

A NEW BIBLE FOR A NEW YEAR

2 TIMOTHY 3:14-17

GOD'S INSPIRED AND INSPIRING WORD



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

Every day, 8 Christians worldwide are killed because of their faith. Every week, 182 churches or Christian buildings are attacked. Every month, 309 Christians are imprisoned unjustly. 1 in 9 Christians worldwide experience high levels of persecution. In the last year 260 million Christians were living in places where they experienced high levels of persecution. Almost 10,000 churches and other Christian buildings were attacked. *Release International* reported increased discrimination against Christians after the coronavirus pandemic, as governments used it as a pretext to step up persecution against Christians.

But what about here in the USA? We don't need to be worry about persecution, do we? George Yancey, an expert on Christianophobia (the unreasonable fear and hatred of Christians) says that "Although American Christians may not yet face persecution, they do experience increasing discrimination." His research found that about half of all Americans believe that evangelicals face discrimination especially in influential institutions such as academia, the media, entertainment, and the courts.

The October Evangelical Leaders Survey found that although only 32 percent indicated that they have been persecuted for their Christian faith, 76 percent expect they will be persecuted in coming years. Most respondents indicated that they are thinking mainly of social, financial and political pressure, not physical violence.

Many Christians are rightly worried about these trends. Will we be able to stand in the face of this persecution or discrimination? Will our children be bullied away from the faith by powerful cultural forces? How do we secure our faith and our children's? In 2 Timothy 3, the Apostle Paul says: **Use God's inspired Word to inspire you in an intimidating world.**

BACKGROUND

Timothy was a young Christian with a timid nature who was growing up in a world hostile to the Christian faith. Paul encouraged Timothy to use God's inspired Word to inspire him in an intimidating world.



1. THE BIBLE IS PROTECTIVE (1-15)

The Apostle's answer to persecution was not to deny it, minimize it, or play it down. No, he faced it head on, admitted it, described it, and warned about it.

A persecuting world

Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived (12-13).

Verses 12 and 13 summarize a lengthy description of persecution that began in verse 1. Unlike some modern preachers, Paul does not portray the Christian life as a bed of roses, but rather as a crown of thorns. He doesn't want to deceive anyone into becoming a Christian under false pretenses. "Here's my 'oppo' research," he says. "Here's what you're going to be up against. The godly will be persecuted both from outside and inside the church. And it's going to get worse not better." How then can I survive?

A protective Word

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings (14-15).

After describing the devil's offense, he provided the Lord's defense. It's this: **read your Bible**. That's it? That's it. "Timothy, you've been blessed with a family that taught you the Bible and lived the Bible. By God's grace you learned well and believed firmly. Keep doing that. Keep on learning the Bible and keep on believing the Bible."

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

Face the truth about persecution. The vast majority of people running academia, the media, government, corporations, sports, and entertainment are hostile to Christian doctrine and ethics. We need to prepare our children for this onslaught, and the only way to protect them is Bible, Bible, Bible.

Faith in the Bible is your protection. However great the discrimination, our defense is greater. But mere Bible reading is not enough. We need Bible-believing and Bible-living. We need firm faith and living faith. Start if you haven't started. Keep going if you're on the way.

THE WORD PROTECTS WHEN
THE WORLD PERSECUTES



The Bible protects, that's great.
But what about power to progress in faith?



2. THE BIBLE IS POWERFUL (15)

The Bible's power is derived from its sacred nature and is demonstrated in its saving power.

Sacred Writings

...from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings (15).

Timothy had the best upbringing any child could ever have. His mother and grandmother dedicated themselves to teaching Timothy the Bible from his youngest years (2 Tim. 1:5). Whatever else they had or didn't have, he had the Bible. His family recognized it was a sacred book, a special book, a spiritual book. It was a book from God about God to bring us to God. They therefore revered the Bible, treated it with the awe and respect, and poured it into Timothy. They believed this sacred book could produce a sacred boy.

Saving Writings

...the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (15).

Some books can elevate us, but only one book can save us. Many books can change us, but only one can convert us. Many books can make us wise for our occupation, but only one can make us wise for salvation. Many books can give us surging finances, but only one can give us saving faith in Christ. We read in order to meet Christ and believe in Christ.

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

Handle the Bible with reverence. When I was in Hungary in the late 80's, I led morning devotions at a Youth Camp. Afterwards I sat down and put my Bible on the floor. An old pastor came over, picked it up, and placed it on one of the beams just above my head. It was then I saw all the other Bibles up there. Hungarian Christians never put the Bible on the floor, but always in the highest place.

Believe the Bible for salvation. Although Christians are mocked as idiots, narrow-minded, fools, etc., the Bible calls us 'wise.' The wisest thing we can ever do is to read and believe the Bible. How much do you want to be saved? How much are you reading your Bible? That's how much you want to be saved. Ask God to show you Jesus in his Word and believe in him.

WHEN THE WORLD UNDERMINES FAITH
MINE THE WORD FOR FAITH



How can the Bible be so powerful?
Because the Bible is so pure.



3. THE BIBLE IS PURE (16)

The Bible is so powerful because the Bible is so pure. It is God's holy breath in all its holy breadth.

God's breath

All Scripture is breathed out [KJV 'inspired'] by God (16).

God breathed his Word out through human authors. By his Spirit, God wrote through their writing, and did so in such a way that they wrote God's Word without errors or extras, without addition or subtraction, without exaggeration or contradiction. 40 different authors, from different places, with different backgrounds, with different jobs, from different continents, in different languages, in different styles, and different subjects, wrote 60+ books over 1500 years, and yet they all have the same message of salvation through Christ. Nothing can explain this other than the supernatural inspiration of God's Spirit.

God's breadth

All Scripture (16).

What we have in our hands is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. It is God's Word, the whole of God's Word, and nothing but God's Word. We point to the Bible and say, "All of that is Scripture. All of that is God's Word." It doesn't merely contain God's Word or witness to God's Word. It is all God's Word. God's breath results in a fully inspired, fully infallible, and fully inerrant Bible.

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

Praise God for an inspired and inerrant Bible. The Bible is not just inspiring; it is inspired. Without God's inspiration, we could never be sure if what we are reading is God's Word. We look back with thankfulness for how God has used the NIV. We look forward with hope for how God will use the ESV. The NIV's strength is its readability. The ESV's strength is greater word-for-word accuracy while still being readable.

Defend all of God's inspired and inerrant Word. If we start picking and choosing what to believe or defend in God's Word, we are doomed. How dare we pick and choose which of God's words to believe. Defend all of God's Word with all that you have at all times to all people. Paul urged Timothy, "But as for you, continue in [conserve] what you have learned and have firmly believed" (14).

BREATHE IN THE WORD
GOD HAS BREATHED OUT



What are some of the results that prove God's Word is pure?



4. THE BIBLE IS PRODUCTIVE (16-17)

Jesus said of false prophets, "By their fruits you shall know them" (Matt. 7:16). The same goes for God's Word. By its fruits in our lives we will know it and we will know ourselves.

The Bible profits us

All Scripture is...profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness (16).

Look at all the Bible can do. It instructs us, rebukes us, corrects us, and trains us in holiness. What a profit! What a gain! What a book.

The Bible perfects us

...that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work (17).

The Bible moves us towards completeness and maturity. It fills in our gaps, it fills up our emptiness, it matures us out of immaturity. It also gives us all we need to perform all good works. It guides us to what good works we are to produce and gives us all we need to do them.

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

Invest in the Bible for the highest returns.

Its returns add by taking away. Its teaching takes away our ignorance. Its reproof takes away our folly. Its correction takes away our sin, Its training takes away our flab. These losses and gains are the best ever ROI. Do you value its correction as much as its instruction? Do you delight in its convictions as much as in its comforts?

Practice the Bible as your highest

service. God's good Word is to produce our good works. The greatest test of our belief in God's inspired word is whether it inspires good works. Defending the Bible is great; doing the Bible is greater. Let First Byron Church be First Book Church. We are people of the Book who are all about the Book.

GOD'S GOOD WORD
GROWS GOOD WORKS
IN A BAD WORLD

Hear God's Story > Change your story > Tell the story



CONCLUSION



PRAYER: God of Truth, use your inspired Word to inspire me in an intimidating world.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What experiences of persecution or discrimination have you experienced as a Christian?
2. How has the threat of persecution or discrimination affected you or others you know?
3. How has God used his Word to protect and empower you?
4. What's the difference between the inspiration of Scripture and inerrancy of Scripture?
5. Explain how God's Word has inspired godly faith and good works in your life?
6. How has this part of God's story changed your story? Who needs to hear this story and how will you tell it to them?

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