

All Scripture Is Profitable

Relevance of 2 Timothy
4:13

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Every verse in the Bible is inspired by God and therefore every verse is profitable. Because we have not discovered the value of a verse, does not mean there is no value in the verse.



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“Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments” (2 Tim. 4:13¹).

Paul previously affirmed in the second letter to Timothy, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). While the New Testament is not the Scripture that Timothy had while in childhood (2 Tim. 3:15), the New Testament is Holy Scripture and is therefore profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness. This is known by considering these points:

- The apostles were guided into all truth (Jn. 16:8-13).
- The epistles they wrote were to be looked upon as Scripture (2 Pet. 3:15, 16).
- The New Testament was a dispensation by the Holy Spirit to the Apostles (Eph. 3:1-5).
- The letters were to be circulated and read by the various churches (Col. 4:16).

So, some may wonder, what does 2 Timothy 4:13 offer by way of profitability concerning doctrine, reproof, correction or instruction in righteousness?

“New Testament Christianity” In A Secular University?

In the 1993/94 school year, while I was attending Indiana University, Bloomington, I took a course on *New Testament Christianity*. It was a very large class, and it became obvious to me that my professor did not believe in the *inspiration* of the scriptures. While I was able to profit a little from the class, I was greatly disturbed by the overall disrespect given to God’s holy word. Had that been my first interaction with the Bible, I probably would have used that class to pave a road to atheism. Parents should know that many state universities have become a breeding ground for atheism—even classes entitled *New Testament Christianity*. This class was the first time I was introduced to the assertion that several of the books in the Bible were not authentic but *pseudepigraphical*, or the assertion that many of the books written were not written by the one who was said to be the author. Through supposed higher criticism, many scholars have dismissed 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus and others as having an anonymous author who used the name of an apostle to give their writings an air of authority. Even books that had general consent to be

authentically “Pauline,” were attacked before my eyes as well as hundreds of other students as having *interpolations* in them. For instance the teaching about women in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 was dismissed from being genuine. This professor also demanded that we use the *New Revised Standard Version* (a gender neutral perversion of the Scriptures that has become better suited as a dust magnet in my office than a useful read).

As the class progressed, I convinced myself that those who challenged the authenticity of a scripture have in all probability an ulterior motive to displace a peculiar doctrine from the scriptures. So if you are for women’s equality pertaining to authority, then 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35 needs to be questioned as original. If you don’t want baptism for salvation, then you have to question the legitimacy of Mark 16:9-20. If you don’t like the teaching of bishops being married with children, then 1 Timothy and Titus must be discarded into a “non-Pauline” trash can. Where 1 Timothy and Titus go, 2 Timothy must follow.

The Relevance of 2 Timothy 4:13

So what does all this have to do with 2 Timothy 4:13? Allow me to explain. What I love about passages that seemingly have little or no intrinsic value regarding doctrine or conduct may actually contain a tremendous worth, an importance that we have either overlooked or simply not yet discovered. As with our text in 2 Timothy 4:13, I am thankful to Paul for having written that text. Think about how this little stroke of the pen refutes the idea that 2 Timothy was written by a forger. Why would someone, who is trying to pass a letter off as Paul’s, insert such a scripture in the first place? What would make a forger even think of adding such a remark? It would serve no benefit to his cause. If so, what benefit would it serve? But if 2 Timothy is written by a friend to a friend, then it makes perfect sense to have little statements like this inserted. It supports the genuineness of a letter written to a genuine and beloved companion.

Three Assertions Against Pauline Authorship

The assault against the authenticity of these letters is based primarily on three things: the usage of new words that are not used in the other epistles of Paul, a high concern for the organization of the church, and some problematic historical correlations with the book of Acts. These can be dealt with far more substantially than in the scope of this short article would permit, but suffice it to say, that the historical problems can and have been resolved by many in understanding that Acts closes with Paul’s first imprisonment. This persuasion contends that Paul was subsequently released, as he also expected to be (Phil 1:19, 20, 25, 26; 2:24; Philem. 1:22), and in due time (five to six years) was arrested, imprisoned a *second* time in Rome and ultimately executed a couple of years prior to the

destruction of Jerusalem. The events in the letters to Timothy and Titus are to be understood within this chronology where Paul visited Miletus, Troas and probably the Philippians as well as a possible evangelistic tour westward to Spainⁱⁱ.

As for the differences in style, it *may* well take into account those whom Paul dictated to. Tertius penned the letter to the Romans (Rom. 16:22). Only Luke was with Paul when 2 Timothy was written (2 Tim. 4:11). Could it be possible that Luke served in the same capacity for 2 Timothy as Tertius did in Romans? Why not? Could these men have an effect on the style of the epistles? Perhaps. Regardless, differences in style are not sufficient proof to debunk authenticity as all of our styles change depending on the subject matter we are addressing as well as the type of audience that we may have before us.

As per any concern about Paul's emphasis on the organization of the church in the letters to Timothy and Titus, we need only be reminded that Paul labored hard to have elders appointed in every church (Acts 14:23). Further he spoke often of these things in other epistles (Phil. 1:1; Eph. 4:11; 1 Thess. 5:12). That these offices should be clearly defined before the canon of scripture closed only makes sense.

Further proof against an imposter is that there are three letters. Why would an imposter write three letters and not just one? Clearly the author of one is the author of all. What would be an imposter's motive for writing 2 Timothy? Whatever the motive would be is not readily apparent. Further, a forger would stray away from using names, places and events. Yet in this short letter, Paul mentions 23 names of Christians and apostates who lived in the apostolic era. He mentions large apostate movements like those in Asia turning from him (2 Tim. 1:15). He warns against certain doctrines and names the names of those who were advocating them (2 Tim. 2:17, 18). It would be contradictory for one to contend against imposters and yet at the same time be an imposter (cf. 2 Tim. 3:13). The writer also displays Paul's large forgiving heart for those who failed, "At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them" (2 Tim. 4:16; cf. Lk. 23:34; Rom. 10:1; 2 Cor. 2:6-8). Yet at the same time, we see that the Lord will repay those who resist the truth (2 Tim. 4:14). Compare such a statement with "since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you" (2 Thess. 1:6; cf. Rom. 12:19). Another huge internal evidence for the Pauline authorship of 2 Timothy is the fact that if this was a forgery in the second century, we would expect to hear of the usefulness of Demas and the apostasy of Mark based on what older texts revealed of their character, yet we see the reversal (see 2 Tim. 4:10, 11; cf. Col. 4:14; Acts 15:37, 38). A forger would work with the facts that were known to be true to the time in which he is trying to portray. A forger would gain very little by elevating Mark and demoting Demas (Acts 15:37-39;

Col. 4:14; Philem. 1:24). Yet we see here that it is Demas who falls short and abandons the Lord's worker and Mark is now considered useful. Why would a forger try to insert such?

Ancient Testimony

Along with such strong internal evidence that my professor failed to mention, is the fact that Irenaeus, a second century person, quotes from 2 Timothy as if it were common knowledge (*Against Heresies*, Book 3, 3:3). Since 2 Timothy is obviously a genuine letter from Paul, it stands to reason that 1 Timothy and Titus would also be considered genuine. These books, like 2 Timothy, were also cited and alluded to by early Christian writers. Polycarp was evidently immersed in 1 Timothy as he quotes from it in several places in a letter he wrote to the Philippians approximately 120 A.D.

"But the love of money is the root of all evils.' Knowing, therefore, that 'as we brought nothing into the world, so we can carry nothing out,' let us arm ourselves with the armour of righteousness; and let us teach, first of all, ourselves to walk in the commandments of the Lord"ⁱⁱⁱ

Clement of Rome, a faithful co-worker with the apostle Paul and mentioned in Philippians 4:3, alluded to Paul's teaching in the book of Titus when he wrote an epistle to the Corinthians between 68-97 A.D.

"He who has commanded us not to lie, shall much more Himself not lie; for nothing is impossible with God, except to lie"^{iv}

Now it stands to reason, that if the early church accepted these books as genuine, when they would reject others that were false, why should we not also accept them? The evidence to deny these books, when weighed on the balance of truth and reason, will be found too light.

Remember, all scripture is given by inspiration and has a purpose!

ⁱ All Scriptures are from the New King James Version

ⁱⁱ See 2 Timothy 4:13, 20, Romans 15:24, 28 and Clement's *Epistle to the Corinthians*, chap. 5

ⁱⁱⁱ Polycarp, *Epistle to the Philippians*, chap. 4, (Quoted from the *Christian Classic Ethereal Library*, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.iv.ii.iv.html>) see also from the same epistle, chap. 5, "They must not be slanderers, double-tongued" cf. 1 Tim. 3:8 as well as chap. 12, "Pray also for kings..." cf. 1 Tim. 2:2.

^{iv} Clement of Rome, *Epistle to the Corinthians*, chap. 27, cf. Titus 1:2.

Also see chap. 2 of the same epistle "ready to every good work" and Titus 3:1 along with several other references from 1 Timothy and Titus by Ignatius.