**More Like the Master**

In His Use of Scripture (Part 2)

Lesson 9

*“Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction,*

*for instruction which is in righteousness. That the man of God may be complete,*

*furnished completely unto every good work”* (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

**God-Breathed Scripture**

 While the word of God was central to the life of Jesus, it is not so with many people today. There are many who do not read the scriptures or understand them. They are either too busy or too unconcerned to care about reading God’s word. They simply do not appreciate how important God’s word is to all mankind. There is ignorance and indifference toward the Bible today both in the world and in the Lord’s church.

 How important is God’s word? The Apostle Paul wrote: *“Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work”* (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Here, Paul gives us three reasons why scripture is important. First, scripture is “inspired of God”. Literally, these words mean “God breathed”. Every scripture is important because it is literally the “God-breathed”, word of God. Second, scripture is “profitable”. Every scripture is important because, when read and obeyed, it will profit us greatly in every aspect of righteous living. Third, scripture makes us “complete”. Every scripture is important because, when read and obeyed, it will make us “complete” and whole in doing the good work of serving God. We will lack for nothing in our service to God when we read, understand, and apply in our life every God-breathed scripture.

 In our last lesson we looked at how Jesus approached the scriptures. He knew them, believed them, respected them, obeyed them, taught them, and used them in his daily living. In this lesson, we will study how Christians today can follow Jesus’ example in his attitude toward the scriptures.

**The Christian and Scripture**

 We need to know the scriptures. Christians today need to be spending more time reading the scriptures or listening to them read. We need to be like the noble Beroeans who examined and searched the scriptures daily (Acts 17:11). We need to be like Apollos who was *“mighty in the scriptures”* (Acts 18:24) and one who could show by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 18:28). Do we know what our Bible says? Paul asked, *“What does the scripture say?”* (Romans 4:3; see also 9:17; 10:11; 11:2; Galatians 4:30). Can we answer this question? Can we tell others what the scripture says? Yes, we can and we must read and understand God’s word and will (Ephesians 3:4; 5:17). Scripture reading was encouraged among New Testament Christians, both publically in the local church (Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27) and privately (1 Timothy 4:13). The same reading of scripture needs to be encouraged today. Like the Eunuch, when we spend our time reading the scriptures, we will be greatly rewarded (Acts 8:28,30,32). We need more preachers, teachers, and church members today who know their Bible from beginning to end. If someone took your Bible, or your Bible got misplaced, how long would it take for you to miss it?

 Christians are supposed to handle accurately the word of God (2 Timothy 2:15). But, if we do not read and know God’s word and we try to use it, we will ignorantly twist and distort it to our own destruction (2 Peter 3:16). If we do not read and know God’s word, we might misuse scripture like the Devil did with Jesus (Matthew 4:6). If we do not know God’s word and are ignorant of it, we will be destroyed for a lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6). Realizing this, let us daily add to our faith the knowledge of God’s word (2 Peter 1:5) and let us grow in that knowledge (2 Peter 3:18).

 We need to believe the scriptures. Christians today, like Jesus’ own disciples, need to come to a belief in the truthfulness of the scripture (John 2:22). Christians need to believe that the scriptures are the *“inspired”,* God-breathed word of God (2 Timothy 3:16). Peter wrote, *“no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation”* (2 Peter 1:20); that is, no scripture originates with the word of men. Scripture is the written words of men moved by the Holy Spirit. Scripture is the God-breathed, Spirit-inspired words recorded by men. Scripture is the very *“oracle”* (word) of God (Acts 7:38; Romans 3:2; Hebrews 5:12; 1 Peter 4:11). We can believe and trust the written word of God today because it is a confirmed word. God’s word was confirmed by miraculous powers in the first century (Mark 16:20; Luke 1:2; Hebrews 2:3), so we can trust it today in the twenty-first century. When we truly believe the scriptures to be God’s word, we will be moved to speak to others about our belief in them (2 Corinthians 4:13).

 We need to respect the scriptures. Christians today need to respect God’s word. Paul calls God’s word *“the holy scriptures”* (Romans 1:2) and *“the sacred writings”* (2 Timothy 2:15). The scriptures are “holy” and “sacred” (sanctified, set apart) and we need to respect them as such. The paper, the ink, and the cover of our Bible are not holy, but the message of our Bible indeed is “holy” and “sacred”. One way we can show respect for God’s word is not to allow our human traditions to void God’s word (Matthew 15:6; Mark 7:13). Another way we can show respect for God’s word is to refuse to alter it in any way (Revelation 22:18-19).

 We need to obey the scriptures. Christians today need to obey God’s word. Jesus taught in the parable of the sower the importance of hearing God’s word, understanding it, accepting it, holding it fast, and bringing forth fruit (Matthew 13:23; Mark 4:20; Luke 8:15). Jesus said that one is blessed when he hears the word of God and does it (Luke 8:21; see also Luke 11:28). The very reason the scriptures were revealed to us was *“unto obedience of faith”* (Romans 16:26). There are many things that God has chosen not to reveal to mankind, but we have the written word of God to obey (Deuteronomy 29:29). It is not enough merely to read or hear God’s word, we must obey it. Jesus said that his disciples show their love for him by keeping his words (John 14:23-24). John wrote, *“Blessed is he that reads, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein…”* (Revelation 1:3). It is important to obey God’s word because we are going to be judged in the last day by Jesus’ words (John 12:48) and those things that are written in God’s word (Revelation 20:12).

 We need to teach the scriptures. Like the sower who *“sows the word”* (Mark 4:14), Christians today need to be sowing the word of God on the hearts of lost souls. *“The seed is the word of God”* (Luke 8:11) and we will do all we can to plant as much of this seed as we can in our lifetime. Like Philip, Christians today need to begin with the scriptures in their preaching and teaching of God’s word. Luke records how Philip, *“beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus”* (Acts 8:32-35). We need to be more like Paul who *“reasoned with them from the Scriptures”* (Acts 17:2). At Corinth, Paul preached the good news of the gospel as it was *“according to the scriptures”* (1 Corinthians 15:1-3) and we need to do the same today. In time, we need to be teachers of God’s word (Hebrews 5:12; 2 Timothy 2:2; Titus 2:3).

 We need to use the scriptures. Christians today need to use the scriptures daily in their lives. We need to use the scriptures to be admonished as we learn how God deals with mankind. Paul wrote, *“Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come”* (1 Corinthians 10:11). We need to use the scriptures for those times when we need comfort. Paul wrote, *“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope”* (Romans 15:4). We need to use the scriptures for daily guidance, teaching and correction in our life (2 Timothy 3:16-17). We need to use the scriptures when we talk with others, *“speaking as it were oracles of God”* (1 Peter 4:11). We need to use the scriptures to make us clean from sin. Jesus said, *“Already you are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you”* (John 15:3).

**More Like the Master in His Use of Scripture**

The Bible is under attack today by avowed enemies when they say that it is merely a product of man. The Bible is also under attack today by some who claim to be its friends when they say there are modern revelations from God or that the Bible is not to be taken literally (such as in the case of creation, the virgin birth, the resurrection, etc.). But, we need to accept the Bible for what it really is – the inspired and authoritative word of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17). We need the same attitude that Jesus had toward the scriptures. We need to let God’s word dwell in us. Paul wrote, *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly…”* (Colossian 3:16). Our heart needs to be full of God’s word. We need to hear it, know it, believe it, obey it, and feed on it daily like Jesus did. May God help us all to be “More Like the Master” in our attitude toward the scriptures!

**Questions**

1. How important is the word of God to many today?

2. What lessons can be learned from 2 Timothy 3:16-17 about scripture?

3. What does the word “inspired” mean in 2 Timothy 3:16?

4. What are Christians to do in each of the following activities? Include NT references.

 Know the scriptures –

 Believe the scriptures –

5. What are Christians to do in each of the following activities? Include NT references.

 Respect the scriptures –

 Obey the scriptures –

 Teach the scriptures –

 Use the scriptures –

6. How can a Christian today be “More Like the Master” in his attitude toward the scriptures?