

Sunday Sermon

5/19/24

Series: God-breathed

Passage: 2 Tim 3:16-17

Title: The Purpose of the Bible

Good morning, church! We have an exciting day ahead of us. If you are visiting this morning, I'm glad you are here. Today is another special day because today is baptism Sunday. I'm so excited to celebrate with those getting baptized this next step in their faith walks with Jesus Christ.

Please turn in your bibles this morning back to 2 Tim. 3:16. We are continuing in our series "God-breathed." So far we've looked at the evidence for the Bible being a unique supernatural book, evidence of it's being preeminent among all literature, including all other religious writings. We saw that there is no other book in existence like God's book. No other book stacks up to the Bible. No other book has had the impact of the Bible. No other book changes lives like the Bible. One book, inspired, "breathed-out," written by God.

Last time, we looked at how we got our Bibles. God's Word did not fall from the sky. We learned how God wrote His book. Holy Spirit chose the words. The apostles wrote it down, and then the early church used 5 proofs to determine which were the inspired books and rooted out the writings that were just the pretenders, and God blessed that entire process.

This week the sermon is entitled "The Purpose of the Bible." Great! We have a book. Why? What's its purpose? What's it supposed to do or be to me? And we are going to talk about that very thing this morning. So, before we get into it. Let's invite the Lord into this space to be our guide and take us where we should go. **[Pray]**

In 2004, *Trail* magazine published an article that provided directions for climbers descending from, Ben Nevis, Britain's highest peak. Problem was that those directions were wrong to the extent that the Mountaineers Council of Scotland blew the whistle saying, "Anyone following those directions would be taken directly over the north face and climbers would literally walk off the edge of a 1,000-foot drop. In poor visibility, climbers following these directions would pay a high price." Faulty instruction.

Question: When it comes to the bible, especially how it relates to us and our lives, do we know and understand its purpose?

Back in the late 90's the Christian band Burlap to Cashmere wrote a song called "Basic Instructions." It came from this thought that if you turned the word "Bible" into an acronym it would mean "Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth." The thought was that the purpose of the Bible is a sort of instruction manual. I've also heard the Bible described as a road map. I want to get from point a to point b: I wanna get from here to God, from emptiness to fullness, from this life to life eternal. How do I do that? Follow the map.

Both of those can be helpful ways to think about the purpose of the bible, but this morning I want to focus on the answer laid out for us in 2 Tim. 3:16-17, ***“All scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”***

***“All scripture is God-breathed and is profitable...”*** Let’s stop there.

Profitable - helpful, useful, advantageous. In other words, the question being asked is, “How does having a book that is God-breathed benefit me?” The word **“profitable”** in the Greek comes from a word meaning **“to heap up” or “to accumulate.”** Last time, I ended the sermon with a bunch of application questions. If I go after the application: if I not only possess the Bible, but read it, memorize it, obey it, let it guide my life – what am I profiting? What am I accumulating or heaping up for myself?

That word “profit” the same word that is used in James when he says, ***“What good (profit) is it, brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works?”*** – James 2:14.

James says, “What usefulness (benefit) is that?”

It’s the same word that Jesus uses when he says, ***“What profit is it for a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?”*** What is he heaping up? What is she accumulating that is useful or advantageous to her? And of course in those contexts the answer is “Nothing.”

But here, in stark contrast to the emptiness of those pursuits, God is revealing that this book that has been breathed-out by him IS profitable. It is beneficial. It does heap something up in our lives. In fact, what we have in this book is so profitable, advantageous, useful it can make us (***artios***) “complete.” It’s actually the word “perfect.” It’s a word that means “having special aptitude.” In other words, what God is saying is that his book is able to equip us, give us the tools and resources we need, in ways that no other wisdom, or counseling, or advice, or knowledge, or source of strength can do, so that we are able to live – what does it say? – “equipped for every good work.” I actually love the King James here. It says “thoroughly furnished.” Why am I complete? Because I’m thoroughly furnished.

My wife is a real estate photographer. And one of the cool things that her company does is they can digitally add furniture to an empty space. So here’s an example of that, **[picture]** you see the stark contrast between the two. One looks empty, the other looks full and inviting. One is a picture of what is, the other is a picture of what could be.

Beloved, don’t miss the connection. God’s will for you is that, in your inner being, in your spiritual being, you would be fully furnished. Complete. That we might be a house lacking nothing. Fully functional for its purposes. So that we are able step out into all that God intends for us in a way that worships and honors him.

**Question: Are you ready for that? Is your spiritual house furnished? Are you supplied for the journey?**

If I were to tell you that we were going on a Rocky Mountain adventure - just us, the mountains, in the wilderness, roughing it, under the stars, for a year. You'd say, "Bro, let's go!" But then, in picking you up, I pull up in a convertible with no bags, no tent, no food, no supplies of any kind other than my sunglasses and a bottle of suntan lotion that my wife made me bring - you'd be like, "I'm not getting in that car." Why? Because I'm not "**artios!**" I don't have the aptitude (knowledge, skills, foresight, fortitude) for the road ahead. I'm not complete or perfectly furnished to finish or accomplish the journey ahead.

If you read forward just 7 verses, Paul will tell Timothy, "**I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.**" How have you done that Paul? He says, "I'm a student of the Word." Listen to what he says, chapter 4, he says, "**I charge you... (v. 2) preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate** (there's that word again - what are they heaping up for themselves?) **teachers to suit their own passions...**"

Listen: Despite what many want to believe, not all compasses point true north. Not all paths lead us in the right way. How do we know where to go, what to say, how to live, what to do?

God says, "**Today I set before you life and death, choose life.**" We read a few weeks ago in proverbs, "**There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.**" - Prov. 14:12.

Listen, there is a book which has been God-breathed, that gives us special aptitude and thoroughly furnishes our house. So that, verse 4, we don't "**turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.**" So that we can always be sober-minded, endure suffering, share the gospel, and fulfill our ministry (the good work God has for our lives).

Is 30:21 - "**When you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice (literally "a word") behind you saying, "This is the way; walk in it."**" That's God's Word. That's God's Word. Do you know it? Do you know what it says? What it teaches? Where it points? Beloved, "Study to show yourself approved...rightly handling the word of truth" - 2 Tim. 2:15. Because without it your aptitude for the journey ahead is incomplete.

And, listen, all these crises we are dealing with today (the marriage crisis, the identity crisis, the mental health crisis, the substance abuse crisis, and yes, even the war in Ukraine and the crisis in the Middle East all stem from men and women rejecting, or forsaking, or ignoring God's Word of Truth. Alright, we've set it up. Now let's break it down: "**All scripture is God-breathed and is profitable** (for what? Here's the purpose) **for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,**

4 things

**1) Teaching**

We all know what it means to teach. It's the concept of giving instruction. Downloading information from one source to another so that there might be knowledge or understanding. Question: **What happens when the instruction we receive is wrong?**

I remember as a kid growing up, I went to a Bills game with my uncle. And as we sat in the stands, he and his friend would watch the cheerleaders, the buffalo jills, and comment on which of them were the hottest. Now I knew my uncle was married, and even as a relatively naive child, this caused some questions in my spirit, so I asked him, "Hey uncle, aren't you married?" And I'll never forget it, his instruction lodged itself directly into my little kid brain. He looked at me and he said, "Chris, it doesn't hurt to look." Beloved, listen, without judgment, just stating what it true, I can tell you, he is not married today. Was that sound teaching I received?

Jesus says, **"Your word is truth."** You see, when it comes to teaching or instruction it's not just about having information. It's about having the right information. True information. Good information to keep you from falling. Information that will lead you in the right way, with right perspective, with eyes wide open, so that you will have the proper framework through which you can filter or apply the messaging and experiences of life.

And that's what God's gives to us in his Word: teaching. A right worldview. God's truth about his world so that we can have **knowledge** and **wisdom** – the right information and the ability to rightly apply that information to our lives and experiences.

So in that, I want to quickly build the framework of the biblical worldview. Now I recognize that each of these can be a sermon series in themselves, so we're just putting up the steel girders, ok? But I'm doing this to give us clarity on what God says is true of his world. 10 things. And if one stands out, where you're like, "What? That's different than what I think." God's Word is useful for teaching. You can dive into the scriptures to see how it's all put together. To see what is true.

10 things:

- 1) There is a God and only one God (Yahweh), all other claims are false.
- 2) The universe, and everything in it, was created and didn't happen by chance
- 3) That God has a divine and moral will for his creation – therefore there is truth and error, right and wrong, good and bad, righteousness and wickedness
- 4) There is a real spiritual realm with spiritual beings, God and Satan, angels and demons, heaven and hell - and that realm has very real impact and influence on this physical realm.
- 5) That this world is under the curse of sin and therefore trouble, injustice, hurt, pain, and suffering exist.
- 6) That humanity, because of sin, is separated from God and life, and because of that, left to itself, humanity does not trend toward better but more and more to evil and depravity.
- 7) That Jesus Christ alone is God's solution and our salvation.

- 8) God says that love should be at the foundation of all we do.
- 9) That our victory and empowerment to live rightly before God comes only through our surrender to Christ's lordship and our dependency on God's Holy Spirit – we can't do it ourselves.
- 10) That God is moving things toward a destination, and while God currently in his mercy allows evil to exist, one day Christ will return to judge the world and to make all things new.

How does all that work and fit together? God's Word is profitable for teaching. This is what he reveals to us. I encourage you to go after it. Hide it in your heart. Let it be the framework through which you orient your life and the world around you.

But that's not the only thing the bible is profitable for.

## 2) **Reproof**

Jesus says, ***"The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."*** – ***John 10:10***. Simply put, reproof is "that by which a thing is proved or tested." You'll sometimes hear me ask, "How's that working out for you?" That's a reproof statement. Reproof is conviction brought through evidence. Let's take a look at this. Let's test it. Reproof is exposing the lie, the depravity, the wrong thinking or direction. "You ***think*** what you're doing is this. What your ***actually*** doing is this."

"You think that conviction you hold is right. God exposes that conviction as sinful depravity."

Why is this important? Because reproof exposes the flesh which is at war with the Spirit, and God shows us that the flesh and its desires only lead to conflict and frustration. Wrong alignment only leads to brokenness. Every day we have set before us life and death. And if we don't know or understand when we are choosing death, then how are we ever to get to life? And to get there we need reproof. Exposing the lies. Testing the evidence.

## 3) **Correction**

I love this. Correction is a compound word in the Greek: epi-"upon", an-or-tho-oh – "to set up" or "build anew." When we think of correction, we often relate it to punishment. Like correcting a child: spanking, grounding, time out. Right? But look at how this word is used in scripture:

In Luke 13, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for 18 years. She was bent over and could not straighten herself. Verse 12, ***"When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, 'Woman, you are freed from your disability.' And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was "epi-anorthoo" made straight, and she glorified God."***

Guys, correction is the reorientation of the life (your life, my life) around the truth of God. I used to build my house on the sand, but now I, set up or build anew, my house on the rock. I used to think that this lesser thing was best for me, but now I know that this thing that God

has is actually the greater thing and now I chase that, believe that, think that, act that way. He's freed me from my soul disability by correcting my path.

#### **4) Training in Righteousness**

Training carries in it the idea of cultivating something.

Is. 61:10 - ***“for he [God] has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness.”***

Training is cultivation. We have spent years, decades cultivating a pattern of worldly or fleshly living. We need to learn how to live as free men, as those who are righteous, who have been made new. Our minds need to be renewed to the truth that we are righteous. That Christ is now our true source of life. That we don't need the old world patterns and systems to fill our heart needs of love and acceptance and worth and security. Sure, I can still choose those things, things that are sin, things that do not come from faith. And, you know what? Sometimes I do. We all do. But that's why we need God's Word. To show us our true identity. To fix our eyes back on him when I might get distracted by the shiny things, the enticement of the world. To remind me again of who I am in Christ, that I have been made new. My past doesn't define me, Yesterday doesn't define me. Two minutes ago doesn't define me. God has created in me a new man. One that desires him. And I need to learn to live out of that identity.

All these things – teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness – work together, beloved, to furnish your house, to fully equip you, to make you wise and discerning, so that as we are traversing the mountain of life, we don't lose our way and buy into misinformation/faulty direction, and walk off a cliff. Beloved, God loves you. Do you know that? He wrote a book that is profitable for you, so that you can make it safely home.

# *God-breathed*

*Why I believe the Bible*



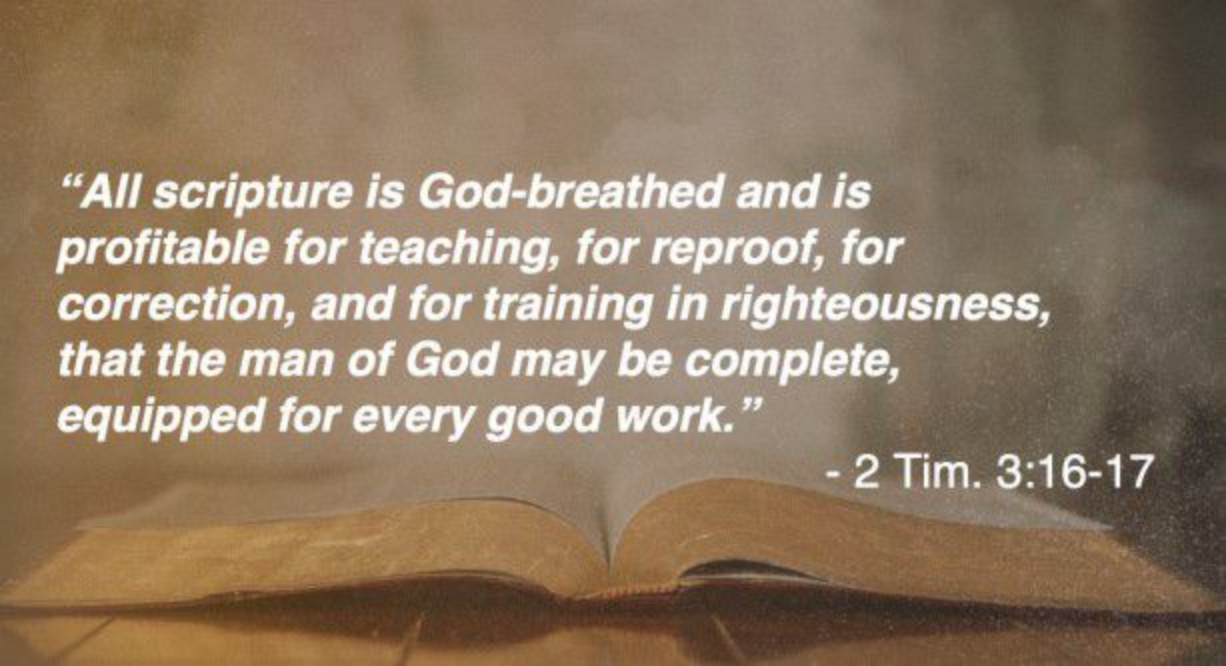






***“All scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”***

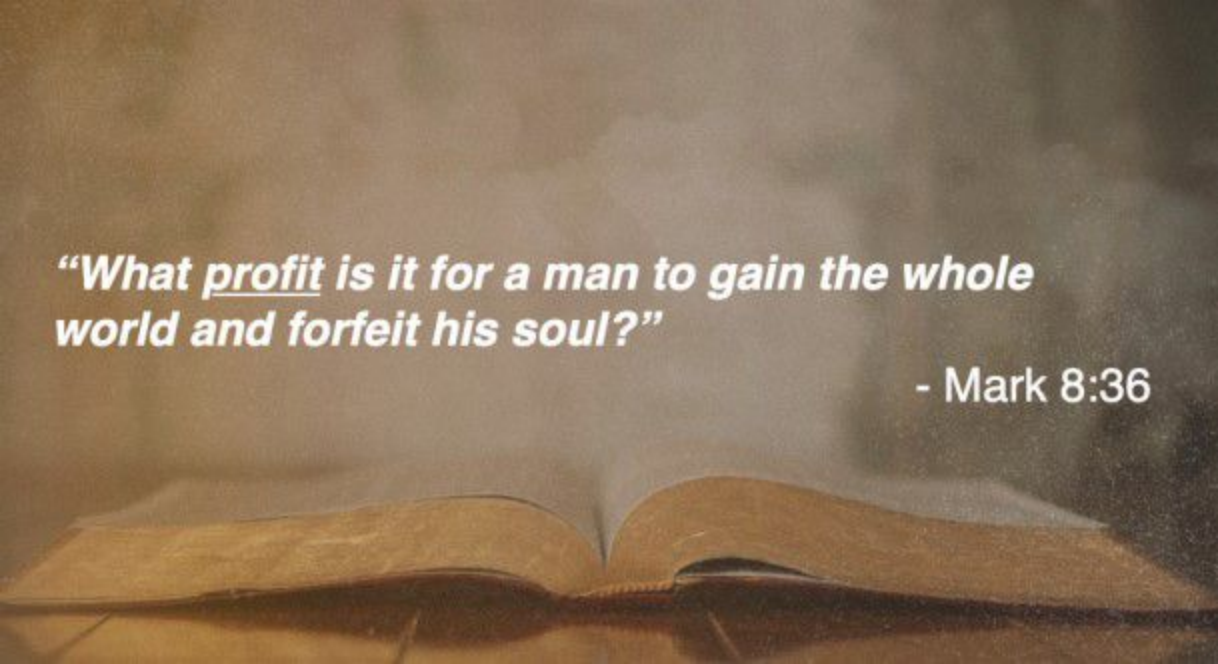
**- 2 Tim. 3:16-17**



***“What good (profit) is it, brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works?”***

***– James 2:14***



An open book with aged, yellowish pages is shown from a top-down perspective. The book is open to a spread of pages, and the central gutter is visible. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light brown or beige color. Overlaid on the upper half of the image is white text in a serif font. The text is centered horizontally and reads: "What profit is it for a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?" The word "profit" is underlined. Below this text, on the right side, is another line of white text: "- Mark 8:36".

***“What profit is it for a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?”***

***- Mark 8:36***

***“All scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be (“artios:” complete, perfect, having special aptitude), equipped for every good work.”***

**- 2 Tim. 3:16-17**



***“I charge you...preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate teachers to suit their own passions...”***


- 2 Tim. 4:1-3

***“Today I set before you life and death,  
choose life.”***

- Deut. 30:19

***“There is a way that seems right to a man,  
but its end is the way of death.”***

- Prov. 14:12





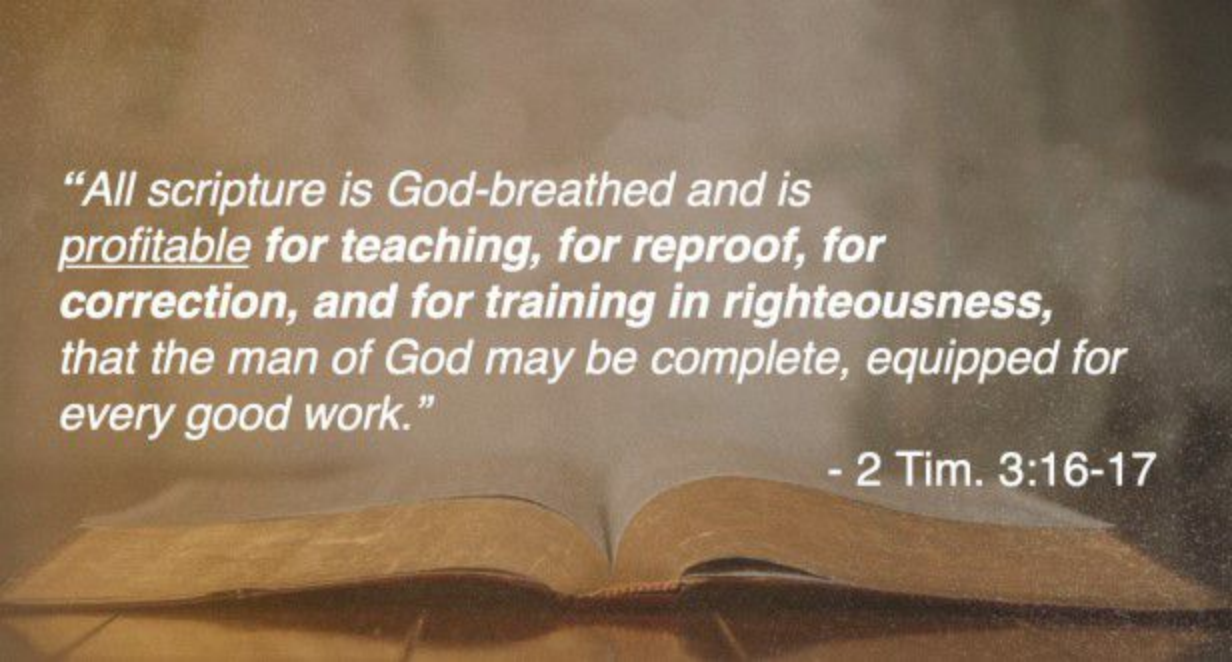
*"I charge you...preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate teachers to suit their own passions, **and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.**" "*

- 2 Tim. 4:1-4

***“When you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice (lit. ‘a word’) behind you saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it.’”***

**- Is 30:21**



An open book is shown from a top-down perspective, lying flat. The pages are a light tan or cream color, and the central gutter is visible. The background is a dark, textured surface, possibly a wooden table. Overlaid on the upper half of the image is a quote in white text. The quote is in italics and includes some bolded and underlined words. The text is centered horizontally across the upper portion of the book's pages.

*“All scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”*

*- 2 Tim. 3:16-17*

## God's Word: 4 Purposes

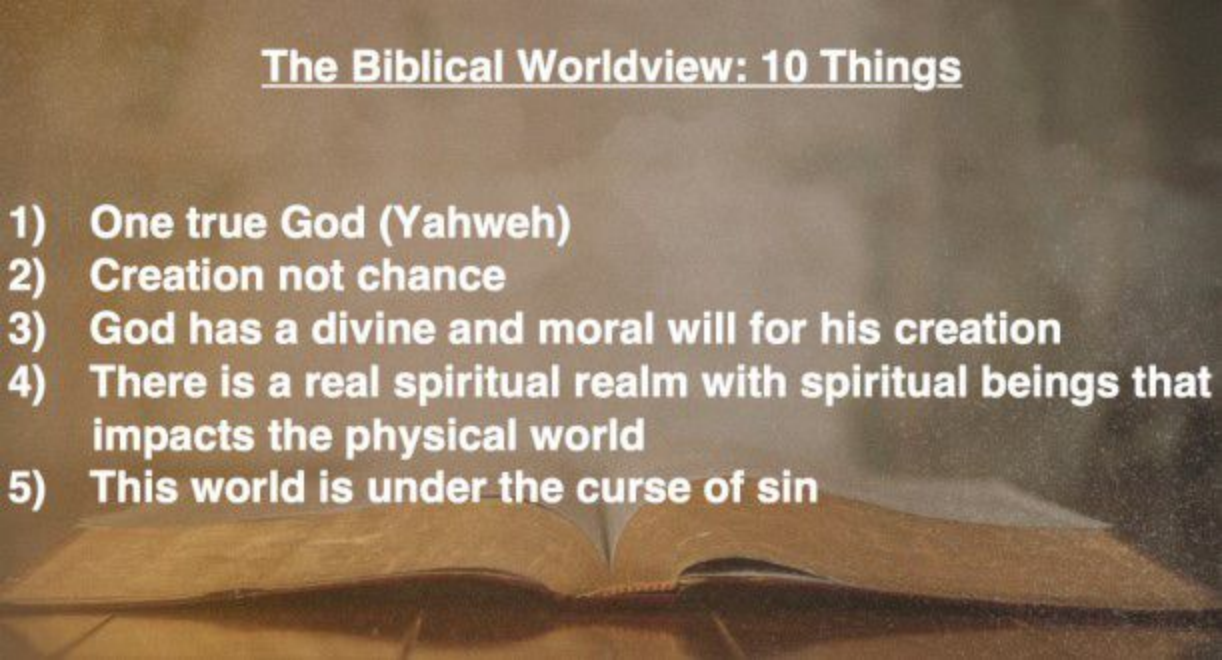
### 1) Teaching

*“Sanctify them with truth; your word is truth.”*

- John 17:17



## The Biblical Worldview: 10 Things

- 1) **One true God (Yahweh)**
  - 2) **Creation not chance**
  - 3) **God has a divine and moral will for his creation**
  - 4) **There is a real spiritual realm with spiritual beings that impacts the physical world**
  - 5) **This world is under the curse of sin**
- 
- An open book is shown at the bottom of the frame, with its pages slightly curved. The background is a dark, textured surface, possibly a wall or a backdrop, with a subtle gradient from light to dark.

## The Biblical Worldview: 10 Things

- 6) Humanity is sinful and separated from God and Life
- 7) Jesus Christ is God's solution and our salvation
- 8) Love should be the foundation of all we do
- 9) Apart from Christ and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit we don't have the capacity to live rightly
- 10) One day Christ will return to judge the world and to make all things new

## God's Word: 4 Purposes

- 1) Teaching
- 2) Reproof

***“The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”***

– John 10:10

## God's Word: 4 Purposes

- 1) Teaching
- 2) Reproof
- 3) Correction





***“When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, ‘Woman, you are freed from your disability.’ And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she glorified God.”***

***- Luke 13:12***

## God's Word: 4 Purposes

- 1) Teaching
- 2) Reproof
- 3) Correction
- 4) Training in Righteousness

***“For He [God] has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness.”***

- Is. 61:10