

"All-Sufficient"

God gave us every spiritual truth that we need to live godly lives and to get to heaven in the Scriptures. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we'll study the all-sufficiency of the Bible. Stay tuned.

Welcome to In Search of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. Because God is holy, we can regard every word that comes from God as sacred. Because our holy God knows everything and is all wise, we can consider the word of God as wiser than anything that comes from man. Because God is holy, wise and loving, we know that every word that comes from God is for our best interest. Because God has the words of eternal life, and because we love Him, we must listen and obey His words carefully. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Many in the world do not like what the Bible teaches. Some in the religious world imagine that they can improve on Biblical faith and provide a Christianity that's more pleasing to the world, so they twist the Scriptures to make them say what they want rather than listen to what God actually says. Others in the world believe that Christians ought to change their moral standards so that the world can without shame feel free to practice things that the Bible calls sin. But the idea of changing God's eternal teaching in any way must offend God and disturb anyone who loves Him.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 4 and verse 4, that "It's written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" We need to pay much closer attention to the word of God, because we need every word that comes from His mouth. God hasn't forgotten anything or neglected to tell us anything that we need to know to live holy lives, to function as the church, or to get to heaven. We aren't lacking anything; and our Bible can guide us into all the truth! Are you reading your Bible?

Now we offer this study on the all-sufficiency of the Scripture free, in this little book, Give Me The Bible. And if you live in the United States, and you'd like a printed copy of this book or a CD of our study, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Galatians 1:6 to 9, and then we'll explore the all-sufficiency of God's Holy Word.

Our reading today comes from Paul's letter to the Galatians, dealing with the one true gospel. Galatians 1, verses 6 to 9. "I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!" That's a very strict warning from the word of God. Let's pray together. Father, we're so thankful for Your love, and we're thankful for Your word the gospel. Father, help us to trust in You and in all of Your words. And may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen!

The Bible clearly reveals that God from the time of Moses wanted His wisdom, His instructions, and His promises to be written down and preserved for later generations. Exodus 24 and verse 4 says, "Moses then wrote down all the words of the Lord," and this book was preserved in the Ark of the

Covenant according to Deuteronomy 31 and verse 26. God commanded Moses in Deuteronomy 31 verses 11 to 13 that every seven years “you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law, and that their children, who have not known it, may hear it and learn to fear the Lord your God.”

Now this law was vitally important to the Lord. God commanded in Deuteronomy 4 and verse 2, “You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor shall you take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you.” Again Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 5 and verse 32, “You shall be careful therefore to do as the LORD your God has commanded you. You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.” Now a third time God said in Deuteronomy 12 and verse 32, “Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it.” Now God wanted His instructions to be obeyed just as He gave them without any changes at all. So settled was the word that God gave that Solomon said in Proverbs 30 and verse 6, “Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.”

We know that Joshua “made a covenant with the people... And Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God” according to Joshua 24:25 to 26. We know that “Samuel told the people the ordinances of the kingdom, and wrote them in a book and placed it before the LORD” (1 Samuel 10 and verse 25). God told Isaiah in chapter 30, verse 8, to “go, write it on a tablet before them, And inscribe it on a scroll, That it may serve in the time to come, As a witness forever.” We know that Ezra “set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel” (Ezra 7 and verse 20).

Now the New Testament uses the phrase of the written word of God. In Matthew 22 and verse 29 Jesus rebuked the Sadducees because they did not know “the Scriptures nor the power of God.” God undoubtedly intended from the very beginning that His words and deeds should be preserved in Scripture. You see, what God writes is not just written on paper with ink but stands written for all people in all places for all time.

“It is written

Now God has never allowed men to tamper with or to edit His written words. Paul told the Corinthians that they “were not to go beyond what is written” in 1 Corinthians 4 and verse 6. Later Paul said it’s disgraceful and underhanded “to practice cunning or to tamper with God’s word” (2 Corinthians 4 and verse 2). So when some Jewish leaders tried to pervert the gospel, Paul said they were accursed (as we read in Galatians 1 verses 8 and 9). When some false teachers tried to change the doctrine that Christ came in the flesh, John said in 2 John 9, that “Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.” When people tamper with or edit the teaching of God, they cannot expect to remain in the favor or grace of God.

At the end of the book of Revelation, John warned against anyone tampering with that particular book. Revelation 22 verses 18 to 19 says, “I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.” Of course, what is true of the book of Revelation is also true of every book of the New Testament. We must not add to or take away anything from what God has caused to be written. The Bible doesn’t need to be re-written or edited; it needs to be reread!

Now why would God forbid adding to or taking away from His scriptures? Well it's because God's message is complete and final. It says everything that God intended to say; and so to change Scripture in any way challenges God's wisdom and His authority. Changing God's word to suit our culture, or rewriting God's laws to please ourselves, is an act of utter rebellion and it dishonors God. Changing God's teaching or His moral laws says men are smarter and wiser than God, that they know better than He knows. Well, that's presumptuous.

The Lord Jesus promised the apostles in John 14 and verse 26, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." They not only had the privilege of hearing the voice of Jesus, they also had the Holy Spirit to remind them of the Lord's teaching.

Again, Jesus said in John 16 verses 12 to 13, "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come." The Lord Jesus knew the apostles would face many problems and would need guidance into all the truth. Jesus didn't withhold any truth; the Spirit guided them into all the truth. Now if they received all the truth, then no more truth would come in other centuries. They received every truth needed by the church to live as God would have them live and to have eternal life.

The apostle Peter said in 2 Peter 1 and verse 3 that "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who has called us to his own glory and excellence." Peter never imagined that they were cheated out of some spiritual truth that they could only find outside the Scriptures in some human tradition or in some feeling that they think came directly from the Holy Spirit. He never taught that our culture's values trump whatever God said long ago. No, he saw that everything that we need can be found in the Bible.

Paul also understood the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures. He wrote to the young preacher Timothy in 2 Timothy 3 verses 14 to 17, "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

You see, Paul didn't point Timothy to later-day prophets, to church councils, or to cultural trends that would correct the teaching of the Lord. He told Timothy to look to Scripture. And we must do the same. The Scriptures can make us wise to salvation; they are God-breathed and there profitable. We aren't lacking anything when we possess the Scriptures. Acts 17 and verse 11 says, "Now these [Bereans] were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so." You see they wanted to know what was true!

Paul said the Scriptures are profitable for teaching. Psalm 119:105 says, that "Your word is a lamp to my feet, And a light to my path." Christianity is built on teaching or doctrine. The Lord Jesus said in John 8 and verses 31 and 32, that "If you abide in my word, then you are truly disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." Now only the truth can set us free. Acts 2 and verse 42 says that the early church "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." Now that teaching is preserved for us in the New Testament.

Paul urged Timothy in Timothy in 2 Timothy 2 and verse 2, "and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, you entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

Paul was interested in perpetuating what had already been taught, not in looking to some later day church canon or supposed prophecy.

Second, the Scriptures are profitable for reproof. Now scripture teaches us convincingly what is right and wrong and it rebukes us for our sins. The psalmist cried out in Psalm 119 verses 9 to 11, "How can a young man keep his way pure? And the answer, by guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart, (he says) I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you." Reproof leads to repentance. And repentance is a change of heart that leads to a change of ways.

You see, reproof gives a need for the third thing, and that is to be profitable in Scripture, and that is correction. The Scriptures move us to repent and correct our wrongs and to leave false teachings for the truth. In the book of Acts, chapter 18, it introduces us to a Jew named Apollos who was an eloquent preacher, but he was only acquainted with the baptism of John and did not know about baptism into Christ. Acts 18 and verse 26 says "that he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately." Now Apollos when he learned the truth, didn't get angry at Priscilla and Aquila for their correction. My friend, when we're corrected, we shouldn't get angry but should humbly change and thank God for the truth. Repentance brings healing to our souls, and that's why repentance is so very important.

Fourth, Scripture is profitable for training in righteousness. The instructions of the New Testament and the examples found in Scripture train us how to love and to care for others, to serve and worship God, to evangelize, to restore the fallen, and to be the church that Jesus loves. It teaches us how to live godly lives and how to go to heaven. It teaches us to be like Jesus. Oh we need the examples of the New Testament to guide us in doing good to others. In Scripture we learn how to forgive, how to be patient, how to endure hardship, and how to serve.

The gospel message is all-sufficient for all time. And we must preach the gospel that the apostles preached in the first century. 1 Peter 1 verses 22 to 25 says, "Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth, do it for a sincere brotherly love, and love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; for 'All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.' And this word is the good news (the gospel) that was preached to you." Psalm 119 verse 160 says, that "The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever." We need to believe in the word of God, that it's sufficient and teaches us all we need to know. Let's pray together. Father, we're thankful for Your word, and for the good news of the gospel. And we pray that we may come to believe it with all our heart, and that we may do Your will on earth just as it's done in heaven. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus our Lord, Amen!

The same gospel that purified souls in the first century will purify souls today. There's only one imperishable seed planted in the hearts of people causing them to be born again into Christ. And that seed existed in the first century and will last until the end of time. Now if we corrupt or change that seed, it won't produce a truly born again person. It'll produce something else outside the truth. Our souls are purified by obedience to the truth of the Lord's gospel, not by obedience to a gospel that's reconfigured to suit some human tradition or our culture.

Hebrews 2:1 through 3 says, "Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and

every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?" God hasn't called us to follow our feelings or to be like those who surround us; He has called us to obedience to His inspired and all-sufficient word. 2 Corinthians 10 verse 18 says, "For it's not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends." Are you paying close attention to God's Holy Word?

The New Testament teaches us all that we need to know to become a Christian and to live the Christian life. We can know the truth and be saved. Now to become a Christian believe with all your heart that Jesus Christ is God's Son. Repent of every sin, turn to what is right. Confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. And be baptized into Christ, immersed in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And when you're baptized, God forgives your sins, He adds you to His church, and you become a child of God. Now after you become a Christian, stay close to God by living faithfully and by abiding in the words of Jesus.

We hope that today's study about Scripture has blessed you. If you'd like to know more about these things, then we ask that you write and ask us for this little booklet, Give Me the Bible. Now if you live in the United States and you want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter, and you can do it online at: www.searchtv.org. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map of the location of churches in your area. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not here to get your money. We're here to help you get to heaven.

We ask that you please get involved with a church of Christ. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. Well, we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.