

“In 1991 James Patterson and Peter Kim released *The Day America Told the Truth*, a study based on an extensive opinion survey which guaranteed the anonymity of its participants. And the truth was shocking! Let me give you a brief sampling of their findings:

“Only 13% of Americans see all Ten Commandments as binding and relevant; **91% lie regularly**, both at work and in their homes; most American workers admit to goofing off for an average of seven hours, almost one whole day per week; and half of our work force admits that they regularly call in sick when they feel perfectly well. One particular question on the survey really grabbed me: ‘**What are you willing to do for \$10 million?**’ (Are you sitting down?) 25% would abandon their families; 23% would become a prostitute for a week; 7% would murder a stranger!

See: Proverbs 11:3; 16:8; Ezekiel 33:31; Matthew 23:28; Ephesians 4:17-25”¹

2 TIMOTHY 3:13:

¹³ But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

The Bible frequently refers to evil and here we find a reference to “evil men.” Now “evil men” can refer to the ungodly, unbelievers, deceivers, hypocrites, and imposters just to mention a few. They oppose righteousness and morality, they lie, cheat, steal, curse, and enjoy forbidden sexual pleasures.

Imposters are deceivers and seducers who persuade somebody to do something by making it seem desirable or exciting. They may call themselves Christians and join the church, but they only do it to get something out of it. They accept responsibility in order to present a respectable A godly person must be very careful when they’re in the company of such evil people.

The point Paul makes here is that evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse. Men will become *more and more evil*, more and more **ungodly, lawless, pleasure-seeking, selfish, immoral, addicted**, and more and more **violent** even to the extent of murder. They will grow worse and worse in their **pretending about their faith**. They will maintain they believe in God, but deny God’s power.

Men will also become more deceptive in their faith. They will be religious, professing belief in God, but they will deny the power of God. They will deceive themselves and deceive others. They will think that they are acceptable to God, and others will even think they are acceptable to God, 2 Timothy 3:1-5:

¹ *6,000 Plus Illustrations for Communicating Biblical Truths*, (Omaha, Nebraska: Christianity Today, 1997), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Deceit".

¹ *But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.*
² *For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,*
³ *unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good,*
⁴ *treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,*
⁵ *holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.*

The only way to be acceptable to God is by believing that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior and loving others. Believing means to follow the teachings of Christ and to love others even as Christ loved them. But many men will become more and more religious, but as seducers or imposters who use religion for their own selfish purposes.

1 John 3:23:

²³ *This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.*

Mark 13:22 (NIV):

²² *For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect--if that were possible.*

Acts 20:30:

³⁰ *and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.*

Romans 16:17-18:

¹⁷ *Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.*

¹⁸ *For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.*

2 Corinthians 11:13-15:

¹³ *For such men are **false apostles**, deceitful workers, **disguising themselves** as apostles of Christ.*

¹⁴ *No wonder, for even **Satan disguises himself** as an angel of light.*

¹⁵ *Therefore it is not surprising if his servants **also disguise themselves** as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.*

“In the more virtuous days of the Roman empire the Roman citizens feared harm only from their enemies, but when those days had become degenerate, they had to endure greater misery from their fellow citizens.”²

² Ibid.; (evil); St. Augustine, “*The City of God*.”

2 TIMOTHY 3:14-15:

¹⁴ *You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them,*

¹⁵ *and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

Paul challenged Timothy in the same way the Holy Spirit challenges us: "*Continue in the things you have learned.*" The Bible is the only place we can be guaranteed of getting the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. People change; times change, philosophies change, and many religions change to fit what it is at the time that people want to believe. When greed, power, and immorality become what the people want, the standards change so the people can do what they want to do. When such things come at us the Bible is still our anchor. The world's values will eventually destroy those who live by them but the Bible will provide encouragement and guidance leading us down the right path. Human solutions, no matter how sophisticated or well researched are full of uncertainties. Only God's Word is authoritative, eternal, and changeless. Both God and His Word in the Bible are the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Paul encourages Timothy and us to "*Continue,*" meaning "*to abide,*" to build his home on the foundation of the Word of God and live within it at all times. It would provide a safe place to be no matter what is happening in the world. Timothy was also told to continue learning by studying the teaching of the same learned teachers who had taught him in the past and the only Word of God He had relied on, the Bible. He could be confident if he continued to study those things. He already knew he had learned how to read and interpret the *Bible* by the very best teachers. What interesting talks Paul and Timothy must have had. Much still remained to be learned through personal Bible study.

Paul called Timothy to remember to study his Bible and he also called him to remember his life as a boy and young man. From that young age Paul reminded him that he had been taught the *Bible* by his family so that he could gain knowledge that would grant him faith for salvation through Christ Jesus.

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

“A man in Kansas City was severely injured in an explosion. Evangelist Robert L. Summer tells about him in his book *The Wonder of the Word of God*. The victim's face was badly disfigured, and he lost his eyesight as well as both hands. He was just a new Christian, and one of his greatest disappointments was that he could no longer read the Bible.

“Then he heard about a lady in England who read braille with her lips. Hoping to do the same, he sent for some books of the Bible in braille. Much to his dismay, however, he discovered that the nerve endings in his lips had been destroyed by the explosion. One day, as he brought one of the braille pages to his lips, his tongue happened to touch a few of the raised characters and he could feel them. Like a flash he thought, I can read the Bible using my tongue. At the time Robert Sumner wrote his book, the man had ‘read’ through the entire Bible four times.”³ **See:** Psalms 34:8; 119:43, 75.

“In 1989, Americans purchased Harlequin romance novels at the rate of 7191 per hour. If only God's people would show a similar interest in his word!⁴ **See:** Psalm 119:97; 2 Timothy 2:15.

“A 91-year-old woman wrote, ‘I spend about one hour each day with my Lord, reading my Bible and Christian literature. When people ask what good all my reading does if I can't remember what I've read, my answer is always the same. I'm in pretty good health, have a roof over my head, and have plenty of food to eat... I also have two sons and one grandson who love me dearly. My cup runneth over. I am not concerned about my memory. I just do my reading and God does the remembering.’

“Does the way look dark? Keep reading God's Word. If you can no longer read, listen to it on tapes. Thank the Lord daily for meeting your physical needs. Draw on the support of other Christians.”

“Even if you forget God's promises, you'll discover that He never forgets them. He'll strengthen you and stand with you.”⁵

There are times when researching material for a commentary that you come across something that could not be said any better than it was by the original author. That's the way I feel about the work by John Phillips that follows.

“Timothy's father was a Greek (Acts 16:1). Likely enough, he had told his little boy stories about the greatness of Greece and her gods and how Mount Olympus was their home. There were many gods such as Zeus, the father of the gods; Hermes, the messenger of the gods; and Neptune, god of the sea. Timothy's mother told him that the imaginary lawless, lustful gods of Greek mythology were really imaginary gods made in the image of fallen man.

“Timothy's father probably told his boy Homer's tales about Ulysses, Helen of Troy, Circe, the Cyclops, the Sirens, Medusa, and the

³ Op. Cit., 6,000 Illustrations, “Bible.”

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Minotaur—once-upon-a-time stories full of adventure, excitement, and narrow escapes. He also told him of historical accounts of Philip of Macedon and Alexander; of Thermopylae, Salamis, the Spartans, and the wars with Persia; of Athens and Mars Hill; of the golden age of Greece; and of Plato, Pythagoras, Aristotle, Archimedes, and Herodotus. And little Timothy no doubt listened with wide-eyed wonder.

“But Timothy's mother and grandmother were Jewish, and they had other tales to tell Timothy. They told Timothy about Adam and Eve; Cain and Abel; Abraham and Isaac and Jacob; David and Goliath; Samson and Delilah; Moses and Pharaoh; and Joseph, Jonathan, Jeremiah, Jonah, and Job. These were the stories that captured the mind and heart of Timothy.

“After all, what was Mount Olympus compared with Mount Moriah, Mount Sinai, or Mount Zion? What was Hercules compared with Samson? What were the gods of Greece compared with the Elohim-Jehovah-Adonai of the Jewish people? Who could settle for human reasoning when he could have divine revelation? So young Timothy's heart turned toward the Scriptures. In the battle for his soul, the fairy stories of Greek religion lost out to the truths of Scripture. The Greek philosophers met with the same fate.

"From a child Timothy was rooted and grounded in God's Word. The word translated 'child' here is *brephos*, which means literally 'embryo,' or 'newly born babe.' So Timothy imbibed the Scriptures with his mother's milk. Her lullabies were the Psalms. The songs she sang around the house were Hebrew hymns. She taught him to read from the Bible and to respect it as the foremost and final authority on all matters. And when his mother wasn't teaching him, his grandmother was. Timothy's father must have been a very tolerant man, or perhaps he died when Timothy was still young.

“From boyhood, Timothy knew about Moses in the bulrushes, Moses at the burning bush, Daniel in the lions' den, and Elijah on Mount Carmel. Timothy was taught about the Mosaic Law and God's righteous demands; about the moral law and the ceremonial law; about the sacrifices, the offerings, the tabernacle, and the temple; about Hebrew history from Abraham to the theocracy to the monarchy to the dependency to the worldwide dispersion of the Jewish people. Timothy read the prophets and learned about the Hebrew hope of a coming Messiah.

“Timothy knew 'the holy scriptures' well. The word translated 'scriptures' in 2 Timothy 3:15 is the plural *gramma*, which refers to the letters of the alphabet. Timothy not only learned his ABCs from the Scriptures; he was a man of letters, as we would say today. The same

was true of the Lord. People marveled at Him and His authoritative teaching. They said, ‘How knoweth this man letters [*gramma*], having never learned?’ (John 7:15).

“It is far better to be ‘lettered’ in the Scriptures than to have a string of letters after one’s name from a galaxy of Ivy League colleges but no understanding of the Bible.”

“By the time Paul came to his hometown, Timothy’s heart and mind had been well prepared. He responded at once to the message of ‘salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.’ Thereafter, Paul was not only Timothy’s spiritual father but also his mentor. Under Paul’s instruction, Timothy’s learning went beyond anything that his godly mother and grandmother could teach him.

“Now he was about to lose his beloved teacher. So Paul continued in his attempt to strengthen Timothy’s resolve by reminding him of his deep roots in the Word of God. Of him to whom much had been given, much was expected.”⁶

What kind of things were you taught about God as a child? Did they teach you about the mythical (storybook; fairytale) gods? Or did they teach you about the true God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)? Or perhaps they taught you that there was no god and mankind evolved out of the primordial (prehistoric) ooze (slop) to become master of his fate and captain of his soul. I believe they call it evolution which is nothing more than a bunch of dunderheads trying to prove the superiority of mankind over the concept of the only possible sound explanation for the origin of the universe and the purpose of mankind.

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

Paul went on to make several important comments about the Holy Scriptures. First, he wrote about the inspiration of the Bible: ***“All Scripture is inspired by God.”*** The word *inspired* comes from the Greek word *Theopneustos*, which means literally God-breathed. *Theos*, God... The “pneu” part is the word *to breathe*. “All scripture is God-breathed.”⁷

In 2 Peter 1:21, we discover that the means of this breath which inspired the Word is none other than the Holy Spirit Himself.

⁶ John Phillips, *The John Phillips Commentary Series – Exploring the Pastoral Epistles: An Expository Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2004), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 423-425.

⁷ John Phillips, *The John Phillips Commentary Series – Exploring the Pastoral Epistles: An Expository Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2004), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 427.

2 Peter 1:20-21 (TLB):

*For no prophecy recorded in Scripture was ever thought up by the prophet himself. It was the **Holy Spirit** within these godly men who gave them true messages from God.*

The Scriptures clearly report that human creativity played no part in the writing of the Scriptures as far as original ideas and words are concerned. Those prophets and apostles who wrote down the actual words were taking dictation from God. They did not create the Word of God. **The Creator is none other than the Holy Spirit.**

Acts 1:16 (NLT):

*¹⁶ “Brothers,” he said, “the Scriptures had to be fulfilled concerning Judas, who guided those who arrested Jesus. **This was predicted long ago by the Holy Spirit, speaking through King David.***

Prophecy is not spoken as a result of the will of man but by special holy men and women that were told what to write by the Holy Spirit of God. The pen of Paul was the means by which the Holy Spirit declared the truth of God.

“So the Word of God is God-breathed. Scripture is God-breathed, God-inspired, God-empowered, and God-activated. Just as God breathed the breath of life into Adam's body (Gen. 2:7), He breathed His own divine life into the very words of Scripture—not just some Scripture but *all* Scripture. It is all verbally inspired; it is all divinely inspired.”⁸

Paul goes on to say that the Bible is “profitable (useful) for teaching (Romans, Ephesians, Thessalonians), for reproof (criticism, conviction, making us feel guilty) for correction (redirecting a person’s life to do the right thing), for training in righteousness;” The Word of God, the Bible, is provided to human beings as a manual for living our daily lives.

Paul's epistles⁹ to the churches teach these "profitable" functions of the Word of God. Romans deals with Christ's *cross*, Ephesians with Christ's *church*, and 1 and 2 Thessalonians with Christ's Second Coming.¹⁰

Romans is followed by 1 and 2 Corinthians and Paul’s reproof of the Christ followers in Corinth for not living up to the teaching of the epistle to the Romans. The Corinthians did not apply the teachings of the cross to their lives.

Then comes Galatians which is concerned with *correction*. Paul corrected the believers of Galatia because they also weren’t following the teaching of the epistle to the Romans. The

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ EPISTLE (e-PIS-1) is a Greek word meaning "letter." Many books of the New Testament were actually letters written to Christians in various cities. Some of these letters are Ephesians, Galatians Romans, 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians, Philippians and Colossians. (Col. 4:16; 1 Thes. 5:27; 2 Thes. 3:17; 2 Peter 3:16), *International Children's Bible Dictionary*, (Nashville, TN: Tommy Nelson, 1989), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "epistle".

¹⁰ Op. Cit., Phillips, 426-430.

Galatians were chartering a course away from the teaching of the cross to "another gospel" (Gal. 1:6).

“Like Romans, Ephesians is followed by an epistle that is concerned with *reproof*: the letter to the Philippians. In it, Paul reproved Euodias and Syntyche, whose squabbling had destroyed the teaching in Ephesians about the oneness of the body of Christ.”¹¹

“Following the pattern, Philippians is followed by Colossians, which is concerned with *correction*. Paul corrected the Colossians because of a doctrinal departure from the teaching in the book of Ephesians. A dangerous cult that attacked the headship and lordship of Christ had sprung up in Colossae.”¹² The Thessalonian letters are the final epistles in the New Testament.

“Paul further stated that Scripture is useful for ‘instruction in righteousness.’ The word translated ‘instruction’ is *paideia*, and refers to the education and training of children.” When used in connection with the Word of God, *paideia* also conveys the idea of disciplining or punishing. “‘Instruction,’ therefore recommends Christian discipline and development of Christian character.” The Holy Spirit uses the Bible to train us in righteousness. It commands us. It convicts, corrects, and counsels us. It controls us, praises us, and comforts us.¹³

“Paul makes one more statement here about the Bible.” He wrote of its purpose: John 1:14 (NLT):¹⁴

¹⁴ So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son.

And we should reflect that glory to others, 2 Corinthians 3:2 (MSG):

² You yourselves are all the endorsement we need. Your very lives are a letter that anyone can read by just looking at you.

Paul called Timothy a "man of God" in 1Timothy 6:11. Now he told Timothy that being a man of God included living according to the Holy Scriptures in his daily life. The goal is to be "perfect [*artios*]." The Greek word means "complete." The Word of God is meant to change us to live our lives within God's will. We could say, then, that the Holy Scriptures Timothus with all of the equipment we need to live lives that reveal our good works. The Bible directs our paths to do the will and work of God in a hostile world.¹⁵

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.