

Inspired Word of God

*It is written, Man shall not live on bread alone,
but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.
Matthew 4:4*

Welcome to the Business Inductive Study Series (BISS)! Our objective with this approach to Bible study is to help you discover for yourselves what God's Word says regarding business. As stewards, and not owners, of our businesses and careers, we are entrusted with the responsibility to carry out the Owner's instructions, and since the Owner and Managing Partner is God, that means we need to know His Word – the Bible!

Thus, our first study is to discover what God's Word says about God's Word. Who is the author of the Bible? What is the purpose of the Bible? Is the Bible accurate and authoritative on all matters it addresses? Is the Bible relevant to my modern business questions? Does it really contain all that I need to know? How do we know that our current Bible is really the Word of God?

Lets ask the Holy Spirit to guide us and instruct us in His Word today.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

17 that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

OBSERVE

The apostle Paul is in prison and Timothy is heavy on his heart. Paul had to write one last letter to his disciple and spiritual son, reminding him of crucial matters concerning the ministry. Perhaps the most important matter was Timothy's charge to *Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.* (2 Timothy 1:13-14). The sound words, the treasure, are of course, the Scriptures.

After exhorting Timothy to hold fast to the sacred writings that he was taught by his mother, grandmother and Paul, Paul then proceeds to describe them, which brings us to 2 Timothy 3:16-17. We are going to break these verses down, study each part, and then put them back together again for a comprehensive understanding.

Leader: Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and have the group say aloud and mark "All Scripture." Explain the purpose of this.

2 Peter 3:1-2, 14-16

1 This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder,

2 that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior [spoken] by your apostles.

14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,

15 and regard the patience of our Lord [to be] salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you,

16 as also in all [his] letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as [they do] also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

2 Peter 1:16-21

16 For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were

All Scripture ...

We know from the context that Paul is referring to the Old Testament Scriptures here. On what basis then, do we apply these verses to the New Testament also?

Leader: Read 2 Peter 3:1-2, 14-16, and say aloud and mark "words," "commandments," and "Scriptures."

In verse 2, what does Peter exhort his readers to remember?

In verse 16, how does Peter describe Paul's writings?

DISCUSS

Do you think 2 Timothy 3:16-17 also applies to the new testament? Why?

Are the "old covenant" Scriptures still relevant to "new covenant" believers? Lets look at some passages about this.

Leader: Ask one member to look up and read from their own Bible Isaiah 40:8, another 1 Peter 1:22-25, another Luke 24:13-32, another Romans 15:4, another Hebrews 10:1, and another Ephesians 6:2-3.

What did you learn from these verses regarding the applicability of the old testament to us today?

- Isaiah 40:8
- 1 Peter 1:22-25
- Luke 24:13-32
- Romans 15:4
- Hebrews 10:1
- Ephesians 6:2-3

eyewitnesses of His majesty.

17 For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased"--

18 and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

19 And [so] we have the prophetic word [made] more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.

20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is [a matter] of one's own interpretation,

21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

1 Corinthians 2:9-16

9 but just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And [which] have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him."

INSIGHT

There are three possibilities when it comes to interpreting old testament commands for application today. (1) Does the new testament affirm it? The new testament generally affirms the moral law taught in the old testament. (2) Does the new testament nullify it? The new testament generally nullifies the ceremonial law taught in the old testament. (3) Does the new testament change it? New testament teaching on the Sabbath is a good example of changing the old testament teaching.

... is inspired by God

OBSERVE

Lets look at the next part of our study verse.

Leader: Refer the group back to page 1. Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 again and have the group say aloud and mark "is inspired by God."

The Greek word translated "inspired" is theopneustos, which literally means God-breathed (Theos (God) + pneo (to breathe)).

Leader: Read 2 Peter 1:16-21 and have the group say aloud and mark "prophecy" and "prophetic," and the phrase "men moved by the Holy Spirit."

The Greek word translated "moved" means to bear with the idea of motion, as a ship is moved before the wind. How does Peter describe the inspiration of the old testament?

What about the inspiration of the new testament? Lets look at a passage that many scholars designate as the definitive statement on the subject.

Leader: Read 1 Corinthians 2:10-16 and have the group say aloud and mark every reference to the "Spirit" and "spiritual."

10 For to us God revealed [them] through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

11 For who among men knows the [thoughts] of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the [thoughts] of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God,

13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual [thoughts] with spiritual [words.]

14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

15 But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man.

16 For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

What do you learn about the Spirit of God in this passage?

What is Paul claiming?

DISCUSS

Do you see a similarity between the 2 Peter passages and the 1 Corinthians 2:10-16? Explain.

Based on what we have studied, do the Scriptures themselves claim to be the very Word of God? According to the Bible, how did this happen?

INSIGHT

As we have just studied, the Bible claims to be the Word of God. How do we know the Bible is what it claims to be? Believing the Bible is ultimately a matter of informed faith. You either believe what the Word of God says about itself or you don't.

However, there are several areas of objective evidence that test and support the inspiration of the autographs, the original manuscripts.

First, there is the *bibliographic* evidence for the Bible's authenticity. No other ancient writings have as much manuscript evidence, in terms of quantity, accuracy and recency, as does the Bible. Secondly, there is the *internal evidence*. Although over 40 different authors wrote 66 separate books in three different languages over a span of almost 2,000

years, there are no contradictions in what they wrote. There is also the remarkable evidence of fulfilled prophecy. Finally, there is an abundance of *external evidence* that supports the Bible's infallibility. When the Bible speaks on matters of history or science, it speaks accurately. Advances in science and archaeological evidence continue to affirm the accuracy of the Bible, much to the consternation of the non-believing intellectual community. And of course, there is the *personal evidence* of a changed life wrought by the living and active Word of God.

As you study the Bible, you will discover that it is a supernatural book ... the very words of life. (Excerpted from The International Inductive Study Bible.)

James 4:13-17

13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow, we shall go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit."

14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are [just] a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

15 Instead, [you ought] to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and also do this or that."

16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.

17 Therefore, to one who knows

... and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness ...

OBSERVE

Now that we have established that the Bible is the infallible and authoritative Word of God, what is it profitable, or useful, for?

Leader: Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 again.

List the four things that make the Bible useful to us.

In order to illustrate this, let's look at a business topic such as how to make business plans.

Leader: Read James 4:13-17 and have the group say aloud and mark these words of transition: yet, instead, but and therefore.

The Greek word translated **teaching** is didaskalia, which means doctrine, that which should be taught, that which is right to do. What does this passage say is the **right thing to do** regarding business planning?

[the] right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin.

(Hint: Look for the statement introduced by "instead.")

The Greek word translated **reproof** is elegchos, which means conviction, being persuaded **what is not right**. What does this passage say is not right to do regarding business planning?

(Hint: Look for statement introduced by "but.") What is described as arrogant, evil boasting?

The Greek word translated **correction** is epanorthosis, which means to set right, or **how to get right**. What does this passage say is the way to get right?

(Hint: Look for the statement introduced by "yet.")

The Greek word translated training is paideias, which means instruction in right living, or **how to stay right**. What does this passage say about how to stay right in business planning?

(Hint: Look for the statement introduced by "therefore.") How does this help us stay right?

DISCUSS

Summarize the teaching on business planning in your own words. Do you see how just this one passage is profitable, useful, to impart God's truth to a business topic? Keep in mind that we looked at just one passage on the subject. A thorough study would include many passages for the full counsel of God.

... that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

OBSERVE

This is a rather startling statement. Said another way, the Bible is claiming that it is not only authoritative (inspired by God) and necessary (profitable), but also sufficient! In other words, the Bible contains all the truth we need to solve any problem, to answer any question, to make any decision – that is if we desire to accomplish the good works that God has planned for us to do.

Leader: Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 again, and then 2 Peter 1:2-3 and have the group say aloud and mark "knowledge."

List what this passage says we get from the knowledge of God.

Where is the knowledge of God found?

DISCUSS

Wait a minute, you may be thinking, this passage we studied in James didn't contain everything I need to know to make my business plans! You're right, and that's not we said. We said that the Bible contains all the truth we need, but not necessarily all the facts. For instance, we just learned that biblically-based business planning starts with discerning the will of the God, and then planning how to implement it. There are many resources available to teach us how to write a business plan. But business planning, no matter how professional, will produce nothing significant if it is not aligned with the will of God and His eternal purposes. That is the truth that equips us for every good work. By the way, the Bible has much more to say about planning, which we will be studying later in a 4-part inductive series.

Do you see how practical and relevant the Bible is?

2 Peter 1:2-3

2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES DISCOVERED

- **All Scripture**, all 66 books of the old and new testament, were **inspired by God**. The Bible is **authoritative** on all matters on which it speaks.
- The Bible is **profitable** for teaching (what is right), reproof (what is not right), correction (how to get right) and training in righteousness (how to stay right). The Bible is **useful** and **necessary**, very practical.
- The Bible **adequately equips** a man for every good work that God has planned for him. The Bible is **sufficient** in terms of the truth we need to do the work.

BUSINESS APPLICATION

1. Seeing the Bible as a practical business resource is new to many Christian business and professional men. At the Harvard Business School, I learned much about every aspect of running a business. I have not just thrown out that knowledge, but rather, I filter it through the Word of God – holding fast to that which is good, and discarding that which does not measure up. For example, the discipline of accounting is value-neutral, but creative accounting to deceive investors is not. The key is to start with God's Word, discover the truth, and then wisely put that truth into practice in your business circumstance. Wisdom is the practical application of God's Word to everyday life.
2. Consider a current business problem or issue that you are having. Search the Scriptures to discover God's truth, principles and instruction. And then do it!

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