

COMPLETE, CAPABLE, PROFICIENT

2 Timothy 3:13-17

INTRODUCTION: From his cell in the dungeon of the prison in Rome, with chains around his ankles, Paul penned his second and last letter to his son in the ministry Timothy. It is a sad letter. Paul wrote,

2 Timothy 4

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

9 Be diligent to come to me quickly; 10 for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.

14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm.

16 At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.

21 Do your utmost to come before winter.

Paul pled with Timothy to come before winter, because Paul longed to see this young man one final time before he departed for glory. If Timothy did not set sail for Italy before winter set in, there would be no possibility of his arriving in Rome before late spring or early summer. The ships did not attempt to cross the winter seas. The northern route by land was impassable because of ice and snow.

But while we see the humanity of the great Apostle Paul in this final chapter of his second letter to Timothy, we also find in the earlier chapters clear instruction and encouragement as to how Timothy's life could be everything God had purposed it to be.

Paul told Timothy, and in so doing tells us, how he could be complete, capable, and proficient, for that is the full meaning of the word translated "complete" in 3:17.

2 Timothy 3:17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

This should interest us. Who of us does not want our life to be complete, capable, and proficient?

- If those words - complete, capable, and proficient – do not characterize your life this morning, they can.
- In a brief passage the Holy Spirit through Paul told Timothy how that could be true of his life just as it had been true of Paul's life.
- But in so doing, the Holy Spirit is telling each of us also how our life can be complete, capable, and proficient.

Three peaks thus far in my journey through life that each time directed the rest of my journey:

At eight years old I got saved.

At 18 years old I married a godly young woman.

At 27 I came to believe and put this instruction into practice. It changed everything and set me on the road to be complete, capable, and proficient. I've not arrived, but I'm on the road.

- And if you will engage with me for a brief time this morning as we examine these words, you can leave here this morning knowing how your life can be this way.
- Now, I cannot promise that your life will indeed become complete, capable, and proficient. That will be up to you. For knowing the instruction is only the beginning point of living such a life. You have to do it.
- But you cannot do it until you know it. And you have the opportunity to know it today, not because of any wisdom I possess, but because I will point you to the very wisdom of God given in His Word that holds forth this promise.

Let's read these powerful words.

2 Timothy 3:13–17

13 But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

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 Holy Spirit tells us:

I. CONTINUE TO BE A DISCIPLE WITH SCRIPTURAL CONVICTIONS.

2 Timothy 3:14 But you must continue in the things which you have **learned**

A. The word “learned” comes from the same root as the word “disciple.”

- It carries the idea of learning by intention and not by accident or circumstance.
- It also has the meaning of “following,” – learning from someone by listening to them and observing and imitating their life.
- Timothy had from his childhood been discipled by his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois.
- Later Timothy became a disciple of Paul.
- At least from his teen and adult years, Timothy was intentional in his learning and following.

B. And what did he learn? The Holy Scriptures!

2 Timothy 3:14–15 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,**

Now here is something interesting and timely for us!

Many of you know that recently Andy Stanley, pastor at Northpoint Church in Atlanta, and a very popular preacher and writer has urged Christians to “un-hitch” themselves from the Old Testament.

Andy is not the first to call upon believers to abandon the Old Testament, and he will not be the last.

What is interesting and timely about this passage is that **the two words translated here “Holy Scriptures,” literally “sacred writings” made up a term used especially for the Old Testament.**

- Folks, do not give up your Old Testament!
- In an attempt to rid yourself of something that
 - you do not understand, or
 - something that makes you uncomfortable
 - something you cannot explain, or

- something you do not yet believe
 - You will be abandoning the Sacred Writings Jesus read, memorized, quoted, and affirmed as fully trustworthy.
 - You will be doing away with the Holy Scriptures which Jesus said would not pass away until every one of them is fulfilled.
- C. The instruction of the Holy Spirit here is “Continue being a disciple who learns the Scriptures.”
- To continue, you have to start!
 - Some of you have never started really learning the Scriptures.
 - Some of you have very few verses of the Bible memorized.
 - Some of you cannot find your way around the Bible. If I told you to turn to Hezekiah 3:4 or 1 Hesitation 6:1, you would spend the rest of your time here this morning flipping madly through the pages of the Bible or if you used the Bible on your phone or tablet, watching the cursor swirl while the computer chip tried to figure it out.
 - Now folks, I do not say this to condemn but to challenge! Get started learning from the Scriptures.
 - You cannot continue until you have started. If you have not started, then start by reading through the rest of the New Testament with us. Next week we read Titus. Three chapters, less than two pages.
 - Start going to small group Bible study on Sunday morning and get with a group of people like yourself and begin to read and study the Word of God.
 - Your life will never be complete, capable, and proficient; your life will never be all that God designed it to be unless you become a disciple who learns from the Scriptures.
 - And for you who have been disciples who learned from the Scriptures, remember the Spirit says, “Continue!”
 - We never learn enough. We never know it all.
 - I sit down every week to study the Word of God to prepare to bring God’s Word to you. I always learn something new. I always discover some fresh insight to use in my own life. I see new applications. I find new connections between passages of God’s Word I have never seen before.

- God’s Word never changes, but when you study it, it will never leave you the same.
- Some of you started being disciples who learned God’s Word a long time ago, but you quit. Now you hardly read it. You seldom study it. You don’t think you need to go to small group Bible study because you know enough.
- Well, friend, I hope you know enough of God’s Word to know that it is true. And you can look right here in 2 Timothy 3 and see that the Holy Spirit tells you to continue learning from the Holy Scriptures!

D. The Spirit says, **CONTINUE TO BE A DISCIPLE WITH SCRIPTURAL CONVICTIONS.**

Where is the word “convictions” in our text?

2 Timothy 3:14–15 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,

- “assured” means convinced, to have confidence in
- It is not just that Timothy was assured by his mother, grandmother, and Paul that the things in the Scriptures were true and dependable.
- It is that Timothy became convinced. Timothy developed confidence in God’s Word. Timothy developed convictions based upon what the Scriptures said.

This is what happened to me at 27. I had influences for and against Scriptures. At 27 I chose sides. I became convinced that Scripture was the Word of God! It became a strong conviction!

- You may be thinking, “Pastor, I am a person of strong convictions!”
 - Well, that is good, if your convictions are based solidly on the declarations of the Word of God.
 - But if your convictions are just your opinion firmly held and boldly stated, that is not good at all.
 - If your convictions are based on the wisdom of the world or upon your own insight or experience but are contrary to the wisdom of the Scriptures, then your life will never be complete or capable.
 - God repeatedly warns us in His Word,

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.

God says, "If you want a life that is complete, capable, and proficient,

CONTINUE TO BE A DISCIPLE WITH SCRIPTURAL CONVICTIONS.

for

II. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES WILL LEAD YOU TO SALVATION THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS.

- A. Folks I could spend a lot of time here talking about how even the Old Testament Scriptures lead us to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Bible declares the faith of Moses, Joshua, Rahab, Samuel, David, Isaiah and many others, all of whom were led to salvation in the Messiah to come by way of the Old Testament Scriptures.

- B. But I think another point is more needful here for us to understand. As important as it is to believe the Word of God, not to dispute it or negate it, we are not saved through faith in the Scriptures themselves.

- C. The Scriptures tell us to put our faith in Jesus Christ and we will be saved.

- D. Salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus and Him alone.

- E. Jesus alone bore our sins upon the cross.

- F. He rose from the dead.

- G. There is no other name under heaven, not even the name Bible, or Scripture, by which we must be saved. We can only be saved in the name of Jesus!

- H. The Bible leads us to salvation through faith in Him.

- It was Jesus, the Son of God, who spoke all of the universe into being.
- Jesus was and is the promised seed of Abraham through whom all the families of the earth would be blessed.
- Jesus is the Passover Lamb whose shed blood allowed those who believed to escape their bondage.
- He is the Lamb of God described by Isaiah who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, whose death made intercession for our sins.

- I. All of Scripture calls upon us to trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior and be saved through faith in Him.

But not only are we saved as the Scriptures lead us to salvation through faith in Christ, but the Holy Spirit says

III. THE SCRIPTURES WILL GROW YOU TO BECOME COMPLETE, CAPABLE, AND PROFICIENT, COMPLETELY EQUIPPED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 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.

This is the process the Bible calls sanctification.

A. The reason the Scriptures can accomplish this great work in us is because they are inspired by God.

Inspired comes from the Greek word theo-pneustos which means God-breathed.

- not in the sense that God blew upon the writings and thereby blessed them,
- but in the sense that **God blew the Scriptures out of Himself to give to the writers.**

B. The Methods of Inspiration - Often people search for a single methodology by which God communicated His truth to men to record. Sometimes people argue, favoring one means of inspiration over another. The testimony of the Scriptures is that God used many means of inspiration. One means is not preferable over another. The fact is that through each of the means, God breathed out His Word to the recipient. Some of those means of inspiration were

- **Inscription - God wrote it Himself.**

Exodus 34:1 And the LORD said to Moses, “Cut two tablets of stone like the first *ones*, and **I will write** on *these* tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke.”

- **Dictation - God dictated word for word, and the human author wrote it down.**

Exodus 34:27 Then **the LORD said to Moses, “Write these words,** for according to the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.”

- **Vision - God showed the author something and told him to write what he saw.**

Revelation 1:11 saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send *it* to the seven churches which are in Asia

And several others.

But far more important than the methods of inspiration are the

C. The results of inspiration.

- **The whole Bible is inspired.** This is called Plenary Inspiration (plenary means full).
- **Every word is inspired.** - Verbal Inspiration (Verbal means pertaining to words).
 - **Verbal Inspiration means that** whatever the means of inspiration (dictation, vision, research...), the end result was that **the very words God desired to be used to express His truth were the ones that made it to the page.**
 - Paul affirmed that it is the very words which are inspired.

1 Corinthians 2:13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.
- **Inspiration makes the Bible inerrant and infallible.** How can what God breathes be any less?
 - **Inerrant means that in the original autographs, there are no mistakes.**
 - **Infallible means that if you follow it, it will not lead you astray.**
- **Since every word and sentence is perfectly true, then all Scripture is useful for**
 - **Doctrine** – to teach us what is right
 - **Reproof** – to tell us what is wrong
 - **Correction** – to show us how to right the wrong
 - **Training in righteousness** – leading us to practice what is right
- **This is the way that God grows us to be increasingly like Christ.**

- **This is the way God makes us complete, capable, and proficient, just as He designed our lives to be.**