

Finishing Well

Lesson #18

The Sufficiency of God's Word

May 3, 2023

*The Living & Active Word of God is Sufficient
Provides EVERYTHING Necessary for Life & Godliness*

Important Items Linked with the Watergate: Significance of 1st Day of the Month
The Nethinim Ezra
God's Word

Ultimate goal: Comprehend & Apprehend the Power and Sufficiency of God's Word

Ps. 19:7-11 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul;

The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;

⁸ The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;

The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;

⁹ The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;

The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold;

Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

¹¹ Moreover by them Your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward.

Consider: God's law converts us, makes us wise, rejoices the heart, enlightens the eyes, warns us and rewards us. God's laws are guidelines and lights on our path rather than chains on our hands and feet. They point at danger to warn us, and then point at success to guide us.

Heb. 4:12-13 For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

Blue Letter Bible: One of the most important doctrines with respect to the Bible is the "Sufficiency of Scripture" which can be simply defined as follows: In the Bible alone, God has given humanity all things that are necessary for the proper understanding of who He is, who we are, how He has acted in the past and what He expects from us. The basic idea behind the sufficiency of Scripture: Nothing else needs to be revealed to humanity about God or His plan for the human race. The Bible is the record of all the things that God thought humanity needed to know about Him. Scripture is complete and sufficient for belief and behavior. Nothing needs to be added to them.

A. The Bible Alone Has the Answers to Life's Most Important Questions

- God's teaching on any subject is sufficient for us.

In Colossians, Paul deals with the dangers local churches face when the sufficiency of the Bible is challenged and merged with non-biblical writings, which are full of false doctrine.

Col. 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

- Literal = beware lest any man carry you off as a captive
- False teachers do not go out to win the lost. They "kidnap" converts. How?
- The "captives" are ignorant of the TRUTHS of God's Word and are fascinated by the philosophies of man.

Question: Why follow empty philosophy when we have all fullness in Christ?

- This is like turning away from the satisfying river to drink at the dirty cisterns of the world. [Jer. 2:13]

Warning: Many false teachers don't ask the believer to forsake Christ. They ask him to make Christ PART of the new system. That idea removes Christ from His place of preeminence.

In Galatians, Paul indicates the seriousness of delivering a message outside of Scripture.

Gal. 1:8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

- The faith has been once and for all entrusted to believers.

Jude 1:3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

B. Everything we need to know about God has been revealed to us.

The truth that God has revealed is sufficient, but it is not exhaustive.

There are many things that God has not told us. Moses wrote:

Deut. 29:29 The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, so that we may follow all the words of this Law.

C. Information about God Was Sufficient at All Stages of Human History

Mankind always had enough information to know God existed and what He required from them. Consequently, they were never left in the dark about God's existence or how He expected them to behave.

1. Adam and Eve were given insight into future salvation.

God gave the following words of judgment to the serpent who tempted Eve:

Gen. 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

- The SEED of the woman would be Jesus Christ, the Savior.

2. Cain and Abel were to bring an offering to the Lord.

Gen. 4:3-5a And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.⁴ And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but for Cain and his offering He had no regard...

You will be accepted if you respond in the right way. But if you refuse to respond correctly, then watch out! Sin is waiting to attack and destroy you, and you must subdue it. [Gen. 4:7]

Before Jesus Christ came into the world, people were saved by looking forward to His coming. Heb. 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

- Moses "suffered for Christ." He considered abuse suffered for the Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he looked to the reward. [Heb. 11:26]

John 8:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it and was glad.

While their knowledge was limited, they were still able to act in faith towards God's promises. They had saving faith without knowing the exact details of Christ's death.

Key: They trusted God's words. It is clear their knowledge was sufficient to act in faith toward God. Scripture has always been sufficient to meet the needs of the people.

D. We Do Not Need Some Authority Figure to Interpret the Bible for Us

Sometimes it is argued that the Scriptures are not clear in and of themselves. Believers need some type of external authority to properly interpret and understand its teaching.

- This may come from a church, a creed or the teaching of a church leader.

However, the facts speak otherwise. The Bible can be understood by the great majority of the people. Nowhere do we find the scripture telling believers: they should only listen to some special spiritual leader to know the truth.

E. God Would Not Give Us a Confused Revelation

It is unreasonable to say: God would give humanity a revelation of Himself that could not be understood by the masses. To the contrary, the Bible is written in such a way that people in every age can understand it.

Jesus made this point clear when He spoke of the nature of God the Father.

Luke 11:11-13 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? ¹³ If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Man needs a clear Word from God. God, compared to a loving Father, gives only good things to His children. He would not give us a confused, or contradictory, revelation of Himself.

F. The Creeds and Church Councils Are Insufficient to Establish Truth

Some claim that creeds, or the conclusions of church councils, are alternatives to Scripture. However, they cause more problems than they solve.

Creeds and councils, no matter how orthodox, are still the pronouncements of human beings. There is no guarantee that any pronouncements they make are to be considered infallible. The Holy Scripture alone contains all things necessary for believers.

G. Jesus Stated the Scriptures Were Sufficient to Answer Our Questions

The answers to the basic problems that humanity faces, such as identity, purpose and destiny, can be found in the pages of Scripture.

John 5:39-40 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. ⁴⁰ And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

H.B. Charles You will never find life in the Scriptures until you meet the Life-Giver in the Scriptures.

H. Each Believer Should Thoroughly Search the Scripture for Answers

Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Chapell: The church's greatest mistake occurs when the people of God honor what a leader says without examining that instruction in light of Scripture.

II Tim. 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

- Scripture should be studied: It is the God-breathed Word of God.
- Study = be diligent; be zealous
- Approved worker = diligently studies and seeks to apply it to his life

Truth: The Word of God is the tool to build, measure and repair God's people.

H.B. Charles: A faithful teacher or student of God's Word is an ongoing learner.

II Tim. 3:16-17 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God [God-breathed], and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly equipped unto for every good work.

Scripture is profitable for Christian maturity: II Tim. 3:16

Christian ministry: II Tim. 3:17

God's Road of Righteousness

Doctrine

Teaches me which way is right.

Reproof

Shows me where I am wrong & where I am off track.

"Men do not reject the Bible because it contradicts itself, but because it contradicts them."

Correction

Shows me how to get back on track.

Instruction in righteousness

Instructs me how I can stay on the road of righteousness.

Adequate describes the man or woman of God who can meet all the demands of the work God has prepared for them beforehand in Christ Jesus that they should walk in them.

- They are fully ready, qualified, and perfectly fit. Eph. 2:10

Context: II Tim. 3:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,³ Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

⁴ Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

⁵ Having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

- Verses 1-13 describe the reality of cultural decline.

- Verses 14-17 describe the remedy for cultural decline.

Paul wrote Timothy: Things are bad & they will get worse. Stick with the Scriptures.

Someday, Matt.6:10 will be fulfilled.

Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

The Sufficiency Of Scripture: II Tim. 3:14-17

II Tim. 3:14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, [Learned & firmly believe] knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

- One will fall away from doctrinal truth if they learn but don't firmly believe.
- Call to perseverance in the truth of God's Word
- Need teachers & leaders who are fully persuaded of the truth of God's Word.

John 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him,

If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed.

Transformed Ministry: We believe the process of discipleship (sanctification) is when the Spirit of God uses the Word of God to teach, reprove, correct, and train in righteousness those who are willing to surrender their will and obey His commands.

Oswald Chambers: The way to become complete for the Master's service is to be well soaked in the Bible. Our Lord wants to give us continuous instruction out of His word;

continuous instruction turns hearers into disciples. Remember there are certain points of truth Our Lord cannot reveal to us until our character is in a fit state to bear it.

The discernment of God's truth and the development of character go together.

Without this conviction of heart, it would have been difficult for Timothy to hold fast in the things he had learned amid so many persecutions and deceptions.

II Tim. 3:15 And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Ps. 119:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul;

The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;

H.B. Charles: The Clarity of Scripture: The Bible is shallow enough for a small child to come get a drink without the fear of drowning and it is deep enough for the greatest of scholars to dive in and never touch the bottom.

Key: It is from the Bible alone that we learn that forgiveness of sins must come through Jesus Christ. We do not have to look elsewhere for answers concerning how we are to be saved from sin.

James confirmed: God used the words found in Scripture to bring the message of salvation or the "new birth."

James 1:18 He wanted us to be His own special people, and so He sent the true message to give us new birth.

H.B. Charles: The Power of Scripture: The Holy Scriptures are ABLE:
inherent power, abiding power, sufficient power

Wise to salvation: Wisdom teaches knowledge how to behave.

The initial conversion to salvation is to lead to ongoing conversion to the image of Jesus Christ, sanctification. Primary means of sanctification is God's Word. [John 17:17]

II Tim. 4:3-4 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables.

- These are professing believers.

But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

- Faithfulness to Jesus Christ requires steadfast confidence in God's Word.

The Scriptures are sufficient in the sense: they are the only ["once for all"] inspired and therefore inerrant words of God that we need to know:

- the way of salvation "*make you wise unto salvation*"
- the way of obedience "*equipped for every good work*"

II Tim. 3:16-17 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God [God-breathed], and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:
¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly equipped unto for every good work.

Context: Paul's last words charging Timothy to Guard the Treasure of God's Word & entrust it to faithful men who can teach others.

Paul charges Timothy in II Tim. 4:1-2, 5

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom;

- Jesus Christ will judge each of us. We should do our work carefully and faithfully.
- This mindset will deliver us from the fear of man.
- It should encourage us to keep going even when we face difficulties. We serve God.

²Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. ⁵But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

I. The Bible Has Proved Sufficient for Us

Scripture provides everything necessary to understand the plan of God and live a godly life.

II Pet. 1:3 According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

I Pet. 1:23-25 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because "All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away,

²⁵ But the word of the LORD endures forever."

Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

I Pet. 2:1-2 Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking,

² as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,

³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

SCRIPTURE	OUR RESPONSIBILITY	GOD'S PROMISE or BENEFIT
<p>I Peter 2:1-2</p> <p>Context = I Pet. 1:23-25 Peter's readers have been born again by the Living & Abiding Word <i>Spiritual Growth</i></p>	<p>Putting Aside All: Malice, Guile, Hypocrisy, Envy, Slander</p> <p>Approach the Word like a newborn baby.</p> <p>Long for; Desire; CRAVE</p> <p>Delight the pure milk of God's Word - COMMAND</p>	<p><u>GROWTH</u> in Salvation</p> <p>Not a smarter sinner, but grow to be more like Christ</p>

James 1:22 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness,

receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls.

Be like newborn babes > Passion and desire for the pure life-giving milk of God's Word.

Stay very close "to the pure, undiluted milk of God's Word".

Many want the Word, but they mix it up with other information. Apples lose much of their health benefit when they are dipped in sugar. A candied apple is sweet, but its nutritional value is diluted because something with no value has been added to it.

Many of us will read the Word, hear the Word, and then talk to people about the Word.

Then we dip it in human viewpoint> diluted Word.

Bible studies that drift away from "thus saith the LORD" may "feel good" but only

God's Word discerns the thoughts and intentions of our heart. Only God's Word provides everything the believer needs for true, fulfilling, and abundant life.

Anorexia-nervosa is a disease of people who starve themselves, sometimes to death.

Symptom #1 Long periods without eating, punctuated by binges, followed by vomiting and enemas. It's sort of an occasional overdose that is rejected.

Spiritual Parallel> Christians who go through long periods of the starvation of the Word of God, punctuated by occasional binges which they reject.

Symptom #2 Excessive exercise usually in an effort to prove oneself competent
Spiritual Parallel > No desire for the Word of God but an effort to make up for what is lacking spiritually by church activity.

Symptom #3 Depression, an inability to deal with problems.

Spiritual parallel > A malnourished Christian will be unable to deal with sin, hence spiritual depression, inability to deal with it.

Symptom #4 Social isolation, a fear of being with people, of being discovered, of being questioned.

Spiritual Parallel > Where spiritual malnourishment leads...

Starve yourself to death and you will not want to answer questions about what's wrong in your life, so you leave the fellowship.

At the outset, victims have an insatiable craving for nourishment. As time passes, the body weakens, the mind is dulled, and the desire for something to eat wanes.

Starving people reach a point: they don't even want food.

Spiritual starvation: If we have been feeding daily on God's Word, it's natural to feel "hungry" when we skip our quiet time.

If we continue to neglect it, we may lose all desire to study the Scriptures.

Thomas Guthrie "If you find yourself loving any pleasure better than your prayers, any book better than the Bible, any house better than the house of the Lord, any table other than the Lord's table, any persons better than Christ, or any indulgence better than the hope of heaven--take alarm." If you've lost your taste for the "bread of life," confess your negligence and ask God to revive your appetite for His Word. Avoid spiritual starvation!

Jer. 15:16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

- Eat the Word: Digest it, assimilate it, make the Word part of your very being
Starts with the desire. Cultivate a craving for God's Word.

II Pet. 1:3 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.

Question: How can I develop a CRAVING for God's Word?

1. Remember your life source> Living abiding Word of God by which you have been born again. The transformation of your life and your eternal destiny was a miracle worked through the Word of God which is living and abiding.

Col. 1:13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

Ps. 103:1-2, 4a Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

² Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

⁴ Who redeems thy life from destruction.

Illustration of the Supernatural Power of the Word of God

The renowned preacher C H Spurgeon once tested an auditorium in which he was to speak that evening. Stepping into the pulpit, he loudly proclaimed,

"Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world." [John 1:29]

Satisfied with the acoustics, he left and went his way. Unknown to him, there were two men working in the rafters of that large auditorium, neither one a Christian. One of the men was pricked in his conscience by the verse Spurgeon quoted and became a believer later that day!

Such is the penetrating power of God's Eternal Word!

No wonder Paul is so insistent on the persistent "preaching of the Word."

II Tim. 4:2 Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season.

Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine.

Why crave it? It is the source of your continued transformation & your continued power.

Truth: If it transformed you in the beginning, it will keep on transforming you.

Moody: God did not give us the Scriptures to increase our knowledge but to change our lives.

Howard Hendricks in Living by the Book

"The Bible was not written to satisfy your curiosity, but to make you conform to Christ's image. Not to make you a smarter sinner, but to make you like the Savior.

Not to fill your head with a collection of Biblical facts, but to transform your life."

Phil. 2:16 holding fast the Word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

Consider: The Word is a spiritual inexhaustible, inextinguishable life source.

It gave you a thrilling glorious, marvelous fulfilling joyous life full of hope, peace, grace, forgiveness and power.

- Crave the Word and the inherent power in it to continue to transform your life.

2. Eliminate Your Sin

I Pet.2:1 "Putting aside (reject) all malice and all guile (originally meant fishhook, deceit) and hypocrisies (spiritual phoniness...originally the word meant an actor who wore a mask, not real, not genuine) and envies (wanting what others have, resenting their prosperity and their blessing leads to grudges, bitterness, hatred, conflict) and all slander."

- backbiting, gossip, defamation, disparagement, malicious talk behind someone's back

Truth: Sin will keep you from this book until you eliminate the hindrances.

3. Admit Your Need

A baby has one God-given instinct, one great craving, milk. As a newborn baby craves the milk he needs, so a believer must crave the Word he needs. It should be read like a hungry baby sucking with all its strength to draw out the nourishment of its mother's breast.

4. Pursue Your Growth

"Crave the pure spiritual milk of the Word that IT may grow you. - Passive Action

If you're content with where you are spiritually, you'll never pursue your further growth. Spiritual growth rises out of discontent.

5. Survey Your Blessings

I Pet. 2:3 Long for the pure spiritual milk of the Word if you've tasted that the Lord is gracious.