

From the Pulpit of the Japanese Baptist Church of North Texas
January 21, 2018

Training by the Bible

1 Timothy 3:14-17

3:14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it

3:15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

3:16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

3:17 that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

1. Inspiration of the Bible

When I was a high school student, I started to go to church, and my first memory verse was 2 Timothy 3:16. My church was built by a missionary from Dallas, and they believed firmly that the Bible is the Word of God. Many framed verses of the Bible are displayed in the worship hall and the small hall that the high schoolers used for their meeting. Every time I read “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,” I remember those days.

“All Scripture is breathed out by God ...,” this indicates “origin” of the Bible. When Adam was created, God breathed a life into his nose. In Genesis 2:7, “Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from

the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.” Just like this, God breathed his words into the Bible, and it became the Word of Life. The “origin” of the Bible is God Himself. The Bible was written by various people’s hands; however, the words came from God, and it is the Word of God. This is the foundation and the starting point of our faith. This is the most important doctrine, and it not enough to emphasize.

If the Bible came from God, it must be treated with great care. When you treat the Bible carefully, you need to use the tangible book of the Bible with great care. Once I had a visitor who came to a church first time and bought the Bible at the church. The person asked me if he can use the highlighter or write down marks in the scripture. He probably asked that question because he had seen people doing so. But he was afraid of doing so because he believed the Bible is too precious to write something on it. I was impressed at him because of his respecting attitude toward the Bible. We, Christians, get used to it, and don't treat it with great care anymore. I was really regrettable.

When I see the Bibles scattered around on the table in a Sunday school class room or the Bibles are used as a coaster of mug cup, I’m not comfortable. My friend told me that he does not put any books on the Bible. When he piles up the books, he puts the Bible on the top of pile. In a Catholic church, I saw a priest kissing a page of the Bible after he read a portion of the Gospel. I think that’s the attitude of his respect and love for the Bible. Some people think that kind of behavior is so external that it’s not necessary. But I believe, if you love and respect the Words of God, your behavior should change in a good way. The Bible is used be called “the Holy Bible.” It is “holy”

book. It is the gift from God. We shall be aware of it.

If you think you store the Bible in a show case and don't open it for keeping your Bible very clean, that's not the love to the Word of God. It can be said the Bible is the "Love Letter" from God. When you received a letter from your dearest, you read it over and over, think what it means, and want to tell your friends about it. The same as this, if you really love the Word of God, you must read it over and over, think the meaning of it, and want to put what you learn from it into practice. Outdated, worn-out Scripture because it has been read so many times, I think this is the sign of your love to the Word of God. You may find out someone's faith by seeing the person's Bible. If you believe the inspiration of the Bible, and know the Bible is God's Word, read it, learn from it, listen to its message, and share it. It will be your great joy. We know that the Bible is "the Word of God" so that we shall respect it, love it, learn from it, and keep it in our heart even more.

2. The Bible and Salvation

Today's verse teaches us not only the "origin" of the Bible but also the "purpose" of the Bible. The "purpose" of the Bible means why the Bible was written. We need to understand it so that we can read the Bible with the purpose, and learn from it in order to fulfill the purpose.

There are two purposes for the Bible. Firstly, leading people to salvation. According to 2 Timothy 3:15, "and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." The main

character of the Bible is Jesus Christ. The Old Testament points Messiah Lord Jesus Christ in the style of prophecy, and the New Testament shows Lord Jesus Christ who came as a human. We know him, believe in him, and are saved. The Bible speaks of Jesus Christ and teach us how to believe in him, and leads us to the salvation.

The Bible has been beloved and respected by the people all over the world. We made our moral principles based on the Bible and built our society according its teachings. The Bible is the source of inspiration for the literatures and arts, It's a guideline of human's life, and even a medicine for our mind. The Bible is a big resources for scholar's research. However, the primary purpose of the Bible is to teach Jesus Christ, faith in him, and to bring the people to the salvation. We can understand the Bible truly when we read it as "God's words leading us to the salvation."

When I read the Bible together with other persons, sometimes I met a person who read the Bible and understood the meanings very well, but does not have faith. On the contrary, I also met another person who seemed not understand the contents, but kept the message of the Bible with faith and joy. I was wondering why these things happen and realized the difference. The first person was reading the Bible as a "textbook." But, the second person was reading the Bible to find Jesus Christ, and he wanted to be saved by him. When you read the Bible according its own purpose, the message becomes yours and it leads you to the salvation. Let us read the Bible, learn from it, and tell about it to people remembering its own purpose.

3. The Bible and Training

The second purpose of the Bible is to train the saved people. 2 Timothy 2:16-17 says, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.”

If the Bible’s purpose is only to lead us the salvation, the Bible becomes useless after we believe in Jesus Christ. Not a bit of it! 1 Peter 1:23 says, “Since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.” “Born again” means that those who believed in Jesus Christ were saved, received new life, and became children of God. Therefore, this verse says that the Word of God led us to the salvation. And the verse is followed by the next verse. “Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation.” (1 Peter 2:2) The Word of God leads us to the salvation. But, it’s not the end of the role of the Word of God. Those who were saved by the Word of God continue to be nurtured and grow up by the Word of God.

The Bible describes those who were saved very recently as “newborn infants.” Babies need nutrition, care, and affection. The Bible is the spiritual nutrition for spiritual babies. The new believers should seek the Word of God even greedy and absorb it for the spiritual growth. However, when grew up to childhood from the stage of baby, you should read the Bible as your teacher and coach, and be trained by the Bible.

Timothy 2:16 says, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in

righteousness.” The original word of “training” of this verse means that parents or teachers give discipline to children in growth period. It means even “to use a whip for discipline.” Now, we have forgotten “discipline.” If we do not discipline our children, you will see the result soon. It is because we forget discipline that we see disorder and confusion of the society in this generation.

In the same manner, if those who were saved one is not be taught, reproofed, corrected, and trained by the Word of God, they will stay in the stage of baby, and never become “the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.” And the church which doesn’t have “the man of God” will lose the power of witnessing the world for Jesus Christ. No ones like correction and training, but no ones cannot really receive the Word of God. Their reading or studying will end up just a brain exercise. It never gives us spiritual growth or change of our life.

In “So, You Want To Be Like Christ?” that is a book I introduced previously, Dr. Chuck Swindoll wrote a story that he was trained by the Word of God. A couple of years after he and his wife were married, he had an obligation to fulfill in the military. He joined the Marine Corps. After completed at boot camp, he received the duty in San Francisco. It was the duty to envy, since many guys were going to hot deserts and Okinawa. There, everything was working and life was charming.

Then, an unexpected letter came in. It was one of those from letters the military sends out by the truckloads. When he opened the letter, he immediately noticed the printed signature at the bottom: Dwight D. Eisenhower, the president. It was the official order for him to change

from San Francisco to Okinawa. He checked the letter to make sure it was sent to him. No mistake.

He went to Okinawa with a big disappointment. But he met a man named Bob Newkirk on the island of Okinawa. Through Bob, Chuck encountered a verse, Philippians 3:10 and 11. It reads, “I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.” He repented that his faith became lukewarm in the days everything was all right. And he found his purpose of life was “to know Christ” and “to be like Christ.” This Bible verse changed his life. He has been changed to “the man of God” who could guide many people to God through the training by the Word of God.

I memorized 2 Timothy 3:16, “All Scripture is breathed out by God “ when I was young. The confidence, that the Bible is the Word of God, has supported my life. But, my heart goes to the following part when I read the verse after fifty years plus. The Bible has power of “teaching, reproof, correction, and training.” The Word of God can change us to “the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.” This is true. I can say with confidence that the Bible has such power because it is “breathed out by God.” We believe that the Bible is the Word of God. If so, let us ask God may change us through the training by the Bible. And let us prove that the Bible is the Word of God through our transformed life.

(Prayer)

Lord God, You gave us for our salvation and spiritual training. May

the seekers will come to Your salvation led by the Bible. May those who were saved will be transformed to the likeness of Christ also by the Bible. In such way, the purpose that You gave us the Bible will be fulfilled in our life. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.