



WEEK 2

1ST SEMESTER · FOUNDATION & IDENTITY

The Divine Authority and Sufficiency of Scripture

A Four-Part Bible Study on God's Word

SPIRITUAL THEME

The Authority of the Bible

PERSONAL THEME

Honesty – living in truth and transparency

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1

LESSON

The Foundation: Scripture is Breathed Out by God

Part A: Introduction to the Topic

Welcome, students, to this important study series. We are going to study one of the most basic truths of our faith: the divine authority and sufficiency of the Holy Bible.

Defining Our Terms

Let us begin with a clear and simple definition.

Divine Authority: The Bible has the full right to tell us what to believe and how to live. Why? Because it comes directly from God Himself. It is not just a collection of human ideas. It is God's own Word to us. That is why it is our final authority. So if we love God with all our heart, we should love His word in the same way.

Sufficiency: The Bible has everything we need to know for salvation and for living a life that pleases God. We do not need to add anything—not human traditions, not philosophies of the world, not new revelations. God has already given us all we need in His Word.

Why This is Our Foundation

This teaching is the rock on which all other Christian beliefs are built. If the Bible is not God's Word, then our faith is only built on the weak and changing opinions of men. But since it is God's Word, our faith has a strong and unshakable foundation in eternal truth.

For every follower of Jesus, the Bible is our food for growth, our lamp in the darkness, and the sword of the Spirit in spiritual battle. To understand its divine origin is necessary for our walk with God.

Our Journey Through Scripture

In this series, we will build our understanding on four important passages in the New Testament. Each lesson will focus on one key passage:

- **2 Timothy 3:16–17** – The Source of Scripture: It comes directly from God.
- **2 Peter 1:20–21** – The Process of Scripture: How God gave His Word through human authors.
- **Hebrews 4:12** – The Power of Scripture: What the Word of God does in our hearts and lives.
- **John 17:17** – The Purpose of Scripture: Why God gave us His Word.

Now let us begin with the first and most basic passage.

Part B: Detailed Exposition of Key Scripture 1 – 2 Timothy 3:16–17

1. Scripture Reading

*"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."
(2 Timothy 3:16–17)*

2. Detailed Analysis

Context: A Final Charge in a Time of Crisis

To understand the power of these verses, we must see the situation in which they were written. This is not a letter from a relaxed professor in a library. This is Paul's last letter, written from a cold Roman prison, shortly before he was killed for his faith.

Paul's Situation: This was Paul's second time in prison in Rome. It was much harder than the first (see Acts 28). He was arrested during the cruel persecution under Emperor Nero. In AD 64, a big fire destroyed much of Rome. Nero blamed the Christians for it. Paul was now in a dark, wet dungeon, treated like a criminal. He knew his death was near (2 Timothy 4:6). Many friends had left him in fear. This letter is Paul's last testimony, his final words to his closest coworker and friend.

Timothy's Situation: Timothy was the young pastor of the church in Ephesus, a rich and powerful port city in Asia Minor (today's Turkey). It was full of trade, but also full of idols and the famous temple of Artemis. Timothy's work was hard. False teachers had also come into the church. They claimed to be Christians, but they taught dangerous lies. This was heavy pressure for a young leader.

Paul knew his own time was almost over. He could not guide Timothy much longer. So what was his final, urgent instruction? He did not tell Timothy to use his own wisdom, or political power, or new human ideas. He told him to hold firmly to the one thing that never changes: the Holy Scriptures, which Timothy had known since childhood.

This statement about the Bible's authority is not only theory. It is the main weapon of a pastor in spiritual battle. It is the anchor of the church when leaders are gone.

3. Verse-by-Verse Breakdown

**Verse 16a: "All Scripture is God-breathed..."*

This is the key truth of the whole passage. "All Scripture" (Greek: *pasa graphe*) first meant the Old Testament writings that Timothy had learned from his mother and grandmother. But the truth also includes the New Testament writings. The main point is its source: "God-breathed." This means

Scripture comes from the very mouth of God. It is not man's thoughts about God. It is God's own words to man. This is the foundation of divine authority.

**Verse 16b: "...and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness..."*

Because Scripture is from God, it is perfectly useful for every part of our spiritual life. It was Timothy's best weapon against false teaching.

- **Teaching:** It tells us what is true about God, about ourselves, and about salvation.
- **Rebuking:** It shows us when we are wrong in belief or behavior. It exposes sin and error.
- **Correcting:** It shows us how to return to the right way.
- **Training in righteousness:** It teaches us how to stay on the right path and grow in holy living.

**Verse 17: "...so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."*

This verse shows the result of using Scripture. "Servant of God" first means Timothy as a leader, but it also applies to every believer. The purpose of the Bible is to make us complete and ready for God's work.

The word "thoroughly equipped" is very strong. It means fully supplied, like a soldier with all weapons or a ship fully prepared for a journey. A soldier who is fully equipped does not need anything else. In the same way, the Bible makes us complete for every good work. We do not need to add human traditions, politics, or new revelations. The Bible is enough.

4. Key Word Studies

- **God-breathed** (*theopneustos*, Strong's G2315) – This word means "breathed out by God." Paul probably created this word to show this deep truth: Scripture comes directly from the Spirit of God. It is not like a poet being "inspired." It is the very breath of God. That is why it has divine authority.
- **Thoroughly equipped** (*exartizo*, Strong's G1822) – This verb means "completely supplied." It shows the sufficiency of Scripture: the Bible alone gives us everything we need for life and service.

Main Truth: With the Bible in your hands, you already have everything you need to know God, to grow in Him, and to serve Him fully.

Key Word Studies

To understand this passage fully, let us look at two key Greek words.



Key Word (English)	Greek Word (Transliteration)	Strong's No.	Core Meaning & Significance in this Passage
God-breathed	<i>theopneustos</i>	G2315	This unique word literally means "breathed out by God." Paul likely created this word to express a profound truth: Scripture comes directly from the Spirit of God. It is not simply "inspired" in the way a poet is inspired. It is the very product of God's own breath. This is the source of its divine authority.
Thoroughly equipped	<i>exartizō</i>	G1822	This verb means "to furnish perfectly" or "to equip completely." It communicates the idea of being supplied with everything necessary for a task. This word demonstrates the doctrine of the <i>sufficiency</i> of Scripture. The Bible alone gives us everything we need for a life of faith and service.

2

LESSON

The Process: Scripture is from God, Not Man

Part A: Review and Connection

In our first lesson, we learned the foundational truth from 2 Timothy 3:16-17. We saw that all Scripture is "God-breathed" (*theopneustos*), meaning its *source* is God Himself, which gives it divine authority. We also learned that it is able to make us "thoroughly equipped" (*exartizō*), which means it is completely sufficient for our faith and life.

Now, we must ask a very important question: If Scripture comes from God, but it was written down by men, *how* did God do this? This lesson will focus on the *process* God used to give us His Word.

Part B: Detailed Exposition of Key Scripture 2: 2 Peter 1:20-21

1. Scripture Reading

"Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:20-21)

2. Detailed Analysis

Context: Certainty in the Face of Deception

The Apostle Peter, like Paul, is writing as an old man, likely from Rome, shortly before his martyrdom. He is writing to a group of churches in Asia Minor who were being troubled by a dangerous internal threat: false teachers.

The Historical Threat: These were not honest teachers with minor disagreements. Peter describes them in strong terms. They arose from *within* the church community. Their teaching was a denial of the core truths of the faith, even "denying the Lord who bought them." Their character was marked by greed, arrogance, and sensual, immoral living. They despised divine authority and promised their followers "freedom," but this was a freedom to sin, which actually leads to bondage. Historically, Peter saw this as a repeating pattern. He compares these men directly to the false prophets in the Old Testament, like Balaam, who for personal gain tried to lead Israel into sin and idolatry. The threat was severe: these "destructive heresies" could lead immature believers astray and bring blasphemy upon the way of truth.

To combat this, Peter wants to give the believers a firm, objective foundation so they will not be deceived. He points to two things they can be certain of. First, the apostles' own eyewitness testimony of seeing Jesus' glory on the mountain (2 Peter 1:16-18). But second, he says they have something "even more certain": the prophetic word of Scripture (2 Peter 1:19). Our key verses, 20 and 21, explain *why* Scripture is so certain and trustworthy. The reason is its divine origin and process.

Verse-by-Verse Breakdown

**Verse 20: "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things."*

The term "prophecy of Scripture" refers to the divinely inspired writings of the Bible, especially the Old Testament prophetic books. Peter's main point here is about the origin of the message. A biblical writer did not just look at the world, invent his own ideas about God, and then write them down. That would be his "own interpretation." Instead, the message he wrote came from outside of himself; it came from God. This directly counters the false teachers, who were inventing their own self-serving doctrines.

**Verse 21a: "For prophecy never had its origin in the human will..."*

This statement makes the same point even clearer. A true prophet of God did not wake up one day and decide, "I think I will write a chapter of the Bible today." The message did not come from his own choice, ambition, or desire. This is the complete opposite of the false teachers, who speak from their own sinful will and desires. True Scripture has a divine source, while false teaching has a human source.

**Verse 21b: "...but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."*

Here, Peter gives the positive explanation of the process. God used real human beings—"prophets, though human"—to write His Word. These men were not robots or mindless dictation machines. They used their own minds, their own vocabularies, their own writing styles, and their own personalities. Luke did historical research. David wrote emotional poetry. Paul wrote with complex logic. They were fully involved in the writing.

However, as they wrote, the Holy Spirit was the one "carrying them along." This beautiful picture shows us that while the human authors were active, the Holy Spirit was the primary force, guiding and directing them to ensure that the final words they wrote were exactly and perfectly the words of God. This is often called the doctrine of "concurrence," meaning God's will and the human author's will worked together perfectly.

This makes the Bible the objective, unchanging standard of truth. When someone brings a new teaching, the question is not, "Is the teacher popular?" or "Does it make me feel good?" The only question is, "Does this teaching agree with the Word that came from God, not from human will?"

Key Word Studies

Let's examine two key words that help us understand this divine-human process.

Key Word (English)	Greek Word (Transliteration)	Strong's No.	Core Meaning & Significance in this Passage
Prophecy	<i>prophēteia</i>	G4394	This refers to a message that comes from divine inspiration, declaring the purposes of God. In this context, it refers to the written Scriptures. It is God's revealed truth, not a human opinion or a personal guess.
Carried along	<i>pherō</i>	G5342	This verb means to be borne, carried, or moved by an external force. It is the same word used in Acts 27 to describe a ship being driven by a powerful wind. The ship and its sailors are active, but the wind provides the power and direction. This shows that the Holy Spirit was the primary author of Scripture, guiding the human writers to produce God's perfect Word.

3

LESSON

The Power: Scripture is Living and Active

Part A: Review and Connection

Let us quickly review our journey. In Lesson 1, we learned that the *source* of all Scripture is God Himself; it is "God-breathed". In Lesson 2, we learned about the *process*: God used human authors, but the Holy Spirit "carried them along" so that the words they wrote were precisely God's words.

Now, in Lesson 3, we will discover the *power* of this divine book. Since it comes from the living God, what does it *do* when it enters our lives? What is its effect?

Part B: Detailed Exposition of Key Scripture 3: Hebrews 4:12

1. Scripture Reading

"For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12)

2. Detailed Analysis

Context: The Urgent Call to Enter God's Rest

The book of Hebrews was written to a community of first-century Jewish Christians. Historically, these believers were under intense pressure and persecution. They were tempted to abandon their new faith in Jesus as the Messiah and return to the more familiar and socially acceptable system of Old Covenant Judaism, with its temple rituals and sacrifices. The entire book is an argument to show them that Jesus is superior to everything in the old system and that to turn back would be a terrible mistake.

To make his point, the author uses a powerful historical example in chapters 3 and 4: the generation of Israelites who God rescued from slavery in Egypt. God promised to lead them into a place of "rest"—the physical Promised Land of Canaan. However, when they reached the border, they refused to trust God to give them victory. Because of their unbelief and disobedience, God declared that this entire generation would not enter His rest; they died in the wilderness instead.

The author of Hebrews applies this historical failure directly to his readers as a solemn warning. He says that the promise of entering God's "rest" still stands for believers today. But this is not a physical land; it is the spiritual rest of salvation—a rest of peace with God and ceasing from our own efforts to earn righteousness. He urges them, "Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience" (Hebrews 4:11). Our key verse, verse 12, explains *why* this warning is so urgent. It is because the Word of God is a

powerful, living force that exposes the very unbelief in our hearts that could keep us from entering God's true rest.

Verse-by-Verse Breakdown

**Verse 12a: "For the word of God is alive and active."*

The Bible is not a collection of dead stories or ancient rules. It is "alive" (Greek, *zao*) because it comes from the living God. It has His life in it. It is also "active" or "powerful" (Greek, *energes*, where we get our word "energy"). This means the Word works. It has energy. It accomplishes God's purposes and has the power to change us from the inside out.

**Verse 12b: "Sharper than any double-edged sword..."*

This is a powerful image of the Word's effectiveness. In the Roman world, a double-edged sword was a fearsome military weapon that could cut deeply from any angle. The Word of God is precise and powerful, able to cut through all our defenses, excuses, and self-deception. Paul calls it the "sword of the Spirit" in Ephesians 6:17.

**Verse 12c: "...it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow..."*

This shows the depth of the Word's work. It does not just scratch the surface of our lives; it performs a kind of spiritual surgery. It is so precise that it can distinguish between the parts of us that are merely human and psychological (the "soul") and the parts that are truly spiritual (the "spirit"). It gets to the deepest, most hidden places of our being, places we cannot even reach ourselves.

**Verse 12d: "...it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."*

The word for "judges" here is *kritikos*. It means "able to discern" or "skilled in judging." The Word of God acts like a divine critic. It examines and evaluates our secret motives, our hidden thoughts, and our deepest intentions, revealing them for what they truly are. We cannot hide our hearts from the Word of God.

This means that we can never have a neutral encounter with the Bible. When we read or hear God's Word, it is actively *doing* something in us. It is either bringing life and drawing us into God's rest through faith, or it is exposing and judging our unbelief. The Word itself demands a response. This should change how we see our Bible reading. It is not a passive duty; it is an active, life-changing encounter with the living God.

Key Word Studies

These two Greek terms reveal the dynamic nature of God's Word.

Key Word (English)	Greek Word (Transliteration)	Strong's No.	Core Meaning & Significance in this Passage
Living / Active	<i>zao / energeis</i>	G1756, G2198	"Alive" and "full of energy/power." The Word is not a static object like other books. It contains the very life and power of God, and it is always actively working in the world and in the hearts of people.
Able to judge	<i>kritikos</i>	G2924	"Skilled in judging" or "able to discern." This highlights the Word's unique ability to analyze and reveal our innermost thoughts and motives with perfect, surgical precision. It is the ultimate critic of the human heart.



LESSON

The Purpose and Final Application of Scripture

Part A: Review and Connection

We have now built a strong, three-pillared foundation for our understanding of the Bible.

- From Lesson 1, we know Scripture's *source* is God Himself (2 Timothy 3:16).
- From Lesson 2, we know the *process* by which God gave it, using men carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21).
- From Lesson 3, we know its *power*—it is living and active, able to judge our hearts (Hebrews 4:12).

Now we arrive at the final and most important question: *Why*? What is the ultimate purpose for which God has given us this authoritative, sufficient, and powerful Word? For the answer, we turn to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Part B: Detailed Exposition of Key Scripture 4: John 17:17

1. Scripture Reading

"Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." (John 17:17)

2. Detailed Analysis

Context: Jesus' Final Prayer for His People

This verse is a jewel taken from the longest recorded prayer of Jesus in the Bible, found in John 17. It is often called Jesus' "High Priestly Prayer" because in it, He acts as our great High Priest, interceding for His people before the Father.

The Historical Setting: The setting is incredibly sacred and emotional. This prayer is offered on the night before Jesus' crucifixion, in the final hours of His earthly life. He has just finished His last meal with His disciples (the Last Supper) and delivered His final teachings to them, known as the Upper Room Discourse (John chapters 13-16). In these teachings, He washed their feet as an example of love, predicted Judas's betrayal, warned Peter of his denial, and promised to send the Holy Spirit. He is now on His way to the Garden of Gethsemane, where He will be arrested.

The Nature of the Prayer: This is not a prayer of desperation, but of holy purpose. Jesus prays with His eyes lifted to heaven, speaking with the Father about the completion of His mission. The prayer has three parts:

1. He prays for Himself, that the Father would glorify Him so He can complete the work of the cross (John 17:1-5).
2. He prays for His eleven disciples who are with Him (John 17:6-19).
3. He prays for all future believers—that includes you and me (John 17:20-26).

Jesus knows He is about to leave His followers and send them out into a world that will be hostile to them. He has just told them, "I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world" (John 17:14). His prayer is for their spiritual protection and for their success in their mission. Our key verse, John 17:17, is the very heart of His prayer for how they will survive spiritually and fulfill their calling in a fallen world.

Verse-by-Verse Breakdown

**Verse 17a: "Sanctify them by the truth..."*

This is Jesus' direct request to God the Father. The word "sanctify" (Greek, *hagiazō*) is a rich theological term. It means to make holy, to cleanse from sin, and most importantly, to set something or someone apart from common, worldly use for a special, divine purpose. When Jesus prays this, He is asking the Father to separate His followers from the sin and falsehood of the world and to dedicate them completely to God's service. The tool, or agent, that accomplishes this sanctification is "the truth."

**Verse 17b: "...your word is truth."*

Jesus does not leave us guessing what this "truth" is. He defines it immediately and absolutely: "your word is truth." The Father's Word—the Holy Scriptures—is the instrument God uses to make

His people holy. The Word of God is not just something that contains true statements; it is truth itself. The Greek word for truth, *alētheia*, means more than just factual correctness; it means ultimate reality, the way things truly are, as opposed to illusion or falsehood.

This verse provides the ultimate purpose for everything we have learned.

- *Why* is Scripture God-breathed and authoritative? So that it can be the reliable truth that sets us apart.
- *Why* was it so carefully given through the Holy Spirit? To protect its purity as the sanctifying truth.
- *Why* is it living and active, piercing our hearts? To perform the spiritual surgery needed to cut away sin and make us holy.

The final goal of Scripture is not just to give us information, but to cause our transformation. Its highest purpose is to take a worldly person and make them into a holy person, set apart for the glory of God.

Key Word Studies

These final two words summarize the goal of our relationship with the Bible.

Key Word (English)	Greek Word (Transliteration)	Strong's No.	Core Meaning & Significance in this Passage
Sanctify	<i>hagiazō</i>	G37	To make holy; to set apart from the world and dedicate to God for His special purpose. This is the ultimate goal of the Word in a believer's life. It is the process of becoming more like Christ.
Truth	<i>alētheia</i>	G225	Not just true facts, but reality itself. God's Word does not just contain truth; it <i>is</i> truth. It is the foundation of reality and the standard by which everything else must be measured.

Part C: Synthesis of Biblical Teaching

Now, let us bring all four of our pillars together to build a complete structure of this doctrine. From our study of these four key passages, we can state several core theological truths about the Word of God.

Core Theological Statements

1. **The Doctrine of Inspiration:** All Scripture is the direct product of the breath of God (*theopneustos*), which gives it absolute and final divine authority in all matters of faith and life (2 Timothy 3:16).

2. **The Doctrine of Concurrence:** God worked through human authors, with their unique personalities and styles, so the Bible is fully human. Yet the Holy Spirit superintended the entire process, carrying them along (*pherō*) so that the result is fully and perfectly the Word of God (2 Peter 1:21).
3. **The Doctrine of Efficacy:** The Word of God is not a dead letter but is living (*zao*) and powerful (*energes*). It is used by the Holy Spirit to penetrate the human heart, expose sin and unbelief, and bring about spiritual transformation (Hebrews 4:12).
4. **The Doctrine of Sufficiency:** Because Scripture is inspired by God and powerful in its effect, it is all we need to be "thoroughly equipped for every good work," making us complete and ready for salvation and a life of service (2 Timothy 3:17).
5. **The Doctrine of Sanctification by the Word:** The ultimate purpose of God's true (*alētheia*) and authoritative Word is to sanctify believers—to set them apart from the world and make them holy for His service and glory (John 17:17).

Part D: Core Principles for Life and Faith

These great theological doctrines are not just for our heads; they are for our hearts and our hands. They lead to simple, powerful, and unshakeable principles for our daily lives as followers of Jesus.

Unshakeable Truths for Every Believer

1. **Your Bible is a direct message from the Creator of the universe to you.** When you hold your Bible, you are holding a book that was breathed out by God Himself. You can trust it more than any other voice. It is your solid rock.
2. **You have everything you need for your faith in the Word of God.** You do not need to be rich, powerful, or have a high position to be a complete Christian. God's Word is sufficient to equip you for every single thing He calls you to do.
3. **The Bible is meant to read you while you read it.** As you open the Scriptures, expect it to be alive and active. Allow it to be the "double-edged sword" that searches your heart, exposes your sin, and heals your unbelief. Come to the Word not just to learn, but to be changed.
4. **The goal of reading the Bible is to become more like Jesus.** The Word is God's primary tool to make you holy (to sanctify you). The more you fill your mind and heart with its truth, the more you will be set apart from the world and set apart for His glory.

Questions for Personal Reflection

Take some time this week to quietly think and pray about these questions. Let the Holy Spirit apply these truths to your heart.

1. If I truly believe the Bible is "God-breathed," how should that change the priority and the attitude I have when I approach it each day?



2. In what specific area of my life do I need the "double-edged sword" of God's Word to do its work of correcting and training me right now?
3. Since the Bible is sufficient to equip me for *every* good work, what is one "good work" (an act of service, love, or obedience) that I can do this week, trusting that God's Word has already prepared me for it?
4. Jesus prayed for me to be made holy by His Word. How can I cooperate with His prayer for me this week by the way I read, study, and obey the Scriptures?