

## **GOD-BREATHED**

**Scripture Reading:** Read 2 Timothy 3

***All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.***

2 Timothy 3:16-17

One of the key doctrines of the Christian faith is that the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, is verbally inspired by God. By this, it is meant that God's Spirit so moved upon the biblical writers that they conveyed the very thoughts and words of God in what they wrote (cf. 2 Peter 1:20-21). The words were not simply man's words flowing out of human understanding but the very words of God (cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:13). In other words, they were God-breathed words through human authors. This does not mean, however, that the biblical writers were human dictation machines. A quick reading of the prophet Amos, the gospel of Luke and Paul's epistle to the Romans should make it clear that God used the background, vocabulary, grammar, experience, etc. of each author to convey what he wanted. The end product is a unified revelation of God to humanity of himself by way of some 40 authors over a period of approximately 1600 years; the infallible (i.e. without error) and authoritative rule for faith and practice.

According to Paul in today's chapter reading, these God-breathed words are useful in a number of ways:

- 1. Teaching** – *God's Word lays out for us what we are to believe. It teaches us the doctrines of the faith that we are to hold as his followers.*
- 2. Rebuking** – *God's Word challenges us when we go astray and convicts us of our sinful attitudes and actions.*
- 3. Correcting** – *God's Word not only rebukes and convicts our errors, it also shows us the way back to a right state. It restores us to wholeness.*
- 4. Training** – *God's Word provides all we need to grow up in Christ and to be trained in righteous living. It doesn't just give us the truths we are to believe it also shows us the right way to live.*

No wonder Paul commanded Timothy to devote himself to the public reading of Scripture in the church services (1 Timothy 4:13), to preach the Word and to correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction. (2 Timothy 4:2). The end result is that the Scriptures are able to make folks wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 3:15) and thoroughly equip believers for every good work (2 Timothy 4:17).

**Action Step & Prayer Focus:** When's the last time you picked up the Bible to read and reflected on the fact that you were holding the inspired Word of God in your hands? How would this change the way you look at Scripture? Skim through 2 Timothy and pray for the Lord to show you doctrines he wants to teach you, areas where you need to be rebuked or corrected, and practices he wants you to learn as he trains you in righteousness.

**Take-a-way:** *The Word God breathed centuries ago still speaks with life today.*