

The Word Works IF You Let It!

Part 1

A Bible Study of The Mt. Zion Church

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Not using the Word of God is like having the answers to every test of life and ignoring them!

Introduction: Paul’s second letter to Timothy was written in the shadow of execution. From a Roman prison, knowing his time was short, Paul did not waste words. He wrote to a young pastor facing pressure, false teaching, and cultural opposition. In that context, Paul pointed Timothy—and every believer after him—not to personality, strategy, or emotion, but to Scripture.

In 2 Timothy 3:16–17, Paul makes one of the most powerful statements about the Bible ever recorded. He does not merely say that Scripture is helpful; he declares that it is God-breathed, profitable, and designed to shape a life of righteousness. This passage forces us to wrestle with more than what we believe about the Bible. It challenges us to consider what the Bible is producing in us.

If the Word truly comes from God, then it carries His authority. If it carries His authority, then it demands our submission. And if we submit to it, it will transform us. This lesson is not simply about defending Scripture—it is about allowing Scripture to do its work in us.

The Word works—but only if we let it.

Guiding Principles for Lesson:

1. Scripture reveals God’s will and shapes believer’s character
2. Knowledge without obedience leads to stagnation

Key Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:16

I. The Word Is Authoritative—2 Timothy 3:16

¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness

Our current lesson focuses on the Word—specifically, the Scriptures as a whole. In 2 Timothy 3:16, Paul makes a foundational, make-or-break statement for every believer: “*All Scripture is God-breathed...*” This declaration is not a minor doctrinal detail; it is a faith-defining truth. Everything we believe about the Bible rests on this phrase. But what does it mean that Scripture is “God-breathed”? It means that everything contained in the Bible as we know it originated in the mind of God and was communicated through human writers whom He chose and guided. The source is divine. The message began with God. Human authors were instruments, but God was the ultimate Author. This truth must become the

cornerstone of our study of God's Word. If the origin of Scripture is not settled in our hearts, then its authority will always be questioned.

Why is this so critical? Because this truth establishes that the authority of Scripture rests in God—not in man. If God is the ultimate authority in the universe, then His Word carries His authority in both its written and spoken form. The Bible does not derive its authority from church councils, scholars, or traditions. It carries authority because it comes from God Himself. We cannot claim to live under God's authority while placing ourselves as judges over His Word. We cannot live under authority and outside of authority at the same time. To live rightly before God, our faith must firmly stand on the conviction that what we read in Scripture comes directly from Him.

At this point, some may raise an important question: What about the people who organized and recognized the books that make up the Bible? Did human involvement compromise divine authority? Before we allow that question to shake our confidence, we must return to the foundational truth of God's authority. By faith, we affirm that God is all-knowing and sovereign over all things. Nothing happens outside His awareness. He either directs events or allows them according to His divine plan.

Since that is true—and it is—then God knew exactly which writings would be preserved and recognized as Scripture. He was not absent from the process. He was not surprised by history. The same sovereign God who inspired the writing of Scripture also oversaw its preservation and recognition. What we have in our Bible is there under His authority and by His providence. He is aware of every word, every sentence, every comma, and every period.

Furthermore, the purpose of Scripture helps us understand this even more clearly. The Bible was not given to record every event in human history or even every act of God. It was given to reveal who God is and to make known His plan of salvation to the world. Therefore, while not everything about God or every work of Christ is recorded, everything necessary for us to know God, understand His will, and receive salvation has been provided. The apostle John expresses this truth beautifully at the conclusion of his Gospel when speaking of the works of Jesus:

“And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written everyone, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.” John 21:25

In other words, Scripture is not exhaustive—but it is sufficient. It contains exactly what God intended us to have. Therefore, when we affirm that “All Scripture is God-breathed,” we are declaring by faith that the Bible is God’s Word—period. It originates with Him, carries His authority, and provides everything we need for life, faith, and salvation.

Often, we struggle with the foundational stances we take in our faith because we are concerned with offending others or seeming rigid. Surprise, you are supposed to be rigid in your faith! To be a Christian, we must have faith that is rigid and unwavering for our God. Does this mean we are to be unkind to people? Not at all. However, Jesus was unwavering even unto death. Bending our beliefs or shrinking at times when our beliefs are in opposition to others suggests that we are not all in for our King.

Deeper Thinking Questions:

- If I truly believe that “All Scripture is God-breathed” and carries God’s authority, where in my life do I still treat my opinion, culture, or feelings as a higher authority than His Word?
- If God sovereignly inspired and preserved Scripture with intentional purpose, what does that say about my responsibility to study it carefully and apply it faithfully?

II. The Word Has Function—2 Timothy 3:16

¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness

Paul does not merely declare that Scripture is “God-breathed”; he also connects Scripture to its powerful ability in the life of a believer. Depending on the translation you are using, the Word may be described as useful, profitable, or beneficial. Each of these terms point to the same essential truth: Scripture is not passive. It is not decorative. It is not theoretical. It is active and effective.

The original term Paul uses carries the idea that when Scripture is handled correctly and applied faithfully, it produces real results. It accomplishes something. It actively brings about positive, practical, and life-changing outcomes in the life of the believer. In simple terms, the Word works. It helps. It benefits. But it does so

when it is used as God designed it to be used—not casually, not selectively, but obediently.

Paul then explains four specific ways the Word produces righteousness in us.

This verse teaches four ways the Word helps us grow in righteousness:

1. The Word teaches us.

The word “teaches” refers to instruction—content that communicates truth. Through Scripture, we learn spiritual realities we would not otherwise know. This is the foundation of understanding God’s character, His will, and His standards. Teaching provides concrete truth. It gives us the substance of what we are to believe. Without instruction, we cannot know what righteousness looks like.

2. The Word rebukes us.

Rebuke means that the Word confronts us. It exposes our sin and brings our wrong thinking or behavior into the light. The Word shines on areas we would rather ignore. It reveals where we fall short of God’s standard and refuses to let us remain comfortable in error. Rebuke is not meant to condemn the believer but to awaken and correct. It shows us both what God desires and where we are failing to meet that desire.

3. The Word corrects us.

Correction goes a step further than rebuke. Rebuke shows us what is wrong; correction restores what is broken. The idea is that the Word sets us upright again. It realigns our conduct with God’s standards. It repairs the damage sin has caused and puts us back on the right path. The goal is not shame but restoration.

4. The Word trains us.

Training refers to disciplined, ongoing formation—much like the careful instruction and development of a child. It involves shaping character, cultivating habits, and building endurance in doing what is right. Training is comprehensive. It is not a one-time adjustment but a lifelong process of moral and spiritual development. Through consistent exposure to Scripture, our thinking, attitudes, and behavior are shaped into Christlikeness.

Take a few moments to reflect on these outcomes in a life structured by God’s Word. Imagine a believer who is consistently taught truth, lovingly rebuked when drifting, restored when falling, and continually trained in righteousness. What would that life look like? What would our churches look like? What would our homes look like if we allowed the Word to fully accomplish its work?

This is vitally important because God desires His people to represent Him well—in how we think, how we speak, how we act, and even how we carry ourselves before the world. We are called to reflect His character. That kind of transformation does not happen accidentally. It requires rigorous and intentional discipleship. It requires submitting to God’s methods of change.

We cannot become what God expects if we resist the very tools He uses to shape us. One of His primary instruments of transformation is His Word. When we allow Scripture to teach, rebuke, correct, and train us, we position ourselves to become the people God has called us to be.

Take a few moments and reflect on these outcomes from a life structured by God’s Word. What would our lives be if we allowed the Word to do its job?!

If I Embrace the Word’s	The Outcome Would Be
Teaching	
Rebuking	
Correcting	
Training	

Deeper Thinking Questions

- Which of the four functions of the Word—**teaching, rebuking, correcting, or training**—do I most readily accept, and which do I tend to resist?
- Since the Word is designed not just to inform but to transform, how are you engaging Scripture in a way that allows it to change my thinking, habits, and character—or merely to increase my knowledge?

III. The Word Transforms—2 Timothy 3:16

*¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training **in righteousness***

The verse concludes with a behavioral component and outcome that comes when a person engages with the Word of God in a serious rather than casual manner. The last portion answers the question *What does my Christianity produce?* Paul wanted his readers to understand that our title of Christian means little if we do not have righteousness as an outcome. Remember, righteous behavior is you and I obediently acting as the new creations The Word has made us into. It is me being and not just acting. It is more than just my standing with God (position). It is my living before people (practice).

Ask yourself: *If someone followed me for a week, how would they see the Word's impact on my righteous living?*

Note: It is okay if your answer right now is “They would not know.” HOWEVER, now that you understand what you are to be and do, **IT’S TIME TO CHANGE.**

In the chart, you will find the trap of the enemy. He loves what we say. God loves how we live. Consider the deeper question. *Where do you function most often and how can you live in righteousness more consistently?*

Saying I'm a Christian	Living in Righteousness
Knows Bible verses	Obeys Bible verses
Attends church	Represents Christ at work/school
Talks about faith	Demonstrates integrity
Defends doctrine	Displays godly character

Conclusion: “All Scripture is God-breathed” is not just a statement to defend—it is a truth to live under. If the Word truly comes from God, then it carries His authority. If it is profitable, then it is meant to produce change. And if it teaches, rebukes, corrects, and trains us, then its goal is righteousness—right living that reflects a right relationship with Him. Christianity is more than claiming a label; it is displaying a life shaped by God’s Word. The question is not whether we believe the Bible is true, but whether we are allowing it to do its full work in us. When we submit to Scripture, it forms our character, aligns our conduct, and equips us to represent Christ well. The Word works—if we will let it.