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God's Word Series **Background of God's Word**

2 Timothy 2:15 – Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed, and who correctly handles the word of truth.

Presuppositions: (with help from seminary prof. Brent Schlittenhart, PhD)

I (Pastor Stan) believe ...

- There is a supreme being we call God.
- God is sovereign (has ultimate authority & control) over all things, but gives freedom to choose for or against Him.
- God continuously relates to His creation.
- Relating to God requires faith. Every belief system (including atheism) is faith.
- The *Bible* is the clearest way God reveals himself to people.
 - (Other - creation, conscience, H.S., others, circumstances)

God's Written Word

2 Timothy 3:16 - "All scripture is God-breathed, and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness."

Question: *Who wrote the Bible?*

Answer: *Men*

Three "Modes" of God's Word:

- Living Word (**John 1:1, 14**)
- Spoken Word (**1 Peter 4:11**)
- Written Word (**2 Timothy 3:16**)

40 men, over 1400 years, in different occupations, different settings, different audiences, yet with a common theme:

An exalted and loving God pursuing and repairing a broken relationship with his beloved humanity.

God's Inspired Word, (God-breathed)

2 Timothy 3:16 - “*All* scripture is God-breathed, and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.”

2 Peter 1:20-21 – ²⁰Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. ²¹For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Example of a man's writings considered scripture:

2 Peter 3:15-16 - ¹⁵Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. ¹⁶He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

The Bible is a partnership between God and man

God's Spiritual Word

Bible Interpretation is ...
Interpretation of Information that leads to Transformation.

God's Word has a Spiritual purpose.

God's Word ministers to us.

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

Understanding God's Word requires God's help

- **1 Corinthians 2:14** - The man without the spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.
- **Psalms 119:18** - Open my eyes that I may see wondrous things in your law.

God's Powerful Word.

Jeremiah 23:29 - “Is not my word like fire,” declares the LORD, “like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?”

Hebrews 4:12 - the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, it penetrates...”

God’s Word can transform lives *all by Itself*.

God's Word Series
Background of God's Word

Opening

Story: Ephesians 2:14 – He himself is our peace, who has made the two one, and has destroyed the barrier the dividing wall of hostility.

I learned many powerful and unforgettable lessons that day...
But the most important was that I need to improve in understanding God's Word before applying it.

(Pray)

Transition

Notes, Handouts

I've invited you to read the Bible daily, many of you told me you are doing it! PTL.

I want to help.

Goal – Correctly handle God's Word. It's our Responsibility...

2 Timothy 2:15 – Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed, and who correctly handles the word of truth.

We will not all be a Timothy, but we can all **improve**.

Can we agree that we can improve?

The goal of this section on understanding the Bible is to

- help everyone be more **thoughtful** about Bible reading.
- Not to feel lost, or intimidated or give up reading the Bible.
- Move forward toward Bible literacy and competence.

Our goal isn't for us to understand the whole Bible.
It is to understand the Holy Bible (get it?)
The Bible is waaaay too deep and spiritual for anyone to understand it all!

Body

Presuppositions: (help from seminary prof. Brent Schlittenhart)
I believe ...

- There is a supreme being we call God.
- God is sovereign (has ultimate authority) over all things, but gives freedom to choose for or against Him.
- God Continuously relates to His creation.
- Relating to God requires faith. Every belief system (including atheism) is faith.
- The **Bible** is the clearest way God reveals himself to people.
 - (Other - creation, conscience, H.S., others, circumstances)

Let's begin with the tangible, the paper and text.

God's Written Word

2 Timothy 3:16 - "All scripture is God-breathed, and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness."

3 modes of God's Word:

- Living Word – Still living today! (reaching Muslims)
 - John 1:1, 14
- Spoken Word – speak, preaching,

- **1 Peter 4:11** – If anyone speaks, he should do it as speaking the very words of God.
- Written Word – scripture, script, hand-written
 - 2 Timothy 3:16

These overlap

This Series – focus on God’s Written Word, Bible.

The Bible is a *written* text book. Or should I say it is a book of *written* texts. The written text is crucial.

- countless oral contributions to the Scriptures, but in the end, the Bible is a written book, a scripture book guided by God.

The importance of God’s written word cannot be understated. As God revealed His words, he used a form that was the most trustworthy to humanity – writing. Scripture.

Writing would provide the best possibility consistency and perpetuation throughout the ages.

This is why God told **Joshua**, Do not let this book of the Law depart from your mouth...

This is why the **kings** of Israel were instructed to read God’s Law and know it. Kings who read and followed the law did good, and prospered. Those who didn’t read and follow the Law did evil in the sight of the Lord.

Telephone game? Form two or more lines of people, give the first person in each line a message, and they need to tell the next

person. The group that at the end gets the message closest to the original message wins.

God knows how that game works. Now the ancients were very good at passing on oral history. Still, writing is more reliable. God provided a paper trail, upon which generations can be confident.

Who wrote the Bible?

Men wrote the Bible. The Bible did not fall out of heaven.

My Story

Men who were carried along and inspired to write as God prompted them.

The Bible is an altogether unique book! When I was young...

40 men, over **1400 years**, in different occupations, different settings, different audiences, yet with a common theme:

an exalted and loving God pursuing and repair of a broken relationship with his beloved humanity.

ALL of these put together, Genesis-Revelation, is the Bible.

Compare that to many other religious writings. Done by **one** person over a period of say, 30 years.

Isn't it interesting that by God's own criteria to validate a testimony - two or three witnesses - the Bible far surpasses that criteria.

As you read the Bible you will find internal corroboration of the testimony of other Bible authors.

God's Inspired Word, (God-breathed)

2 Timothy 3:16 - "All scripture is **God-breathed**, and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness."

All Scripture is God-Breathed. Not *some*, not *most*, but ALL.

Peter describes it like this...

2 Peter 1:20-21 – ²⁰Above all, you must understand that **no prophecy of scripture** came about by the prophet's own interpretation. ²¹For prophecy **never had its origin in the will of man**, but **men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit**.

Men were not the ultimate authors of the books in the Bible. Men were the instruments that the Author (capital "A") used. Of course for practical purposes we say that the author was so-and-so, and that's fine. We know what we're talking about. For example, **Paul** was the human author of Philippians.

In fact, Peter affirms Paul's writing as scripture.

2 Peter 3:15-16 - ¹⁵Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the **wisdom that God gave him**. ¹⁶He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the **other Scriptures**, to their own destruction.

Here we see Peter **includes** Paul's writings as Holy Scripture.

So, Bible → Collaboration, partnership between God and men.

Inspiration of God, guiding men in writing in various forms:

Text message, email, letter, card, post-it

We will cover interpreting Literary forms in upcoming sermons.

Because the Bible is God's Inspired Word, the Bible is...

God's **Spiritual** Word

The Bible is first and foremost, a **Spiritual** book.

- Although there is a physical component → spiritual.
- Not mere literature
- Not a science, finance, sociology, history, art, philosophy, psychology, poetry, astronomy, music, political science.
- As a **Spiritual** book...

Bible Interpretation is ...

Interpretation of Information that leads to Transformation.

- The Bible has a spiritual purpose
→ relationship between God and humanity.
- This is the **WHY**. Why did God give us the Bible?
- God describes the problem, the condition, the remedy.
- As a **Spiritual** Book, God desires to minister to us.
- **2 Timothy 3:16-17** – All scripture is God-breathed, and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- First, God teaches us, rebukes us, corrects us, trains us in righteousness, through His Word.
- Then God can use us to do the same for others.
- Here is the **WHAT**.
- **Information** -
 - I don't mean just data like information
 - ***Person (God Himself) + Content*** (the Bible)
 - God's Word guides us, and gives us wisdom.
 - His Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.
 - His Word reveals truth.
 - His Word provides everything we need for life and godliness.

This Information, content, does something to us...

- **Transformation** - God's Word transforms us from within.
But, Understanding God's Word requires **God's help**

- **1 Corinthians 2:14** - The man without the spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.
- **Psalm 119:18** - Open my eyes that I may see wondrous things in your law.

Because God's Word is Spiritual, it is Powerful...

God's Powerful Word.

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Hebrews 4:12 - the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, it penetrates..."

The Bible does not get its power by scientific, literary, or archaeological proof supporting the Bible's claims.

- The accuracy of Luke's gospel was doubted by critics because archaeology has not discovered anyone by that name. Then, in 1961 the Pontius Pilate stone was discovered.

But all generations of believers prior to that discovery did not need that archaeological proof to experienced the power of God in full. It's nice to have such verification, but totally unnecessary for God's power.)

The Bible does not get its power from

- medical journals explaining physical healings in the Bible.
- geologists explanations of how the Red Sea was parted, or
- astronomers on how the Bethlehem star moved in an unusual manner.

The Bible doesn't serve any other book. The Bible gets its power from the *inspiration of God*.

People who have no scientific proof, literary or archaeological proof, medical explanations can and do still experience the transforming power of God that flows from the Bible into peoples lives!

Listen –

God's Word can transform lives <i>all by itself</i> .

The word of God is living and active.

Next week we will talk about the Canon of Scripture