

Biblical Authority

Lesson 03 of the series, "The Centered Life"

A. At Centerpoint we value the Bible as our guide in all matters of faith and practice.

"How sweet your words taste to me; they are sweeter than honey. Your commandments give me understanding; no wonder I hate every false way of life. Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path." Psalm 119:103-105 (NLT)

"The sole basis for our belief is the Bible – the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments. The Bible is God's word to all people in all times. The entire Bible is uniquely God-breathed, without error, and the final authority on all matters of faith and practice." Centerpoint Statement of Beliefs

B. Three reasons why we trust the Bible as our guide.

1. The Bible is inspired.

"*Inspired*" = "God-breathed."

"Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God." 2 Peter 1:20-21 (NLT)

"Dear brothers and sisters, I want you to understand that the gospel message I preach is not based on mere human reasoning. I received my message from no human source, and no one taught me. Instead, I received it by direct revelation from Jesus Christ." Galatians 1:11-12 (NLT)

Life Application: We must embrace the Bible as a marvelous gift from God to help us.

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NLT)

"Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. But they delight in the law of the LORD, meditating on it day and night. They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do." Psalm 1:1-3 (NLT)

2. The Bible is truth.

"Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth." John 17:17 (NLT)

"And the one sitting on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new!" And then he said to me, "Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true." Revelation 21:5 (NLT)

Life Application: We must learn God's Word and put it into practice.

"But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it."

James 1:22-25 (NLT)

Life Application: We can boldly proclaim God's Word with confidence everywhere.

"Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching." 2 Timothy 4:2 (NLT)

"I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God's ambassador. So pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for him, as I should." Ephesians 6:20 (NLT)

3. The Bible is powerful.

"For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires."

Hebrews 4:12 (NLT)

"I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile. This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, 'It is through faith that a righteous person has life.'" Romans 1:16-17 (NLT)

"The rain and snow come down from the heavens and stay on the ground to water the earth. They cause the grain to grow, producing seed for the farmer and bread for the hungry. It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it." Isaiah 55:10-11 (NLT)

Note: Spreading God's Word is at the heart of the Great Commission.

- Acts 6:7 (NIV) "So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith."
- Acts 8:4 (NIV) "Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went."
- Acts 12:24 (NLT) "...the word of God continued to spread, and there were many new believers."
- Acts 19:9-10 (NIV) "But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord."

"...faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ." Romans 10:17 (NLT)

Life Application: The better we know God's Word the more useful we will be at spreading God's Word.

"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." 2 Timothy 2:15 (NIV)

John Schmidt / 09-27-15 / john@centeringlives.com

Discussion Questions

1. Looking back at your notes from this week's lesson on "Biblical Authority" was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?
2. Have you ever read the Bible cover to cover? If so, how did it impact your life? If not, what would help you get started?
3. What is your favorite story/passage/promise in the Bible? Why?
4. What claims does the Bible make about itself in the following verses?
 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17
 - Psalm 1:1-3
 - Hebrews 4:12
 - Isaiah 55:10-11
 - James 1:21-25

Why should we read the Bible? Why do many Christians fail to read their Bibles regularly?

5. Share one insight God has given you through your Bible reading lately. Pray for each other. Ask God to give everyone in your group a hunger for his Word.
6. Discuss the following quotations:

"The evidence for our New Testament writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for many writings of classical authors, the authenticity of which no one dreams of questioning . . . And if the New Testament were a collection of secular writings, their authenticity would generally be regarded as beyond all doubt." – F.F. Bruce, The New Testaments Documents: Are They Reliable?

"The sole basis for our belief is the Bible – the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments. The Bible is God's word to all people in all times. The entire Bible is uniquely God-breathed, without error, and the final authority on all matters of faith and practice." Centerpoint Statement of Beliefs

"It ain't the parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me, it's the parts that I do understand."
Mark Twain

"Defend the Bible? I would as soon defend a lion! Unchain it and it will defend itself." C H Spurgeon
7. Read the following passages from the book of Acts: 6:7,8:4,12:24. What role did the Bible play in the early church? What role does the Bible play in enabling Centerpoint to fulfill its mission and vision?