

Foundation Study 1: The Bible

What do these verses say about the Bible?

1. 2 Timothy 3:15–17

The Bible provides the information for salvation. Only Scripture contains the information a person must know to be in a right relationship with God. Creation tells us God is immeasurably glorious, infinitely powerful, eternally existent and inherently good (Psalm 19:1-4, Romans 1:18-20, Acts 14:17) but only Scripture tells us how to be saved.

The Bible is authored by God. The term *inspired* means “originating from” and indicates that the content of the Scripture originated from God. It was God-breathed. Theologian John Walvoord states, “God’s words were given through men, by the Holy Spirit, so that their writings are without error.”¹ Author Mark Taylor corroborates, “Scripture is true, reliable, authoritative, permanent and powerful because it comes from God himself.”² God authored the content of the Scripture, and man recorded it.

Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet’s own understanding or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God (2 Peter 1:20–21).

The most immediate application of the term *Scripture* in 2 Timothy 3:16 is the Old Testament. The inspiration of the New Testament is confirmed by Peter in 2 Peter 3:16, where he refers to Paul’s writings as *Scripture* (which means divine in origin) and by Paul in 1 Timothy 5:18, where he uses an Old Testament quotation as New Testament writings. Author Paul Enns says, “The New Testament Scriptures are equally inspired with the Old Testament Scriptures.”³

¹ Roy B. Zuck and John Walvoord, ed., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary on Old and New Testaments*, for the Olive Tree Bible App (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook), Note 2 Timothy 3:16.

² *NLT Study Bible: Ask, Seek, Nock* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2017), Note on 2 Timothy 3:16.

³ Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1989), 128.

The Bible is sufficient. The Scriptures provide instruction and guidance for every role God calls a person to fulfill. It provides everything a person needs to be a fruitful witness, a godly friend, a faithful steward, a loving spouse, a good parent, an obedient child, a trustworthy employee, a reverent employer, a joyful child of God, and a loyal servant of the Lord.

2. 1 Thessalonians 2:13

The Bible is the actual Word of God. It is not musings of man about God but the actual words of God given through a few men, to all people, about Himself.

We were not making up clever stories when we told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We saw his majestic splendor with our own eyes (2 Peter 1:16).

Thomas Constable says, “The gospel is not the kind of message man would invent if he could, nor is it a message he could invent if he would.”⁴

The Bible is empowering. The Holy Spirit uses the words of the Scripture to enable a person to grow spiritually. The term *work* in the original Greek is where we derive the word *energy*. The Bible gives believers the power to live God-honoring lives (Hebrews 4:12; Jeremiah 23:29; 1 Corinthians 1:18).

3. Revelation 22:18–19

The Bible is complete. The content of the Scripture (the canon) is finished. There is no additional revelation or new prophecy for this age. Divine punishment and eternal judgment await anyone who tampers with God’s written revelation (Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32; Proverbs 30:6; Jeremiah 14:14, 23:16, 28:15, 29:31). While the content of Scripture is complete, it was progressive while it was being given. Ryrie states, “The New Testament has greater priority as the source of doctrine. Old Testament

⁴ Zuck and Walvoord, ed., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Note on 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

revelation was preparatory and partial, but New Testament revelation is climactic and complete.”⁵

4. John 17:17

The Bible enables spiritual maturity. The term *sanctify* means to “set apart.” It communicates the ideas of holiness and maturity. The Scriptures are an essential part of the spiritual growth process. The more a believer allows the Holy Spirit to use the Scriptures to fill the heart, the more that person grows. The more a person grows, the more he or she becomes involved in the plans and purposes of God (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:13).

The Bible is truth. Owing to its exclusive claim about being truth, anything that disagrees with the Bible is false. All writings about God that do not agree with the Scripture are, by deduction, untrue. The truth claim of the Bible addresses the age-old question asked by Pilate in John 18:38: “What is truth?” Richard Wurmbrand says, “God is the truth... the Bible is the truth about the truth.”⁶ (cf. Psalm 119:43, 119:160; Revelation 19:9, 21:5, 22:6).

5. Matthew 4:4

The Bible is essential. Consuming the content of the Scripture is as essential to one’s spiritual health as consuming food is to one’s physical health. Both are required for healthy living. We are both spiritual and physical beings. Just as going without physical food makes one physically weak, going without spiritual food makes one spiritually weak. We are nourished by the Word of God by reading it, meditating on it, and applying it (cf. Deuteronomy 8:3, 32:47; Joshua 1:8; Matthew 22:29).

6. Hebrews 4:12

The Bible is alive. Even though it was written thousands of years ago, the Scriptures are not dead but rather, living. The voice of the living God resounds

⁵ Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology: A Popular, Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 1999), 16, Kindle.

⁶ Richard Wurmbrandt, *Tortured for Christ* (Bartlesville, OK: Living Sacrifice Book Co.,1998) location 1285, Kindle.

through the words of the Bible to convert, convict, counsel, encourage, and enlighten. They speak to our innermost thoughts, reveal our true attitudes, surface our deepest feelings, and address our most significant needs. Walvoord says, “The inner life of a Christian is often a strange mixture of motivation, both genuinely spiritual and completely human. It takes a supernaturally discerning agent such as the Word of God to sort these out and expose what is of the flesh.”⁷ (cf. Luke 24:32).

7. Psalm 19:7–8

The Bible is a blessing. The Bible refreshes the soul, promotes joy, provides guidance, supplies understanding, and gives confidence to faith. The Bible brightens life. Walvoord says, “Joy and guidance fill the soul of the one who meditates on and follows God’s commands.”⁸ (cf. Romans 15:4; Psalm 119:14, 119:98–100, 119:105).

8. Romans 1:16

The Bible is powerful. Our word *dynamite* is derived from the Greek term for *power*. The Bible provides the power to move a person from unbelief to belief. The Holy Spirit uses the Scripture to radically transform a person’s character and permanently redirect the destiny of the soul (1 Corinthians 1:18, 1:24; Jeremiah 23:29). Memorizing Scripture gives victory over sin (Psalm 119:11).

9. 1 Corinthians 10:11

The Bible is a warning. The Scriptural accounts of God’s judgment serve to give notice to those who follow in the footsteps of the disobedient. Author David Lowery says, “The same God who disciplined...with death would do it again.”⁹ (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:6; Acts 5:1–11; Psalm 19:8,11, 119:67, 119:71).

10. James 1:22

⁷ Zuck and Walvoord, ed., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Notes on Hebrews 4:12.

⁸ Zuck and Walvoord, ed., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Note on Psalm 19.

⁹ Zuck and Walvoord, ed., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Note on 1 Corinthians 10.

The Bible is meant to be applied. The Bible is not just for reading. It is meant to be obeyed. What matters most is doing the truth, not just reading about it. God desires that Bible readers are both knowledgeable and responsive. (cf. Matthew 7:24–27; Luke 6:46; Romans 2:13; James 2:17).

Which Scripture was the most meaningful to you? Explain.