, etc., is found in the Bible. Though the Bible does not tell us everything, it tells us enough. It is sufficient for all your spiritual needs, which are the most important needs you have. Whatever your situation is, God's Word breaks through!

Verse 16. profitable. Scripture is profitable for several things according to 2 Timothy 3:16: **teaching.** Just as we go to school to learn the subjects necessary to help us throughout our lives, so we go to school when we read and study the Bible. It teaches us about God and the things of God. True doctrine comes only from the Bible. **reproof.** This word in context means "to rebuke on account of our sin." This is the work of Scripture: to point out where we have gone wrong. **correction . . . training.** These words relate to your conduct in a negative and a positive way. The Greek word translated *correction* has the meaning of "straight." God's Word straightens us out when we are not thinking and living right! Training is the positive side of the coin: God's Word trains you how to think and live biblically and righteously.

Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now share with the group the things for which the Bible is "profitable" to the believer.

Read Acts 17:11 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Verse 11. In this verse Luke gives us some principles about the importance of Bible study for the Christian life. **received the word with all eagerness.** Notice how the Berean Christians first received the Word. How should you respond to the Bible when you read it or hear it taught or preached? With great eagerness! Just as a young woman would respond to the man she loves when he proposed marriage to her: with great eagerness! **examining.** This Greek word means "to search out." We study the Bible to "search out" its meaning for us. Like Paul said to young Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:15: "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved." **daily.** Paul tells us that we should be reading and examining the Bible daily, not just on Sunday. Staying in close fellowship with God is impossible apart from being daily in the Bible, His Word.

Discussion Question

People who do not eat enough food daily can become anorexic. Spiritually speaking, how can believers who do not take in Scripture daily become similar to a person who is anorexic?

Studying the Passage

When you come to the Bible, your attitude should be one of submission. You must have a teachable spirit. Like Samuel, you should say, "Speak, for Your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:10). You must be willing to find and follow God's truth at all costs.

We will never understand all the Bible contains. It is like a deep ocean of truth, but that should not deter us from diving into it daily. Satan will fight you here. He will do everything possible to keep you from reading and studying your Bible.

James uses the metaphor of a mirror to describe the Bible. When we look into it, it shows us what we are. When we stay in the Bible daily, we will gradually become more like Jesus.

Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now share with the group ways the believer can receive the Bible as the Word of God and examine it.

Discussion Question

The Bible says, “But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” (James 1:22). Can you recall periods of life when you knew what the Bible said but you chose not to obey it?

On Your Own

In the space below, write your plan for studying the Bible daily. On average, what time will you do this? How will you know which passage to study each day? Do you need someone else to help you develop a plan?

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** at the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below and then be ready to share that with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: “In our last session I made a commitment to . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue, I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . .”

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

In this lesson we have looked at what the Bible says about itself and what it says concerning our reading and response to it.

We have seen that the Bible is a unique book unlike any other in history. It is a book of authority because it has God for its ultimate Author. In the Bible, God Himself speaks. It is an inspired book. God the Holy Spirit has inspired the biblical writers so they wrote exactly what God wanted written. As 2 Peter 1:21 says: "For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." 2 Timothy 3:16 teaches us that "all Scripture is breathed out by God."

- Because the Bible is inspired by God, it is also inerrant (without error).
- Because the Bible is inspired by God, it is also sufficient (it meets all our needs).
- Because the Bible is inspired by God, it is profitable (for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction).
- Because the Bible is inspired by God, it should be read and studied daily (Acts 17:11).

Just as we eat three meals a day for nourishment and health, so we need a steady daily diet of the Bible for our spiritual health. This is the only way to become spiritually strong and mature. When we first become Christians, we are to desire "the milk of the word" (see 1 Peter 2:2 and 1 Corinthians 3:2), the basic teachings. But as we grow spiritually, we need to move on to "the meat of the word" (see Hebrews 5:12-14), more solid doctrine.

May God help you to be a doer of the word and not a hearer only (James 1:21)!

Follow-Up Question

What should be a disciple's attitude, belief and action concerning the Bible as the Word of God?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.