

God-Breathed
Part 1: God-Breathed
July 12th, 2015

Welcome: This summer, we asked you to share places in Scripture that are meaningful to you and have played an important role in your life. And we've taken all of these responses and crafted a nine-part series that will take us through Labor Day Weekend!

I don't know what you believe about the Bible...whether you like it or don't; whether you read it or not; whether you believe what is written on its pages or whether you're suspicious of it altogether.

What I do know is that if the Bible is indeed the spoken Word of God (as we believe that it is) if you will be so courageous as to open and read it with us, I believe that God is able to communicate his heart for you in a way you won't be able to explain! On the other hand, if the Bible is nothing more than words contrived by and then written down by men, then you have nothing to lose because you can walk away unaffected...

Regardless of where you are today, our prayer this summer is that God's Word comes to life in your life in a way you've never experienced before. And as a result, some of us will grow to know and love him more...and some of us might even come to know and love him for the first time!

Today...as we begin, I simply want to look at two verses that help us understand why God gave us His word...and it happens to be the text on which this entire series is based!

Go with me to 2 Timothy 3:16...

"All Scripture is inspired by God..." 2 Timothy 3:16a

Inspired by God – That phrase is a single Greek Word that means God-breathed! Many translations (including NIV) read...

"All Scripture is God-breathed."

Paul is saying that this book, which we know as the Bible, is not simply a collection of words on a page. It is the product of God's breath, the result of his action!

This means that though the sixty-six books of the Bible were written over the span of one thousand years by over forty human authors with unique personalities, stories, and life-perspectives; nevertheless, it was God who spoke His timeless and unified message into and through their lives...

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“Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet’s own understanding or from human initiative. No, these prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.” 1 Peter 1:21

Why is it important to understand that God spoke?

Dating – Love-Notes: When Beth and I started dating, we didn’t have texting or Snap Chat! If you’re younger than thirty, you’re probably wondering whether it’s possible to foster a romantic relationship without Snap Chat. It is possible!

We dated in the late nineties (a millennium ago)...so we emailed back and forth about our love for one another and we’ve kept many of those emails. To this day, those messages aren’t just words on a page. They are, in written form, Beth’s mind and heart for me...and mine for hers!

There’s a reason, if you’re married, why you keep letters and cards from the one you love and why the most sentimental of you get them out and read them again and again...to be reminded of what they said!

God’s Word – The same is true of Scripture! It is literally God’s message to us...his words for us...his mind and heart poured out in ways we can understand!

Now...that’s not how what some of us think about the Bible or how we grew up seeing the Bible is it?

Many people today believe that the Bible is primarily an instruction manual that tells us how to live better lives.

Others believe that the Bible is a book of morals that tells us how God expects us to live...and by doing what it says, we stay on God’s good side and out of trouble!

Now, it is true that the Bible gives us wise instruction about work, rest, romance, finance, and friendship! And it is true that the Bible addresses morals and behavior both on a personal and societal level. But the Bible is so much more than an instruction manual or book about behavior!

Let me give you a different image to help reframe the way you see and think about Scripture...

Child Dedication – Recently, we hosted Harbor’s summer child dedication, and Kelly Tibbitts – our Director of Kid’s Harbor – who does such a terrific job at leading this was on the verge of canceling the event because very few families were able to participate.

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However, at the last hour families start coming out of the woodwork and we dedicated over twenty children to Christ!

Now...for every child dedicated, Kelly provides a card to their mom and dad to write down in detail what they want to see God do in the life of their son or daughter as they grow into a young man and woman! Each parent takes this card, writes on it, and tucks it away until the child turns 18.

On that day, moms and dads will open these cards and speak what is on this card over the life of their teenager. The vision they've had and stewarded and labored for and pleaded for God to bring about! And this spoken word will have a powerful effect...

In the same way...the Bible gives us a vision of God's heart for us, His desire to know and be known, to love and be loved by us! Scripture gives us a vivid picture of the men and women He created us to be, and reveals His plans and purposes for the world in which we live!

The God of the Bible has spoken His heart out over our lives and in his mercy enabled human authors to capture His message in a written form that transcends time, culture, and language! So...when you hold and read the Bible...you are holding and hearing the very words of our Creator God, spoken for you!

Here's the beautiful thing...Scripture not only gives us a window into God's vision for our lives...it goes on to tell us how to live out that vision. It teaches us how to become the people God created us to be...

Look again at the text...

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17

How do you grow into the person God created you to be? How does God encourage you, mature you, shape you, lead you, and equip you for what He calls you to?

By speaking to you through His Word!

"Scripture is the chief means which God employs to bring the 'man of God' (woman of God) to maturity." John Stott

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God-Breathed – One of the reasons I believe this God-Breathed series is going to be so special is that behind every text we'll look at this summer is someone in our community saying, *"Here's how God, through His Word, is shaping me...how He's changing me...how strengthening and sustaining and guiding my life."*

Now...the question is...how does God's Word accomplish this? Paul gives us the answer!

(If you're taking notes: God's Word does four things)

Teaches...Rebukes...Corrects...and Trains!

Let's look at each one together...

#1 – Teaches – (To Provide Sound Instruction)

University – Do you remember the first day you stepped onto a university campus and walked into your very first college course? For the next four or more years, you literally stepped underneath the leadership of your professors and began taking instruction from them! In doing so, you admitted (without saying it), *"I don't know much about this subject matter (chemistry or psychology or world history or whatever you happened to be studying), but you do. Teach me!"*

In the same way, when we open God's Word, we step underneath His leadership and confess, *"God, apart from your grace, I won't know who you are or how to have a relationship with you, or how you created me to live. Please teach and show me how to know and live for you!"*

Action: Oftentimes, when I open God's Word, I'll begin with this simple prayer, *"God...teach me. I surrender to you as King of my life..."* (Jesus – *"Not my will, but yours"*)

I've found this to be important because there are times when God's Word is encouraging, comforting, and helpful, but if you've ever read the Bible you know there will also be times when God's Word makes you uncomfortable, or when Scripture says something you don't like or agree with...or when God instructs you in a way that conflicts with what you believe, how you think, or how you are living. Those are the moments when it's tempting to put Scripture down and say, *"I'm going to determine what is right, good, and true."*

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I'm not saying there's anything wrong with questioning God or honestly wrestling with something you find difficult to understand or accept...

I walk alongside people all the time who are struggling with something in the Bible...and I encourage them to ask thoughtful questions, and ask God to give them understanding. (James 1 – *"If any of you lacks wisdom...he should ask God for it!"*)

So I'm not suggesting we shouldn't question Scripture, but that we shouldn't subvert Scripture! We shouldn't sift through God's Word to separate what we like from what we don't...or to hold on to what makes us feel good and comfortable while discarding the rest!

The most mature Christian will tell you there are times when we embrace what we see and times when we struggle back and forth with God in an effort to understand. But, if we believe we are holding the very words of our good, loving Heavenly Father who teaches us for our joy, we will say, *"Father, regardless of whether I fully understand or agree with what I see, I trust you...teach me!"*

So...God uses His Word to teach us...

#2 & 3 – Rebukes & Corrects

The word "Rebuke" literally means to convict or to point out what is wrong...

Discipline – Parenting – As parents, our heart is to teach and lead our children to live life to the fullest and become the young men and women God created them to be! If you parent a child older than eighteen months, you know there are times when our children follow joyfully and sometimes they fall down in the middle of Target and scream! So, there's joy and agony that paves the road of parenting, but regardless of what we get at any given moment, we're committed to leading our children for their good and joy!

As a result, there are moments when we have to confront and correct, aren't there? In fact, no never confront and correct our children would be destructive to them! For example, if you say to your three year old, *"We're going to have a bedtime snack at 7pm and then go to bed"* and little Johnny goes, *"I like the snack, but I'm not going to bed."* At that point...do you say, *"Ok buddy...enjoy the Cheerios and let us know when you're ready to sleep."* Or if you say to little Susie, *"We're going to ride our bike together...but don't ride out in the busy street."* And she goes, *"Thank you...I love my bike, but I also like to play Frogger..."* Do you go, *"She's so cute...good luck!"* NO! You don't let Johnny and Susie make the calls...I hope not...if you do, your home is filled with anarchy!

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If we really love our children, we graciously tell them what is wrong with their attitude or choice and then correct. By doing so, we're helping our sweet child grow up into a mature, respectful, healthy young man or woman.

In the same way, God will speak into our lives to convict and correct us...and he does so because He loves us!

Judgmental – I've shared with you very honestly how for much of my life my heart was so critical and judgmental that I was completely unable to enjoy ordinary people because I was always finding something wrong with them!

I remember the season when God began to confront my critical heart...and when I say season, I mean like six or seven years! Over and over God spoke to and confronted my heart through texts like these...

"Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged. And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own?" Matthew 7:1-3

"Make allowance for each other's faults; and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others." Colossians 3:13
Jesus had freely extended his mercy to me, yet I was stingy with mercy toward others! I remember very vividly that the more God showed me what was true of my heart, the more it hurt. In fact, things got worse before they got better because God had to expose my infected heart before He could heal it. But by His grace He did, and this is only one example of how God has rebuked me!

If you're walking in Christ, it is inevitable that God will press on something in your life and say, "This isn't of me. I want to change this. I want to shape this." And our tendency is going to be to run in those moments! (Ex.)

Anger – I've been around the church long enough to know that being a Christian doesn't excuse someone from being an angry or controlling person! I've met countless Christian men and women who try to hide their anger issues! And sadly, it's generally the people at home who pay the price. If you're perpetually angry, God is going to press on that and your tendency is going to be to hide...to play that it's not real! Yet your spouse is going to point it out and your kids know it's true, and the only way you'll heal is if you surrender to His gracious hand and allow God to confront and correct your wounded heart!

Forgiveness – If you read the Bible, it plainly says that Christians should be the most gracious, forgiving people on earth because we serve the most gracious, forgiving God man has ever known. But isn't it true that we're not exempt from bitterness, grudge-holding, and division? I've seen more Christian friendships and marriages become fractured and even fail because one or both parties were unwilling to bear with one another's weakness, extend mercy, and work toward reconciliation. If you're holding a grudge and your heart is hardened by the unwillingness to forgive, the moment God presses on that, your tendency will be to offer excuses (*Jed, you don't know what they did. You didn't hear what they said*). I'm not saying what they did or said was right, I'm not even suggesting you have to like the other person, I'm suggesting that Jesus said to love and pray for your enemies, and by not offering mercy you're ignoring His words and your heart will become hard and brittle. Let him confront, correct, and heal you!

Sex – Many young men and women who are walking in Christ want to be completely devoted to Jesus except for when it hinders their physical devotion to another young man or woman! God created sex as a gift for a husband and wife to enjoy and strengthen the bond of marriage as they give their whole selves to one another – mind, body and heart. That's not very popular today! Our culture says, "*Sex is just for fun as long as it doesn't hurt anyone. How could you possibly have a relationship without sex? If you don't have sex, you won't be complete.*" This message is so loud that our tendency as young Christ-followers is to dismiss God's Word as passé and embrace the cultural message as our norm. If you're a follower of Christ and you're stripping sex from the purpose God created it for, He's going to press on that so that He can ultimately spare you a lot of pain and heartache and bring you a joy, peace, and wholeness our culture knows nothing of!

You see, the Bible describes God as a good and gracious Heavenly Father who is laboring for our joy and wholeness and where sin threatens to steal either of those things, He will confront and redirect. When you realize this, you'll say, "*Jesus, confront and correct me...my life is in your hands!*"

Action: We must allow God's Word to READ US!

So...God's Word Teaches, Rebukes, and Corrects...

#4 – Trains (last part of vs. 16)

*"(God's Word) teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to **prepare and equip** his people to do every good work."*

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Teaches us to do what is right = Trains us for righteousness...

Righteousness = Right Living!

Women's World Cup: It was a sweet time for the United States women's soccer team last weekend when they won the World Cup! It was remarkable to watch these ordinary young ladies demonstrate incredible athleticism and skill on the field...

Do you know how they got this far? (To win a World Cup)

From the time they were young, they learned under coaches who taught, rebuked, corrected, and trained them...taught, rebuked, corrected, and trained...taught, rebuked, corrected, and trained...over and over and over and over again until they became the very best of the best!

You don't win a world cup without this!

In the same way, God, through His Word teaches, rebukes, corrects, and trains!

God does not give us His Word only to teach (lecture), or rebuke (disciplinarian), or even correct (moral police). God does all of these things to train, equip, and prepare you to be the man or the woman, husband or wife, mother or father, neighbor, employee, leader, and friend that He created you to be...inside and out!

Let me be very clear...we do not become right with God by reading and obeying His Word!

Paul, in his letter to the Romans said, "No one is righteous, not one...all fall short of God's glory!" If you've read the Bible, you know that the more you read the more you recognize how far you fall short...

Gospel – Though we are sinful and we don't deserve to stand in God's presence, the Bible tells us our relationship with God doesn't hang on how well we obey this book, our relationship depends on the fact that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, hung on a cross for us! On the cross, Jesus' perfection was marred by our sinfulness. His holiness covered in our blemishes. His perfect faithfulness to the Father ruined by our rebellion! He did it all to bring you back into the arms of God!

God gave us His Son to make us righteous! He also gave us His Word to make us like His Son!

[Close](#)

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God's desire isn't simply to remodel your life. He's not trying to make the best version of you...listen, we don't simply need a little bit of help! We need to be made new!

We need our character to be made new...

We need our homes and marriages to be made new...men, we need our love for our wives to be made new...like Christ loved the church.

We need our hope for the future to be made new...

We need our desire to forgive and restore what is broken to be made new in the same we Jesus loved and forgave his enemies...

We need a renewed desire to love our neighbors like Christ love our neighbors in the same way that Jesus came not to be served but to serve!

Through His Word, God makes us more and more like Christ...He equips and prepares us for every good work! The Creator of your soul longs to speak His vision for your life over your life... Are you listening?

Application: Can I encourage you, as we close to press into the Scriptures?

Resources: We've provided journals and reading lists in the café for you to pick up if you want to know where to begin! Start there...

Pray: