

More Than a Manual

Scripture and Background Information for January 8-14.

To prepare for your group discussion each week, group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scripture below.

For most Christians we hear about the importance of the Bible to our understanding and growth in our faith but if we are honest, that's not exactly our experience. Instead, we find it confusing, boring, or irrelevant and instead of consistently engaging with Scripture, we find that we avoid Scripture itself. God designed Scripture for so much more than what we often experience. This series is an invitation to view Scripture the way God intended and to begin to engage with it in fresh ways that help you understand more of its purpose and find the One behind it all along.

Background for 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

2 Timothy is a book written by the Apostle Paul at a moment when he is in a dire place in life. He has been imprisoned and put on trial (1:16, 4:16), faced great opposition (4:14), been deserted by multiple people (1:15, 4:10), and, in his mind, is near the end of his life (4:6). Within these circumstances he reaches out to one of his most beloved disciples, Timothy, to encourage him and tell him to visit him quickly.

Our passage for today comes at the end of a section Paul devotes to encouraging Timothy to continue in the faith (2 Timothy 3:10-17). Paul appeals to the Scriptures as a way to help Timothy persevere by pointing out that he has learned them from good people and has known them from his childhood. But, in verse 16-17, Paul discusses a more important reason the Scriptures can help Timothy in his faith: the fact that they ultimately come from God! God has breathed-out or inspired the words of Scripture. Even though He used human authors to write them, God remains the source behind them. This means that the Scriptures truly are God's words. Therefore, we can be hopeful and trust God that the various examples of benefits mentioned in these verses are gifts that are available to those who sincerely engage with the Scriptures.

Insights and questions to engage with the text:

1. If God truly is the ultimate author of all Scripture, how does this affect how we view and read the Bible compared to other books?
2. These verses list several ways in which the Scriptures are useful to people (teaching, reproof, correction, training in righteousness). How have you experienced the Bible helping you in these ways? How have the Scriptures been "profitable" to you in ways that are not on this list?
3. In verse 17, it says that the Scriptures can make us complete and equipped for every good work. In what ways can the Bible equip you in your faith and ministry?
4. How are you personally engaging with Scripture currently? What goals might you have for this new year?