

## The Word of God

### IV. The Four Characteristics of Scripture: The Sufficiency of Scripture

- a. *Scripture contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly.*
  1. Sufficient for salvation – 2 Tim. 3:14-16; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23
  2. Sufficient to equip us for living the Christian life – 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Psalm 119
- b. *We can find all that God has said on particular topics, and we can find answers to our questions.*
  1. In light of item *a* above, we know that we will never be able to perfectly obey all of Scripture in this life (James 3:2; 1 John 1:8-10), however the sufficiency of Scripture allows us to focus our search for what God has said about the questions we have on Scripture alone, for all that we need to know about every topic is contained therein.
  2. Because we believe in the sufficiency of Scripture, we believe that all that we need to know about God, about salvation, and about what our response should be in light of what he has revealed is found in the Bible. Further, we believe that every question we have about how we should think and act in this life is found in Scripture. We also believe that all the matters that arise in our world are first and foremost answered by God's words contained in the Scriptures.
- c. *Practical applications of the sufficiency of Scripture*
  1. Encourages us that how we are to think and what we are to do as Christians is found in Scripture alone. All we have to do is diligently study God's word.
  2. Because Scripture is wholly sufficient, we can know that nothing is ever to be added to it or taken from it. Do not be fooled by claims of "new" Scripture or truth.
  3. Assures us of what to believe about God. If we are told or taught something about God that is not grounded in Scripture, we can confidently reject it.
  4. No modern inventions, even if they are said to be from God, should ever be placed on the same level as Scripture. Examples of this would be the Book of Mormon, the Koran, or things revealed by charismatic gifts.
  5. What is sin is clearly spelled out in Scripture. We should be very careful about making lists of so called "sins" according to our own traditions or preferences, then placing them on the same level as Scripture. Examples of this might include things such as music, dancing, consuming alcohol, playing card games, etc. Allowing such lists to creep into our doctrine almost always causes alienation and a misunderstanding of God. We should be content with the sufficiency of Scripture.
  6. The sufficiency of Scripture assures us that nothing is required of us by God that is not commanded in Scripture either explicitly or by implication. When we have questions about God's will for our lives, we need look no

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further than Scripture. An example of this would be all those who have fallen for the health, wealth and prosperity Gospel. Many Christians have blindly believed what certain preachers have said about God wanting them to have their best life now. If they would search Scripture on this matter they would find that God promises this life will be difficult for those who diligently follow him, but that an eternal reward will be had for those who persevere through the troubles of this life. This should give us great peace and comfort.

### V. *Questions for Personal Application*

- a. In the process of growing in the Christian life and deepening your relationship with God, approximately how much emphasis have you placed on reading the Bible itself and how much on reading other Christian books? In seeking to know God's will for your daily life, what is the relative emphasis you have put on reading Scripture itself and on reading other Christian books? Do you think the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture will cause you to place more emphasis on reading Scripture itself?
- b. What are some of the doctrinal or moral questions you are wondering about? Has this study increased your confidence in the ability of Scripture to provide a clear answer for some of those questions?
- c. Have you ever wished that the Bible would say more than it does about a certain subject? Or less? What do you think motivated that wish? After this study, how would you approach someone who expressed such a wish today? How is God's wisdom shown in the fact that he chose not to make the Bible a great deal longer or a great deal shorter than it actually is?
- d. If the Bible contains everything we need God to tell us for obeying him perfectly, what is the role of the following in helping us to find God's will for ourselves: advice from others; sermons or Bible classes; our consciences; our feelings; the leading of the Holy Spirit as we sense him prompting our inward desires and subjective impressions; changes in circumstances; the gift of prophecy (if you think it can function today)?
- e. In the light of this study, how would you find God's "perfect" will for your life? Is it possible that there would be more than one "perfect" choice in many decisions we make? (Consider Psalms 1:3 and 1 Cor. 7:39 in seeking an answer)
- f. Have there been times when you have understood the principles of Scripture well enough with regard to a specific situation but have not known the facts of the situation well enough to know how to apply those scriptural principles correctly? In seeking to know God's will, can there be any other things we need to know except (a) the teaching of Scripture and (b) the facts of the situation in question, together with (c) skill in applying (a) to (b) correctly? What then is the role of prayer in seeking guidance? What should we pray for?