

¹⁴ **But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, ¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.**

¹⁶ **All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

The Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures

Timothy was a young pastor in the church at Ephesus. He was young and timid and feeling overwhelmed by the troubles of ministry. He lives and worked in a world that is hostile to the Word of God, as we also do today. But in the midst of great troubles, Timothy enjoyed great advantages, and Paul was directed by the Spirit of God to remind Timothy of these advantages and to hold on to them. What advantages did Timothy have?

First, he had the Word of God in His possession – the sacred writings which are inspired by God Himself. How dark is this world without the light of the Holy Scriptures showing us the way, the truth and the life. And how lost are we in that darkness! To possess the Word of God is the greatest gift of all. Let us be thankful that God has brought us to His Word in one way or another!

Second, he knew the Scriptures and was assured (convinced) of convinced their truth. This gift is just as great. To have the Word without knowing it is of no value, and to know the Word of God without believing it and being assured of its truth will not rescue you from the evil passions that lead men astray. But when, by the Holy Spirit's power, you know the Scriptures and are assured of their truth, this is a knowledge that bears much fruit. It is a power that protects us from the destructive desires of sin and the lies of false teachers. It is also a power that supports us when we are discouraged by difficulties and disappointments. The Lord then reminds us that His word is the power of God unto salvation. And, thirdly, it is also a power that gives us progress in being a man of God!

Third, he had been brought up in the knowledge of holy Scripture from childhood. As Timothy struggled against the false teachers who were twisting the Scriptures into a false message, Paul reminded him that he had known **the Holy Scriptures from childhood**. This reminder served as a great encouragement to Timothy: not only that he *had* the Scriptures, *knew* them, and was *assured* of them, but that he was raised on them, deeply rooted in them, and greatly blessed and built up by them: the Scriptures had **made him wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus**. The Word of God had turned him into a man of God – so why should he despair of their power and authority in the face of difficulty? Why should his confidence in the Bible waver even a little bit?

Paul called special attention to this fact in Timothy's life. When he first met Timothy on his second missionary journey in the city of Lystra (in Asia Minor), Timothy was a man **well-spoken of by the brethren at Lystra** (Acts 16:2) because of his faith. He was well-grounded in his Christian faith and life because of a solid-upbringing in the Word of God. For this reason Paul found in Timothy a readiness to learn to become a minister of the Word of God and to make progress in sound doctrine. What your parents do with the Bible in your childhood still brings great benefits to you when you are an adult!

The apostle Paul saw in Timothy a sincere faith, but also saw where this came from, how God planted this in Timothy's life already as a young child. He wrote to Timothy: **I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.** (II Timothy 1:5) We ourselves maybe did not have this advantage of growing up with the Word of God, but praise God that our children do have this great advantage! Dear Christian parents, the greatest blessing of the covenant for children is that your children get to grow up on the perfect, powerful Holy Scriptures! They get to be planted in the rich soil of God's Word when their hearts and minds are still very young and tender.

Solomon wrote: **When I was a son with my father, tender, the only one in the sight of my mother, he taught me and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments, and live...Hear, my son, and accept my words, that the years of your life may be many. I have taught you the way of wisdom; I have led you in the paths of uprightness. When you walk, your step will not be hampered, and if you run, you will not stumble. Keep hold of instruction; do not let go; guard her, for she is your life."** (Proverbs 4:3-4, 10-13) Wow! What a gift from God to have such a childhood! Sadly, too often Christian households fail to appreciate how great this gift of God is for children, and many times do not make use of this blessing as God wants us to.

But it was such an important part of who Timothy was that when he was struggling with troubles in the ministry at Ephesus Paul called attention not only to the fact that he knew the Scriptures, and was convinced of their truth, but also to the fact of how long ago he learned it and from whom – even his mother and grandmother. John Calvin notes in his commentary: That Timothy knew the

holy Scriptures *from childhood* is no ordinary addition, for he had been accustomed, from his infancy, to the reading of the Scripture; for this long habit may make a man much more strongly fortified against every kind of deception....And it ought to be reckoned a remarkable instance of the kindness of God, if any person, from his earliest years, has thus acquired a knowledge of the Scriptures.

The Perfection of the Holy Scriptures

Paul begins II Timothy 3 with these words: **But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come.** (3:1) In this chapter the Holy Spirit describes what it is like to live and serve the Lord in a culture of corrupt minds which reject the faith of holy Scripture. It is like standing at the edge of a sea with huge waves crashing over you, wave after wave of opposition to the Bible, wave after wave of persecution and ridicule, and yet, like Timothy, as Christians **we must continue in the things we have learned.**

Why? First, because the lies of men will not do anything to build you up. **Evil men and impostors (false teachers) will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.** (II Timothy 3:13) Timothy, do not be tempted to take the easy route and give in to those who are making things difficult for you. Yes, even though rooted in the good soil of sound doctrine since childhood, he is still vulnerable to falling and he must keep fighting the good fight of the faith. No Christian, no pastor, is so strong that he cannot fall. No one is so strong that he does not have to be on guard against the lies of Satan. Timothy, if you are your fellow Christians take the route of wandering from the Scriptures your faith and life will become shipwrecked.

Why continue in the things you have learned? Secondly, because what you learned from the Scriptures is the holy and perfect word of God which is able to build you up! **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.** (II Timothy 3:16) Literally it says: **All Scripture is breathed out from God.** *God-breathed!* Imagine having God Himself breathing on you since you were a child!! That's what is really happening every time you take time to read and hear the Holy Scriptures! Do not underestimate the power of this divine gift called the Bible! This word is **able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.** And this word has the power to make you stand up when you are weary of the battle against the devil, the world, and your sinful flesh. Paul said earlier to the elders of this same church where Timothy pastored: **And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.** (Acts 20:32)

The Scriptures are not the constantly changing opinions of men; they are the unchanging word of God on which we can build our lives. Jesus said: **Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does them is like a wise man who built his house upon the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.** (Matthew 7:25)

Many have made it their lifetime ambition to discredit the Holy Scriptures but it happens without fail that the error proposed against the Bible falls down flat, while the Scriptures stand firm. It also happens that the lives that promote the error fall down flat and descend deeper and deeper into misery, while the lives of those who stand on this inspired, God-breathed word are built up and richly blessed by God. The Bible's truth continues to be confirmed by history, science, archeology, psychology, experience, and every other field of study. [Note: Just this summer an article in *Livescience Journal* described a massive gate structure (called the Goliath Gates) in Israel which is believed to belong to ancient Philistine city of Gath. As they uncover more and more of these remains it confirms all that the Bible says about the gates and walls of the ancient Philistine cities.]

These words are from the mouth of God. Therefore these words are perfect. They are flawless. They are the oracles of God. Jesus often appealed to them: **Have you never read in the Scriptures?** He trusted them fully as God's unbreakable word. He said: **The Scriptures cannot be broken.** (John 10:35) Jesus often said, "Scripture says..." and when He said that He meant, "God says..." because for Him Scripture itself is the God opening up His own mouth and talking.

-Psalm 12:6 **The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times.**

-Psalm 19:7 **The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.**

-Psalm 119:160 **All Your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal.**

The Power of the Scriptures

And because the Bible is inspired by God, it is powerful to keep on building us up in our doctrine and life, in our faith and works. It is not an empty word. It is not powerless ink on a page. It **is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,** ¹⁷ **that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

It is the Word of Truth, the Word of salvation, the Word of Life. Hebrews 4:12 says: **For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and**

intentions of the heart. The reason it is so powerful and able to do so much for us and in us when we're children, and also when we're teenagers, and then again when we're adults is that it is the Word of Christ. The Bible is the message of Christ crucified and raised for sinners. As we read it, the Holy Spirit, as it were, leaps from the pages into our lives. He plants Christ Jesus in us and keeps on forming Christ within us as we abide in His Word.

Colossians 3:16 says, **"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,"** while Ephesians 3:17 says, **"that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."** These two actually mean the same thing. If the *Word* of Christ is in you, then *Christ* Himself is in you! This is what makes the Scriptures so powerful. It is the living Word that acts upon us and in us as we read and study it in faith. Paul calls it **the Word of God which is at work in you who believe.** (I Thessalonians 2:13) The Word that worked in Timothy when he was a young child, is the same Word that shaped Him into a man of God in his teenage years, is the same Word of God that trained and equipped him to become a pastor, and the same word that would now support and strengthen Him in the challenges difficulties of His work. **Continue in what you have learned!** Don't go to other sources for your comfort and wisdom. Keep drinking from that same Word that saved you and raised you and equipped you.

The Word of God is **profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

This divine book from God's own mouth has power not only to save lives but to change lives, shape lives, and equip lives for every good work. The Bible is able to get us ready for any task, any calling God has for us, any work. Here he is speaking to the man of God as pastor, to Timothy. But in a broader way it is true for all of God's people, for Dads and Moms and Children, for Homemakers, Teachers, Firefighters, Electricians, Accountants, and Computer Programmers.

Conclusion

So Grampas and Grammas, Moms and Dads, if you want your children to be Timothy's when their older, you have to raise them like Timothy when they're younger, and waste no opportunity to teach the Scriptures when you lie down and when you rise up, when you sit at home and when you walk by the way. And boys and girls, as you get older you need to take over this work yourself of digging into the holy Scriptures and learning the Word of God and not letting yourself become too busy for the Bible. And when you become adults and enter the university setting or the workplace or begin a family, don't ever become too good or too strong or too smart for the Bible for you need the Word of God all the time, no matter what your calling! This is our constant source of strength – it protects us, supports us, and sanctifies us.

The apostle John said: **I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.** (1 John 2:14)