

## Breathed Out by God

From childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

### **2 Timothy 3:15-16**

---

### Discussion Guide

Our faith in Jesus Christ must be a biblical faith.

The only reason we know anything about God — his nature, his attributes, and his requirements of man — is that He has chosen to reveal Himself to mankind through words. Romans 10:8-17 makes it clear that the only way for man to be saved is to have faith in Christ, and the only way to have faith in Christ is to hear from God through His word.

It is vitally important that we understand what the Bible is so that we can read it, hear it explained, and allow it to transform our lives. We should take the Bible seriously because our lives depend upon it.

If you've got an hour to listen, I'd recommend this message from John MacArthur on The Doctrine of Scripture. He does an outstanding job at explaining why the Bible is absolute truth and what makes it more trustworthy than anything else we might read or hear.

<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/DOC-1/doctrine-of-scripture>

If you don't get anything else from this discussion, know this. **You can always trust what The Bible is telling you.**

The doctrine of inerrancy has been the subject of our greatest controversies over the past 100 years of American church history. This doctrine teaches that because the Bible is the word of God, it cannot lie or contain errors. The Bible holds absolute authority over the church and Christians, even when it may contradict other sources of authority in our lives.

In 1978, churches across our nation were struggling with their positions on the authority of the Bible. To address this growing concern, Leading Christian scholars and pastors drafted and signed the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy. While this document should not be considered a creed or given the same weight as Scripture, it does give a clear definition to our belief that the Bible is "truth without any mixture of error."

I wholeheartedly agree with the affirmations of the Chicago Statement and highly recommend reading it. Perhaps it can help clarify the truth of Scripture in your own life.

<http://www.bible-researcher.com/chicago1.html>

Biblical inerrancy is not a popular position to take in our modern western culture.

People see it as ridiculous to say that God speaks through a document that is thousands of years old. What gives this document absolute authority over our lives?

Sometimes these voices even come from within the Christian church.

One former evangelical (now Catholic) Christian sociologist has written a book critical of our doctrine of Scripture. In it, he argues against “the problem of pervasive interpretive pluralism.” In other words, most people have a hard time believing the Bible as the authoritative word of God because they see people of faith have such a hard time agreeing on the meaning and interpretation of Scripture.

We have hundreds of denominations who will read the Bible thousands of different ways. How can we view something as inerrant and binding when we can’t even agree on what it is saying? The person who is only casually religious will throw up his hands and say “who can say anything with certainty as it pertains to the Bible?”

I suspect that many people within our church may fall into that same category.

We have a vague notion that the Bible is important, but we are often scared to study it and live by it because we don’t believe we can be absolutely certain about what it is saying.

The whole purpose of this series’ sermons and discussion guides are to give you confidence that you *should* intensely read the Bible and that you *can* know with certainty the main themes of what it is teaching you. That confidence will bear fruit as you discover the Bible as authoritative and life-changing.

The fancy word for what you will be learning is hermeneutics. Don’t panic at my theological geekery. This word just means you will be learning basic methods for reading and interpreting Scripture consistently.

After the Chicago Statement was released, it was widely questioned by theological liberals. They ridiculed its assertion that all of the Bible is factual and should be taken as literally as possible.

Obviously, some passages (Revelation, for instance) have elements that are meant to be taken more figuratively than literally. This is where the process of hermeneutics becomes vitally important.

Some of the basic principles of hermeneutics are outlined in another Chicago Statement on

Biblical Hermeneutics, signed in 1982.

<http://www.bible-researcher.com/chicago2.html>

As you read the Bible, remember these basic things:

1. There is unity in the entire Bible because it has one divine Author.
2. We must take into account the genre, setting, and human authorship of each passage so that there is proper context to what we are reading.
3. God means to say what the Bible says. There are no “hidden codes” or secret meanings.
4. The best way to understand one passage is to allow other passages to make it clear.
5. Jesus is the point!

### Discussion Questions

- What keeps you from taking the Bible as seriously as you should?
- Do you have doubts that the Bible is inerrant and authoritative? Where do those doubts come from in your own life? How do you answer those doubts?
- Do you have a hunger to ask questions of Scripture? Is it possible that seeking answers to questions will harm your faith? Why or why not?
- Which Bible passage do you least understand? How can you use hermeneutics to help you better understand it? Can Scripture give you more confidence in Scripture?