

THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

The Bible is God’s Word to us. It is our final authority in all matters of faith and life. *2 Timothy 3:16–17; Hebrews 1:1–2; Acts 2:41–42; Acts 17:11; Psalm 119:14–16; Psalm 19:7–11*



The Battle of Voices

We live in a world where many voices are shouting for our attention and allegiance. On social media, influencers tell us how to live. In our families, elders tell us how to honor tradition. And in some churches, “men of God” claim to have the latest word from heaven. But how do we know which voice we should follow?

Group Discussion

Imagine you are facing a massive, life-changing decision—perhaps a career move or a family crisis. If you could ask only one source for guidance, who would you ask?

A: A traditional healer (herbalist, diviner, or spiritualist)?

B: A popular prophetic ministry leader?

C: God—by praying and reading his Word in the Bible?

When you are making major decisions, where do you actually turn first? If the first person’s answer doesn’t satisfy you, do you ever consult one of these other options?

Case Study: The Contradictory Prophecy

Consider this scenario: A sister in a local congregation is told by a visiting prophet that she must divorce her husband because he is “spiritually blocking” her promotion at work. However, when she reads the Bible, she sees that God desires marriages to be preserved. The prophecy feels urgent and “supernatural,” but the Bible says something different. In this situation, who has the final say—the so-called prophet or the Bible?

Today, we will explore why we believe the Scriptures are our highest authority and guide. In the noise of competing voices, God has spoken clearly through his written Word in the Bible.

Scripture Comes from God, So It Carries His Authority

Let's read **2 Timothy 3:16–17**. These verses teach us that all Scripture is inspired, or “God-breathed.” To call the Bible inspired is to say it originates from God himself. This means the Bible isn't just a collection of human wisdom. It is the Word of God. Because it is God's Word, it has authority over our lives.

We are familiar with authority. Someone with authority has a level of power that requires our obedience and respect. In African cultures, when a chief or a headman speaks, his word is final. To ignore the chief's decree is to disrespect the chief himself. Similarly, because God is the author of Scripture, disobeying the Bible is not just ignoring a suggestion—it is disobeying and dishonoring God.

INSPIRATION

God breathed out Scripture through human authors. Because the Bible is God's Word, it carries his authority.

INERRANCY

God cannot lie, so his Word is completely true and trustworthy in all it teaches.

Scripture Points Us to the Lordship of Christ

Read **Hebrews 1:1–2**. The wonder of this passage is that God speaks to us. He not only knows us, but he communicates with us. But how does God speak? In the past (in the Old Testament), he spoke through prophets. But that changed with Christ. Now God speaks to us through Christ, and that is why we have the Bible.

SUFFICIENCY

Scripture contains everything we need for faith and life. God's Word is our final authority and guide.

It is the revelation of Jesus Christ. We submit to the Bible because we submit to Jesus.

Yet many of us still want God to speak through personal prophecies. In many modern charismatic movements, people are often told they need a “fresh word” or a “direct revelation”

to solve their problems. This implies the Bible is insufficient. But the revelation is sufficient. Hebrews 1:2 uses the past tense: God “has spoken” through his Son. In Christ, God has already given us the message he wants us to receive as it was

written in Scripture. We don't need to add a new "word" to the finished work of Christ in the Scriptures.

Authority Is Lived Out in the Church

Read **Acts 2:41–42**. This passage teaches us the importance of God's Word. In Acts 2:41, three thousand Jews came to salvation as they trusted in Christ and repented of their sins (2:38). In the very next verse, they were following God's Word as it was taught by the Apostles. Their devotion to God's Word shaped their lives and set them apart from the society around them.

The Berean Example

Read **Acts 17:11**. The Bereans were "noble" because they didn't believe Paul was right just because he was an Apostle. They checked the Scriptures to see if he was telling the truth. This reminds us that our leaders are not the final authority. Preachers are not authoritative just because they are preachers. They have authority because they proclaim the Scripture, the Word of God, which has authority in our lives. But in some of our churches today, the pastor's word is seen as higher than the Bible. However, the example of the Bereans shows us that even the most respected leader—even Paul himself—must be checked with the Word.

We must also check our traditions. Look at how we do things—baptisms, appointing elders, organizing a service. Are we doing things this way because "that's how we've always done it" (tradition), or because the Bible says so? Even the New Testament churches set aside some of their religious practices and traditions to follow God's Word. As Paul told Titus, we must "put what remained into order" (Titus 1:5 ESV) by aligning our church practices with Scripture.

Group Discussion

What are the dangers of obeying prophetic words without checking to see if they align with Scripture?

Our Heart's Response: Delighting in His Authority

Read **2 Cor 10:8**, **2 Cor 13:10**, and **1 John 4:18**. When we hear the word *authority*, we may think of strict rules, fear, or heavy burdens. In many situations, we submit

to authority simply because we have no choice. But God's authority is entirely different. God's authority is a loving authority that builds us up and casts out fear. We can respond to God's authority with joy (Psalm 119:1–2).

Submitting with Joy, Not Obligation

Read **Psalm 119:14–16** and **1 John 5:3**. As God's revealed truth, Scripture is our final authority, but it's not an authority that burdens us. It is an authority that blesses us.

The psalmist didn't view God's laws as a heavy chain. He saw them as "great riches" and a source of deep "delight." We do not just submit to the Bible with our minds out of duty. We embrace God's Word with our hearts out of love.

- **Protection, Not Restriction:** Read **Psalm 19:7–11**. When God sets boundaries in Scripture, he isn't trying to rob us of life but to give us life. Just as a loving parent tells a child not to touch a hot stove, God's authoritative commands protect us from the destructive deceptions of the world.

- **The Guardrail of Peace:** In a world filled with chaotic and conflicting voices shouting for our allegiance, the absolute authority of the Bible is a relief. It takes the pressure off our hearts. We don't have to guess what pleases God or constantly hunt for a "fresh word" to feel secure. He has already spoken out of love.

- **An Idol vs. a Relationship:** The Bible is not a magical relic or a lucky charm to keep under a pillow for protection. That's bibliolatry—turning the Bible into an idol. True heart submission means we love the Bible because we love the Author. We trust and appreciate the Word as the place where we clearly see the face and lordship of Jesus Christ.

Group Discussion

1. When you think of the word *authority*, do you usually feel a sense of fear, restriction, or peace? How does knowing that the Bible is "God-breathed" change how you feel about its rules?

2. How can we move from merely intellectually agreeing that the Bible is true to delighting in it and trusting it as a gift of love?

Personal Submission

Please find a partner and ask each other, “What is one area of your life, family, or ministry that you need to bring under the authority of Scripture this week? How will you allow God’s Word to guide or correct you in this area?”

Examples: Is it how you handle money? Is it how you treat your spouse? Is it a traditional practice that contradicts the Bible?

After you share your answers, pray for each other. Pray that God will give you the courage to submit to his Word instead of following the culture or the opinions of others.

Conclusion and Commissioning

God’s Word is our final authority in all matters of faith and life. No one else has a higher authority. We need to study the Bible to see if what people teach us aligns with Scripture. We need to compare our traditions to what God says in the Bible. Because Jesus is our Lord, we are to live according to God’s Word even when our cultural traditions or our personal opinions clash with what God says.

God’s Word is his love letter to us because he desires to have a relationship with us. We delight in God’s Word and view its authority in our lives as God’s love toward us. Hence, we submit to his Word joyfully, knowing that through his Word God desires to bring us protection and peace.

So, dear brothers and sisters, don’t be blown away by every new wind of doctrine (Eph 4:14) or every “prophetic” decree on social media. Be people of the Book. Let the Word of God be the foundation you build your house upon (Matthew 7:24–27). Be the kind of believers who, like the Bereans, honor God by honoring his Word above anyone else’s.

Closing Prayer

Lord, we thank you for the gift of your Word. We ask for the strength to be doers of the Word and not hearers only. May your Scripture rule our homes, our churches, and our hearts. Amen.



NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.