

Institutes of Theology | Session 19
Bibliology: The Necessity, Relevancy, and Infallibility of Scripture
October 28, 2025

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Well, if you have your copy of God's Word, let me invite you to turn to Psalm 1. Tonight, we're going to continue our Bibliology series by looking at the necessity, the relevancy, and the infallibility of Scripture. So we've been looking at different attributes or perfections of Scripture. This semester, tonight, we're going to consider three: necessity, relevancy, and infallibility.

Well, Augustine of Hippo, the early church father, was born in North Africa on November 13th, 354 AD. And during his lifetime, Augustine made many major theological contributions. No Christian writer of the ancient world has left us a larger body of work than Augustine himself. We have over 100 of his books, 307 of his letters, and 583 of his sermons. Now, it's amazing thinking about this man preaching and teaching the Word of God in the fourth century, some 1,000 years before the printing press. It's staggering that we have this much content from someone from so long ago. But we are indebted to him because of the several major theological contributions that he gave us. For example, if you look through his writings, he was one of the early Christians to help articulate how to explain the doctrine of the Trinity. He was also key in helping us understand the doctrine of what we now call the doctrine of original sin. He was also highly influential in putting together the terminology and subsequent explanation of soteriology or the doctrine of salvation. If you look back at his works, he placed a major emphasis and shed a lot of biblical light on the doctrine of election. But Augustine, not only is he known for his theological contributions, as I mentioned earlier, we have a massive amount of his works that are still available to us today.

Some of these works you may recognize, but he has a massive work entitled "On the Trinity" where he explores the doctrine of the triune God, that He is one divine essence and He is three distinct persons. And we'll talk about those realities next semester. Now, another book, probably his most well-known book, is basically a devotional book that he wrote entitled "Confessions." In this book, he wrote about his early life and his road to the Christian faith. It's a personal

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devotional style book. Really, nothing like this exists in the ancient world, and this is actually how we know so much about Augustine because of his book titled “Confessions.” But another crucial work that he wrote is titled “The City of God.” It was written in 400 AD during that year or around that year. The first half of the book is a response to the idea that Christians were responsible for the sack or the plundering of Rome. Now, Augustine says, well, that's not true. And actually, the fall of Rome essentially was due to paganism.

The second half of the City of God is a book about two cities. One city that trusts God and abides by His word and abides by His ways, and another city filled with those who have rejected God and desire to live out their sinful passions. So, Augustine writes about two cities, the city of God that is full of believers who live under the reign and rule of the Triune God, and the city of man, which is full of people who have never repented of their sins and trusted in Christ. So, Augustine explains the Scriptures to show that there have always been two cities in this world, and that every human being that has ever existed lives as a citizen in one city or the other. We have to ask ourselves tonight, what city do we live in? Even more personal, according to Augustine's work, what city are you a citizen of?

And one of the primary characteristics of those who are citizens of the city of God is the fact that we delight in God's Word. Tonight, as we continue our study in Bibliology, which is essentially the study of the perfections or attributes of the Bible, we have to begin by asking ourselves if we truly delight in God's Word. Then as an entry point into our study tonight, I want us to examine Psalm 1, because Psalm 1 not only categorizes Augustine's two cities, but it really drives home the point that God's people take God's Word seriously.

Let's read Psalm 1 together. God's Word says,

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the council of the wicked,
Nor stand in the path of sinners,
Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!
But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
And in His law, he meditates day and night.

He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water,
Which yields its fruit in its season,
And its leaf does not wither,
And in whatever he does he prospers.

The wicked are not so,
But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.
Therefore, the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the assembly or congregation of the righteous.
For the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
But the way of the wicked will perish.

So this text powerfully describes those who live in the city of man, and those who live in the city of God. Now, to show you a stark contrast, let me begin by giving you several characteristics of those who are citizens of the city of man. In other words, Psalm 1 will lay out several characteristics or distinguishing marks of the unbeliever, of the one who has never professed Christ as Lord and does not believe in the one true God. So the city of man consists really of four characteristics according to Psalm 1, and we're not going to spend a lot of time looking at these characteristics, but I just want you to see them so you can rehearse them in your mind to see the contrast of the citizens that live in the city of God. So four characteristics here of those who live in the city of man.

Number one, unbelievers follow the advice of the wicked. Number two, unbelievers follow the sin patterns of the wicked. And number three, unbelievers associate with the resources of the wicked. And then lastly, unbelievers perish at the judgment seat of God. These are characteristics of those who live in the city of man. They follow the advice of the wicked, they engage in the sin patterns of the wicked, they associate with all of the resources that the wicked have produced, and ultimately, we're told they will perish at the judgment seat of God on that final day.

Now, let's look at Psalm 1 in terms of how it speaks about those who are citizens of the city of God. Let's examine these characteristics. Psalm 1 lays out several characteristics about the man who lives in this city. This is the true believer. We saw this in verse 2. True believers delight in the Word of God. The blessed man of verse 1, we are told according to verse 2, that man, that redeemed sinner, the one who has bowed the knee to Christ, we are told that his delight is in the law of the Lord, in the law of Yahweh. That word delight means to take pleasure in something. The blessed man, the man that lives in the city of God, he takes pleasure in the law of God. In other words, the blessed man delights in all of Scripture. Let me ask you tonight, do you delight in the Bible? If you remember back to our study of Psalm 19, do you desire the Bible, God's

Word, more than silver? Do you desire it more than gold? Is it sweeter to you than honey? Do you read it? Do you memorize it? Do you try and apply it? Those who are in the city of God delight in the Bible.

A second characteristic we saw in Psalm 1 is that believers, true Christians, meditate on the Word of God. Believers meditate on the Word of God. Look at verse 2. Verse 2 says, And in His law, in His word, in the Scripture, the blessed man, notice how often he meditates. He meditates day and night. The Hebrew word for meditate actually means to whisper. That's the idea that the blessed man, the one who is in the city of God, he whispers the Word of God internally in his own heart all day and all night. This simply means that he thinks deeply about God's Word. He thinks deeply about how to gain knowledge of it and then subsequently to do something about it.

Number three, believers produce fruit consistent with the Word of God.

And then one final characteristic that we see here is that believers have an intimate relationship with God. So let me say this again. One of the primary characteristics of those who are citizens of the city of God is delighting in God's Word, men, and, ultimately, that's my prayer for all of us tonight. It's not only that we would delight in explicitly reading the Bible in our morning devotional times, or our afternoon devotional times, or in our evening times. It's not only that we would delight in God's Word on Sunday mornings in corporate worship, but even thinking about perfections or attributes of Scripture, what the Bible says about the Bible, my prayer is that we would even delight in those realities.

So tonight, we're going to look at three different perfections of Scripture. As I've already mentioned, we're going to look at the necessity of Scripture, the relevancy of Scripture, and then we'll look at the infallibility of Scripture. So let's begin our time by looking at the necessity of Scripture, or the necessity of the Bible.

And I want to do what we did two weeks ago. I want to start by looking at a definition of necessity. That way, we're all beginning here on a level playing field. Now, like I did with the sufficiency of Scripture, I want to go back a few hundred years to consider a definition for the necessity of Scripture that was written by the founders of the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith. Now, if you were here two weeks ago, we explored the reformed Presbyterian role or the reformed Presbyterian world by looking at the Westminster Confession of Faith. So I don't want

to leave the Baptist out of the discussion here, so tonight we want to look at the 1689 London Baptist Confession and their definition of what the necessity of Scripture is.

So in 1677, the reformed Baptist community published the Second London Confession of Faith. These men and their respected churches wanted to demonstrate that their Baptist beliefs were not only derived and in lockstep with Scripture, but that their beliefs were also in line with the Reformation, the 16th century movement that retrieved the core doctrines of the Christian faith, and pulled away from the apostate Roman Catholic Church. Now, as with other confessions that were developed in the post-Reformation era, the writers of the Confession sought to outline and describe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. So in these Confessions, these men and these churches weren't looking to begin a new faith. They were looking to take the Scripture and then to document and outline and define all of the fundamentals of the faith that had been obscured and covered for several hundred years. The 1689, like the other main Confessions, begins by describing how man can come to a knowledge of God.

James Rennehan, in his book on the 1689 London Baptist Confession, he writes, "True theology is erected on the Word of God. It rests on exegesis, collates the results of that task, and carefully articulates the results." So what did the writers of this Confession conclude about the necessity of Scripture? Well, as we look at their definition, let's break it down into four propositions, and this will help us wrap our minds around what we think or should think about when we consider the necessity of Scripture. So let's begin by understanding that the writers of the Confession first, they laid out that Scripture is the only rule for salvation, sanctification, and obedience to the Lord. So in their definition, they highlight that Scripture is the only rule for salvation, sanctification, and obedience to the Lord.

You can see what they said here on the slide. They wrote, "The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience." Okay, so that's how they begin. Now let's move to proposition number two. In proposition number two, they make clear that God is pleased to make Himself known to all people at all times in general revelation. So here's what they go on to say, "Although the light of nature and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God as to leave men inexcusable, yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and His will which is

necessary unto salvation.” So the writers of the Confession start by saying that Scripture is the only rule for faith and practice. But then they also highlight the fact that God has made Himself known in what we call general revelation.

Remember all the way back when Pastor Tom taught us in August, he focused on general revelation. So then these men go on to say in Proposition number three, that God is pleased to make Himself known in special revelation. So now, we're talking about what has been recorded or what has been written in the Word of God. Notice what these men say and follow their logic. “Therefore, it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in diversified manners to reveal Himself and to declare that His will unto His church. And afterward, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, the malice of Satan, and of the world.” So God has been pleased or was pleased to make Himself known in special revelation, to declare His will, to establish His truth, to comfort His church, and to help us fight against the flesh, Satan, and the world system.

Now, this is all leading up to the necessity of Scripture here in proposition number four. So follow with what they're saying here, that God is pleased to document special revelation in Scripture. So they go on to say, “To commit the same holy unto writing, which makes the holy Scriptures to be most necessary. Those former ways of God's revealing His will unto His people being now completed.” So after the writers of the confession work through Scripture being the only rule for all of faith and practice, after they lay out a doctrine of general revelation, and after they lay out a doctrine of special revelation in Scripture, they summarize it all. They put an exclamation point on their entire statement by saying that holy Scripture is the most necessary.

Now to summarize from our perspective and vantage point, we need Scripture to come to a knowledge of salvation, to grow in sanctification, to fight against our flesh, to be victorious over Satan, and to never be tossed to and fro by the evil and corrupt world system. Brothers, we need Scripture for those reasons. And by the way, this is isolated to God's created image bearers. Because if you look at this from God's perspective, think of necessity from God's perspective. Does God actually need the Bible? Well, He does not need Scripture. It is not a necessity to or for Him. God has given it to us for our good, and of course, His glory, but God Himself doesn't

need Scripture. And this is why we need to understand the creator-creature distinction. God Himself doesn't need the Bible. We as creatures need the Bible. The Bible is necessary.

I mean, think back to the Old Testament. For a couple thousand years before Moses' writing of the law, God instructed His people by spoken word, and such revelation was passed down through oral tradition. And that revelation that was spoken by word and passed down through oral tradition was sufficient revelation to save and sanctify people. I mean, we would all say that Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness, and that he became more sanctified throughout his life, yet he didn't have the inscripturated Word of God. So God could have continued to communicate with us through spoken word and oral tradition only. So God, in effect, does not need Scripture.

Francis Turretin, he puts it like this. "God, indeed, was not bound to the Scriptures, but He has bound us to them." And then Turretin goes on to write, "The doctrine was always the same, nor has it been changed by the mode of revelation or delivery, nor by the mutations of time." In other words, only God communicates truth, and He did so by spoken word prior to the time of Moses, but then from the time of Moses until the Apostle John, God delivered His revelation through the prophets of old and the apostles of new, and gave us, in effect, the word of truth. So, revelation, the Scripture, the Bible, it's necessary for us. It's necessary for man. And where we are in redemptive history, such revelation has been canonized in the Word of God. Simply put, men, we need the Bible.

So, with that basic understanding of necessity in view, let's now look at not only a definition of necessity, but let's now consider the attacks against necessity. So, when we think about the necessity of Scripture, how we as fallen sinners, how we need God's revelation, let's think about at least three here that I've mapped out, but there are certainly more. Let's look at three attacks against the necessity of the Bible. The first one, I've simply labeled charismaticism or the charismatic movement. How does this movement attack the necessity of Scripture? Well, it's because this movement focuses on new revelation and experience. Now, I don't want to spend a lot of time here, but I want you to be aware of how the charismatic movement inherently attacks the necessity of Scripture. A hallmark of the movement is that God today speaks new, fresh, divine revelation to you in the same or similar ways that He did to the prophets of the Old

Testament and the apostles of the New Testament. So in the charismatic movement, the desire is for new revelation. In fact, that new revelation becomes the necessity, not what was written. And you understand this, men. Many of you, including myself, came out of a charismatic background or the charismatic movement. And we understand that the emphasis in that movement, a majority of the time, is placed on new revelation or a new word from God and experience.

Those ideas, those concepts, actually attack the necessity of Scripture because it teaches that the Bible isn't necessary for salvation and sanctification, but new, fresh revelation and experience are. So, in other words, your experience becomes the standard. Your experience becomes the rule by which your faith and practice are lived out. Experience becomes the necessity, not what was written on the pages of Scripture. A second attack—well, actually, let me stop right here. If you haven't read Pastor Tom's book, "A Biblical Case for Cessationism," he goes into this world, and he dissects the idea that God is still giving new revelation. He refutes that idea, and he goes through six or seven different arguments to explain why that ended with the prophets and the apostles. And we've been sold out for a while, and we finally have them back in the bookstore. So go down there and get you a copy this weekend.

So a second attack on Scripture that I think it would be helpful for us to consider is Catholicism. Catholicism, in Roman Catholic theology, they promote the magisterium and tradition. That's what becomes necessary, not the Bible. So listen to me carefully here. So Roman Catholicism does affirm many right and sound concepts with respect to Bibliology, they will affirm inerrancy, they will affirm relevancy, and other doctrines of Scripture. And this is what makes Catholicism dangerous, because some of their theology is right. But make no mistake, they elevate the magisterium, their church leaders, and their church traditions on a par with Scripture, and in some cases above Scripture. So by default, their theology teaches that Scripture is necessary, but listen, but equally necessary are popes and bishops and the church's traditions. And here again lies the problem with Rome. They can't keep their category straight. Lines become blurred. Rather than the pope and tradition sitting under the Bible, they elevate those things above the Bible. Scripture and the church are equally necessary. Well, the correct view is to say that Scripture alone is necessary, and pastors and elders sit under the rule and authority of the Bible. You have to keep your category straight. Like Roman Catholicism doesn't. So Rome and any

other ism that usurps the necessity of Scripture must be rejected. So we have to be aware of these things.

A third attack that we can consider tonight is individualism, also known as the modern self. Carl Truman in his excellent book, "Strange New World," he's got "The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self." That's a few hundred pages. And then the distilled version of that is called "Strange New World." So this one's taken from "Strange New World." Here's what he says about the modern self. "The modern self is one where authenticity is achieved by acting outwardly in accordance with one's inward feelings. We might even say that the very notion of personal lifestyle choice is a symptom of a society where expressive individualism is the normative way of thinking about self and its place in the world. In other words, you be you, you do you, and however you want to go about living your life and your truth is up to you.

Men, there's a reason why Scripture repeatedly warns us to abandon ourselves, to forsake ourselves, to lean not on our own understanding. The modern self says that man is the necessity. Man needs to determine what is right and wrong. Man needs to determine what is moral and ethical. We have to reject these ideas and these attacks on the necessity of the Bible.

So, we have seen the definition of necessity, just a few attacks against necessity. Let's now look at the biblical foundation for necessity. The biblical foundation for necessity. Now, there are many portions of Scripture that we could turn to tonight to help build this doctrine. We could string together and pull together numerous passages to make a case for necessity, but I just want to consider a few. So, let's begin by looking at Proverbs chapter 22. Turn there with me if you have your copy of God's Word. Proverbs 22. Now, the Proverbs are an interesting genre of Scripture. They consider us to draw near to God for His glory and to seek wisdom for daily living. And here is exactly what we find exactly that in this text. Let's start reading in verse 17. Solomon writes, "Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, and apply your heart to my knowledge. For it is a pleasant thing if you keep them within you. Let them all be fixed upon your lips." Verse 19, "So that your trust may be in the Lord. I have taught you today, even you. Have I not written to you excellent things of councils and knowledge, to make you know the certainty of the words of truth that you may correctly answer him who sent you?"

Now, let's stop there. So, notice in verse 22 that Solomon tells us that our trust must be in the Lord. Notice it's God's covenant name that's mentioned here in the text, the covenant-keeping God of the nation of Israel. We are told here that we need to trust in the all-wise and all-sufficient God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Now, how do we come to know and trust this covenant-keeping God? That's the question that we need to ask. We'll look back at verse 20. We come to know him by the excellent things of councils and knowledge, which, according to Solomon, the author of Proverbs, has come through what has been written down. Notice verse 21, which is called the certainty of the words of truth. So we come to know the excellent things of God through what has been written down, the certainty of the words of truth. Now, when are we supposed to invest in this type of council and in this kind of knowledge? When are we called to spend time in these certainty of words? Well, notice verse 19, it tells us, today, today. So what Solomon is saying is that our daily, ongoing, relentless pursuit must be of the words of truth.

So we all understand that Solomon, right, he's the wisest man to have ever lived, and we are told here by his own lips, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that the certainty of the words of truth, the excellent things of councils and knowledge, we are supposed to seek those things daily. Men, the necessity of Scripture is absolutely crucial. Every one of us in this room tonight needs a daily dose of it. So Solomon is teaching that we need what has been written down, not only in the Proverbs. That's Solomon's primary intent here, what he has written about before. But we also need what has been written down all across Holy Scripture. In fact, we often forget that as it relates to the Book of Proverbs. The Book of Proverbs, a good chunk of Proverbs is actually built off of previous revelation of Scripture. That's why you see so much harmony with what was written in Proverbs and even say back in the Pentateuch. Solomon is telling us to invest time in the Proverbs, but the wider principle is Solomon is telling us that all of Scripture is necessary for the man of God to be wise.

Now, let's jump to the New Testament. Let's turn to Romans chapter 15, as we keep building a foundation for the necessity of Scripture, we looked at Proverbs 22. Now, I want us to consider Romans 15. Just one verse in Romans 15. Paul writes in verse 4, "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope." Now, just looking at the context of Romans 15 from an aerial view, Paul is simply trying to encourage believers to be unified. And he's encouraging

believers who are younger in the faith and those who are seasoned in the faith. In fact, chapter 14 of the Book of Romans focuses on Christian liberties. But here in chapter 15, Paul says, look, you need to go back to previous Scriptures. You need to go back to what was previously written down to see what has been left for our instruction. And it's through that instruction; it's through that necessary word that you are able to persevere and be unified as a people of God.

So in chapter 14, Paul talks about Christian liberties. And then in chapter 15, Paul uses Christ as an example of one who sought the benefit of others and looked towards serving his neighbor. Paul basically says, we are to emulate Christ. And when making this particular argument, Paul explicitly quotes an Old Testament text about Christ not pleasing Himself. And then in verse four, which we just read, Paul says the Old Testament was written to help us. So Paul making his argument for unity among brothers as it relates to Christian liberties, he holds up Christ as the supreme example for putting others, for putting your neighbor first, and then he says, go back to the Old Testament, read what was written, and learn from it.

What is written in Holy Scripture is necessary to teach and train believers. Robert Mounts, in his Commentary on Romans, he puts it excellently. He says, "Verse four contains a principle of great significance for the 20th century believer. Everything that was written in Scripture in days gone by was written for us. Not only did it serve the needs of its own day, but it is still relevant in the modern world. Scripture is relevant because it speaks to our deepest needs." So, Mount's here, he's telling us as he's working out the application of this text, that Scripture is necessary. And just because it's Scripture of old, doesn't mean that it isn't necessary and relevant today. (I mean, in my Sunday school class, a plug for my Sunday school class, third hour, we meet here in the chapel. Omega is the name of the Sunday school class. We just had a potluck last Sunday. We just came and ate food for an hour. But we needed to do that because we've been studying the Book of Leviticus for the last few months.) But it's amazing to look back at that ancient book, that ancient sacrificial system, and to see truths that were so pertinent and crucial to the nation of Israel as they were at the foot of Mount Sinai. But at the same time, to see so many connections to the person and work of Jesus Christ that it grips your heart even today to live unto the Lord, to live sacrificially unto Him.

Brothers, again, Scripture is necessary for us. It will help us in all things that pertain to life and godliness, even Leviticus. (We'll be doing Leviticus 8 on Sunday, if you want to join us, by the way.) So that's the Book of Proverbs and the Book of Romans. Let's look at another example in 2 Peter, Chapter 1. Turn to 2 Peter, Chapter 1.

Let's consider a third text as we look at the biblical foundation of necessity, 2 Peter, Chapter 1. (Now, if you've been with us on Sunday nights in our Sunday evening service, we're going through the Book of 2 Peter. And just a couple of weeks ago, Pastor Jonathan walked through this text. So if you want the full treatment of that, just go back and listen online to that message.) But I want to give you just a brief snapshot of how this text relates to the necessity of Scripture. Look at 2 Peter 1:19. Peter writes, "So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

Now, you're familiar with this text, and if you've done any work in systematic theology, you're going to find this text in every bibliology section. I want to focus on three key insights that we find in this text that help us understand the necessity of Scripture. The first insight that I want to consider is that this text deals with the priority of Scripture. Verse 19, "to which you do well to pay attention." So if you're the type that underlines or highlights or marks up your iPad, I would underline the word "pay attention," the two words pay attention. That's a present active participle that means to give heed, to follow, or to give attention. Peter says that you would do well, or that it would be right, or it would be correct for you without exception to follow or pay attention to the Word of God. He says to always be paying attention to the Word of God. So this is connected to Psalm 1, where the blessed man, he meditates on the law of God day and night. Here, Peter, hundreds of years later, he's saying, always be paying attention to the Word of God.

Why? Well, a second key insight we find in this text deals with the effect of Scripture. So the priority of Scripture is to always pay attention to it, keep it at the fore. A second insight that we find here is the effect of Scripture. Look at verse 19. As to a lamp shining in a dark place. In other words, pay attention to Scripture because it is a lamp shining forth, blazing light in

darkness. Psalm 119, verse 105 says, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Those who are in Christ, those who delight in God’s Word, read Scripture, take heed to it, and then operate as if it is true. Peter says, pay attention. Always be paying attention to Scripture. Why? Because it is a lamp in a dark place. In terms of necessity, how long is Scripture to be necessary for you? Well, Peter gives us a third and final key insight, and that is the lifespan of Scripture.

Look at verse 19. How long are we to pay attention to Scripture? Verse 19, “until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.” That’s pretty clear, right? We aren’t done with Scripture tonight when we leave Institutes. Peter says, pay attention to Scripture until Christ returns. You see that there’s no end to Peter’s words. He says that we are always to be taking heed to Scripture. Men, that is the call on our life. This is where our Christian duties begin. We show allegiance to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by taking heed to His word at all times. And then we allow that to be a lamp that shines in a dark place. We allow that to govern our path. John Calvin, he writes, “Peter’s object only was to teach us that the whole course of our life ought to be guided by God’s Word; for otherwise, we must be involved on every side in the darkness of ignorance. And the Lord does not shine on us, except when we take His word as our light.” I mean, you can see Calvin’s words plainly. Do we want to be in darkness and walk in ignorance, or do we want to abide by the Word of God and allow it to be our everlasting lamp and light until Christ returns? Let’s consider another passage.

Turn to 2 Timothy chapter 3. Now, you understand the context of 2 Timothy 3. I feel like every session we’ve had in Bibliology; we have turned to 2 Timothy 3 at some point. So you understand the context. Paul has just written at the beginning of the chapter to expose false teachers, not only their deceptive doctrine, but their deceptive actions. Paul says, don’t be like them, rather focus your attention on what you have learned from godly people in your lives in whom they taught you the Scriptures. It was those godly people that taught you the Bible. Notice verse 15, Paul calls the Scriptures the sacred writings. Now in 2 Timothy 3, 15, Paul says that “it was the sacred writings that were made known to him that were able to make him wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.” What I want us to see here is that the Scriptures led someone to salvation in faith in Christ. We understand this reality. This is ultimately our own spiritual biography. It is those Scriptures which are necessary for salvation. And notice just

probably one page over in 2 Timothy 4, Paul then exhorts Timothy to preach those Scriptures. To preach that word. To preach the infallible Word of God.

Paul says the Scripture is necessary for your own soul, but it's also necessary for others. In other words, Scripture is not only the authority in our lives, but it is a crucial necessity. Now, that's the Biblical foundation for necessity. Let's begin looking at the categories for necessity. So we've got a few more minutes here before we'll take a break, and we'll look at a couple of these. But let's begin working through the categories of necessity.

So I think we're tracking with our understanding of the necessity of Scripture. We've seen a definition. We've also looked at several attacks on the necessity of Scripture. We sort of laid a biblical foundation that the authors of Scripture call us to understand how crucial and necessary the Bible is. Now I just want to look through different categories of necessity, and what components of our Christian life must we run to the Scriptures. That's basically what we're going to do here in this section.

So the first category of Scripture that I want us to consider is that Scripture is necessary for salvation. Let's turn to the Book of James as we begin looking at this specific category. James chapter 1. Let's turn to James 1. Now, if you were to summarize the Book of James, you would say that the Book of James centers on the effects of saving faith. In other words, the Book of James maps out how Christians are supposed to live post justification. And, by the way, this was most likely the first book written of the New Testament just in terms of chronological order. Most likely, it was written around AD 46 or AD 47, but this letter was crucial in that time period because it really mapped out how Christians were supposed to be living their daily life. Now that you are saved, how should you live? So, it's a very practical book that focuses on Christian living.

Let's read verses 19 through 22 of chapter 1. "This you know, my beloved brethren, but everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger. For the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility, receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. Let's stop there.

So, you can see how practical those verses are. In those verses that we just read together, James maps out how believers are to respond in this life, if they are truly saved. It's summed up there in verse 22, they must be doers of the word, not simply hearers.

And James goes on to stress this all throughout his letter, right? Probably the most familiar portion of that is James 2, where he brings to the four two categories of faith, right? True, authentic faith is faith that produces works, right? The false faith is a profession of faith that does not produce good works. So again, James is concerned about, now that you are in Christ, what are you doing about it? And we saw some of that practicality there in the verses we just considered. But for our purposes, look back at verse 21. James says, "Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls." So in this verse, James is explicit. He describes the necessity of Scripture as it relates to bringing the sinner to salvation. James says, you have to turn from your filthiness, you have to turn from your wickedness and receive with humility the word implanted. Again, another great word to underline in your Bible here.

The idea behind implanted is a seed being sown into the ground. And once that seed takes root, it begins to show fruit. That is why at the end of verse 21, James says that the implanted word is able to save your souls. This is crucial for us to understand as it relates to necessity. How can you know if the truth of God's Word has been implanted in your own heart, thus saving your soul? James says that the word has done its work in your heart, bringing you to salvation if you are a doer of the word, not simply a hearer.

Augustine, who we talked about earlier, he writes on James, "Neither I nor any other preacher can see into your hearts, but God is looking, for nothing can be hidden from Him. Do not deceive yourselves by coming eagerly to hear the word and then failing to do it. If it is a good thing to hear, it is a much better thing to do. If you do not hear, you cannot do, and therefore, you will build nothing. But if you hear and do not do, then what you are building will be a ruin."

Brothers, Scripture is necessary for salvation. Let us never forget that it is the implanted word which is able to save our souls.

All right, so we're looking at categories of necessity. So we're looking at trying to chop up and break down why necessity is important. And we've just briefly considered, and we'll just briefly

consider these, but we've looked at necessity is crucial for salvation. Let's secondly look at necessity is crucial for sanctification. So we need the Bible to be sanctified. The classic verse on this is John 17:17, Jesus' own words in the high priestly prayer. Sanctify them by the truth. Your word is truth. So Jesus makes crystal clear that sanctification happens by the truth, and that truth is found in God's Word. But I don't want to study or examine that particular text. Instead, I want to turn to Hebrews chapter 5. Let's turn to Hebrews chapter 5, and I want to just present to you a passage that perhaps you're familiar with but maybe haven't thought of it in terms of necessity and sanctification. So maybe I can draw out a few things here from this passage. Hebrews 5.

So the overarching message of Hebrews is that Jesus Christ is superior to all, both in His person and work, but also in New Covenant realities. But this book, more than any other book, and this is really important to know about Hebrews. The book of Hebrews, more than any other book in the New Testament, describes Jesus and focuses and emphasizes Him as the great high priest. You may only find maybe one or two other Scriptures in the New Testament that tease out the theology of Christ being the great high priest. The book of Hebrews does this basically from chapters 1 to 13. I would argue that is the main point of Hebrews, focusing on Jesus as high priest. (Another plug from my Sunday school class, when we're done with Leviticus, we're doing Hebrews.)

Now, in terms of the recipients of the letter, Hebrews is probably the most debated book in the New Testament, in terms of who the author of Hebrews was writing to. So we don't know who the author is, and it's really hard to determine the audience. So it's challenging to narrow that down. But what I want us to grasp, as we consider Hebrews 5, controversies aside, some of the intended audience needed to be exhorted to grow in the faith, pursue sanctification, and no longer partake of just the milk of the word, but move on to maturity, to meat, to solid food. So in other words, some of the audience had become complacent and stagnant, and they needed to be reminded that just as babies are weaned from their mother's milk to solid foods, so it is for Christ's people spiritually speaking. Men, we don't need to stay on just the milk of the word. We need and we must over time move to solid food. That's what we find here in Hebrews 5:12-14.

Follow along as I read it. So the author of Hebrews writes, "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the

oracles of God [or the Word of God], and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.” So at its heart, this passage deals with Christian sanctification, which requires constant interaction and exposure to the Word of God. The writer addresses those believers who were spiritual infants. And notice, he encourages them to move on to maturity.

Now here, in verses 12 through 14, the author of Hebrews lays out several important details about sanctification. Let's look at them. The first detail he gives is the source of sanctification, Scripture. You saw it here in verse 12, but the author of Hebrews refers to Scripture. He refers to the Bible as the oracles of God, the Word of God. This undoubtedly refers to the Old Testament revelation, but also the New Testament. The author of Hebrews says, for you to grow in your sanctification, you have to invest in the only source that can perform that work in you, the Bible. Now, of course, he's not, and hear me on this, he's not saying it's just the Bible alone, okay? Obviously, he affirms the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit, okay? Every passage can't say everything, all right? So he is saying, for you to grow in your faith from milk to meat, you have to have regular intake of the Word of God, the oracles of God.

While at the same time, he affirms the work of the Holy Spirit. In fact, if you go back to... We're not turning there tonight, but if you go back to Hebrews 1 and subsequent chapters, oftentimes when he quotes the Old Testament, the author of Hebrews says, the Holy Spirit said, okay? So the author of Hebrews has a great pneumatology. He understands the Holy Spirit. But here, his focus is on the oracles of God. Notice verse 13. Not only does he talk about the oracles of God, verse 13, he calls the Bible or Scripture the word of righteousness. So this unique expression, “word of righteousness,” this isn't talking about the imputed righteousness of Christ that you receive at justification. Rather, the word of righteousness here and the way the author of Hebrews is trying to use it, he's talking about progressive righteousness, or we might say progressive sanctification. He's talking about growth in sanctification from being on milk to meat. The point is, the author of Hebrews knows that it's only God's Word that can produce authentic spiritual growth in the life of the believer. And for that reason, brothers, Scripture is necessary. Without God's Word, there will be no spiritual growth.

Now, another important detail we find in this passage, not only do we see the source of sanctification, we also see the progress of sanctification from infancy to maturity. The issue here, and you saw this in verse 12, is that some of the Christians that the author was writing to should have been spiritually mature, but they weren't. Look back at verse 12. "For though by this time, you ought to be teachers." So in other words, the author of Hebrews is saying, hey, look, it's been a long time. I mean, it's been so long that you should be teachers. You should be teaching the Word of God, but you aren't. You are still on milk. So for whatever reason, and we're not exactly sure here, their growth had been stunted, and they were only drinking milk. But notice the end of verse 12. "And you have come to need milk and not solid food." Notice verse 13. If you only partake of milk, you are an infant. Look at verse 14. "But solid food is for the mature." Again, the issue was, well, let me put it this way. The issue wasn't that they were not saved. The doctrine of justification was affirmed in their lives. The issue is, they didn't recognize that Scripture was necessary for their spiritual growth. And because of that, we're not for sure how long, months, possibly years, their growth was stunted. They should have been leading the Bible studies at church, but instead, they were still on the basics of the basics.

Notice what Martin Luther says. Martin Luther writes, "For because of the time, they ought to have been teachers if they had been watchful and eager in the understanding of the Scriptures. Now, however, they have been sluggish and have not worked that land of promise flowing with milk of honey, that is, Holy Scripture. I mean, Luther's right. They were sluggish, and they had missed out on developing spiritual maturity. They did not grow. Why? Because they weren't invested in the Scriptures.

Now, there's a final important detail this passage gives us, thirdly, the goal of sanctification, and that is wisdom. So we've seen the source, the progress, and now let's consider the goal of sanctification. We find that here in Chapter 5. Obviously, the primary goal of sanctification is the glory of God. We get that. That's not his particular focus here. Obviously, part of the goal of sanctification is the glory of God. Obviously, part of the goal of sanctification is godliness, Christlikeness, and those things. But here the author of Hebrews highlights that the goal of sanctification is also wisdom. So this connects us back to the Book of Proverbs. Remember, the Book of Proverbs maps out ways to live the Christian life, daily living, similar to James. Here, the author of Hebrews picks up on that motif.

Sanctification, the goal of it in his mind is wisdom. Look at verse 14. “But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.” So here he's not talking about spiritual infants, but the mature. Notice here, those who are mature have been trained in their senses. That word trained, we see this a few times in the New Testament, but the Greek word for trained is where we get our English word gymnasium, or gym. The author of Hebrews is telling the audience they need to get in the gym and train in the Scriptures. That's what he's saying. You've got to train in the Scriptures, but what will that produce? Well, one, it'll take you from milk to meat, but it will also produce in you wisdom. That's why I look again at the end of verse 14. So you can discern good and evil.

John Owen, he writes, “To be deprived of the food of our souls is of all distresses the most dreadful.” Let me read that again. “To be deprived of the food of our souls is of all distresses the most dreadful.” We cannot deprive our souls of the Word of God. And that's what the author of Hebrews is pushing that audience and us today towards. We want to be mature. We want to progress. We want to eat meat.

So we've looked at the necessity of Scripture for salvation and sanctification. Let's look at the necessity of Scripture for spiritual war. Turn to Ephesians 6. So all of Scripture, particularly the New Testament, makes clear that we are in a war against Satan and his demons. Now, the two classic texts on this are 2 Corinthians 10 and Ephesians 6. In 2 Corinthians 10, Paul says, look, we aren't warring according to human flesh, but we're looking to bring down fortresses and strongholds, and we are to take every thought captive to Christ, in obedience to Christ. And in Ephesians 6, Paul is essentially mapping out the same reality, the same theology, but here in Ephesians 6, He equips believers with the armor of God. And brothers, we need the armor of God. None of us are exempt from the attacks of Satan.

1 Peter 5 tells us that Satan, that he walks around like a roaring lion, seeking to whom he may devour. I mean, he's coming for us, right? And he will relentlessly attack us, and he will relentlessly pursue us to lead us astray. We are in a spiritual war, a spiritual battle, and we need Scripture to be able to go on the offense, but also on the defense. He sought to bring down Adam in the Garden of Eden. He sought to bring down Christ in the wilderness. And I'm telling you, he seeks to bring us down as well.

Well, to help Christians fight in this battle, Ephesians 6 lists and describes several pieces of armor. I just want to consider one of them, and that is the sword of the Spirit. Look at verse 13. “Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything to stand firm. Stand firm therefore.” And then he lists out several pieces of armor, but jump down to verse 17, “and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” Now, let's stop there. So this sword described here was probably two inches wide and 20 inches long. It was very sharp, and it was primarily used for hand-to-hand combat. Paul says, in order to fight against the devil, that you must have this sword, and you must be trained and equipped to use it. And Paul says that this sword is, in fact, the Word of God. In other words, Paul says, look, if you're going to fight in this spiritual battle, if you are going to win this war, you have to have the sword of the Spirit.

Well, what is the sword of the Spirit? Well, what do we mean by the sword of the Spirit being the Word of God? Well, when Tom preached through this section of Scripture, Ephesians 6, several sermons, I might add, I know that's not a shock to you, but he said this about the sword of the Spirit. He said, “The sword of the Spirit is the knowledgeable use of the propositions of Scripture to defend against Satan.” In other words, we need to be armed with bits and pieces of Scripture so that in the middle of Satan's attacks and temptations, we can recall it and access it to thwart off Satan and to fight in our battle against sin. So practically, what does this look like?

Well, practically, obviously, we're supposed to have a holistic understanding of the Bible. But at the same time, according to Ephesians 6, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, we are supposed to have bits and pieces of Scripture memorized that we can recall quickly in the times of temptation. I mean, consider the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and the many times when faced with temptation, He quoted Scripture. Now, we just studied in Matthew 4, when Jesus was being tempted by Satan in the wilderness, that three times He quotes from Deuteronomy 6 through 8. Now, the primary point of that passage is to show his victory over sin and to demonstrate He is the new Adam, the King of the universe. But one of the implications of that passage is when Jesus was tempted, He was quick to throw out small pieces of Scripture to fight off the temptation to sin. That's exactly what we're supposed to do in our spiritual battle. Men, we must know Scripture. We must memorize it. And we must do that because we are in a spiritual war.

Fourthly, we also need Scripture for the mortification of sin. Now, we're going to need to pick up the pace a little bit here as we go through some of these. So stick with me here as we start working our way a little bit faster here. But we need Scripture to mortify sin.

First, we need Scripture to identify sin. Men, we have to do this in our own lives. We have to examine our own hearts, and then we have to give our sins actual biblical labels. I know it may be cringe to do that. I know it may be difficult to identify explicitly your sins, but in order to mortify sin, you have to know what sin you are dealing with or what sin you are struggling with.

Thankfully, Scripture helps us with this because it identifies our sin. Scripture is necessary for this. The Apostle Paul in Romans 7:7, he says, “What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? May it never be. On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the law, for I would not have known about coveting if the law had not said, You shall not covet.” So if we're going to mortify our sin, Scripture helpfully gets us to the points where we can identify our sin.

Secondly, Scripture will help cleanse us from our sin. So Scripture is necessary to cleanse us from our sin. You know, there's not any power in the actual pages, right? We understand that. But Scripture calls us to repent of our sins, not only in terms of justification, but in terms of sanctification. You know, everybody talks about Martin Luther's 95 theses. The first one, the first point that he makes there is that all of the Christian life is about repentance. So we need to repent, to cleanse, to be cleansed from sin, 1 John 1:9. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Scripture is also necessary to promote your progressive sanctification.

Turn to Ephesians 4. So not only—and this Ephesians 4 passage is absolutely imperative for us to know and for us to grasp and for us to understand as we look to mortify sin. Because Scripture not only identifies our sin, Scripture also tells us that we can be cleansed from our sin, but then Scripture also gives us a path forward on how to put on the opposite virtue. This is Ephesians 4:25-32. We don't have time to go through all of this but just make a note in your notes to read through this passage at some point over the next couple of weeks. So what Paul does in Ephesians 4:25-32, is he gives us really the put off and put on principle. He says to put off this sin and to put on the opposite virtue. Here's just an example. Look in verse 25. Paul says, look, “Lay aside falsehood.” So if you have problems with lying, Paul says, lay that aside, turn

from that sin, and then notice verse 25, he says, “Speak the truth.” Let's go to verse 28, another example. If you have issues with stealing, verse 28, then you must put off that sin and then begin to work hard. So he does this. He just identifies sins, and then he gives you the opposite virtue to put on. Scripture is necessary. This is helpful, right?

So Scripture tells us what we should not do, but then thankfully Scripture tells us what we should do. So Scripture is necessary for the mortification of sin. Next, Scripture is necessary for the administration of the church. Paul writes to Timothy in 1st Timothy 3:14-15, “I write to you.” So this is one of the most clear statements that Paul gives. “I write to you, Timothy, so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God.” So Scripture is necessary for the administration of the church. The church best operates when the church sits under the Word of God. You know this.

Next, Scripture is necessary for the advancement of the gospel. Turn over to Romans 10. I want to look at a couple of verses from Romans 10. So, you're familiar with Romans 10, and at this point in Paul's argument, he has demonstrated the doctrine of election in Romans 9. He shows human responsibility in Romans 10, and then he gives a basic gospel call in verses 9 and 10 that you have to confess Jesus as Lord, and you have to believe in your heart that God raised Christ from the dead. That's just basic, vanilla Christianity. You have to profess Christ as Lord to be saved. And then Paul goes on in verses 11 through 13, and you can just take your eyes across these verses just to refresh your memory. Paul says, look, whoever believes or whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, so it doesn't matter if it's Jew or Gentile. If you repent and turn from your sin and believe on Christ, you will be saved.

But in verses 14 through 17, Paul then lays out a series of rhetorical questions that highlight the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the fact that it has to be proclaimed. Now we understand this, right? If we've ever evangelized the lost or we've shared the gospel or communicated the truth about Jesus Christ with someone else, with someone that doesn't know Jesus as Lord, we understand that we have to communicate the Word of truth. We want to sow the seed of the Word, that implanted Word, so that their souls might be saved. That's exactly what Paul says in verses 14 through 17, that you must have a preacher, that someone must preach the

good news. Someone must be sent, and someone must convey the message. Scripture is necessary for the advancement of the gospel.

So those are the categories of necessity. Let's next look at the arguments for necessity. So the first argument that we can lay out is from God Himself. Or maybe we could put it in the form of a question. Does God Himself believe that His word is necessary? I think we know the answer to that question. But let's begin by looking at the triune God. God Himself is the best argument for the necessity of the Bible. Remember, in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, God says that you shall teach diligently to your sons, you shall talk of the commandments of God in your house. When you walk, by the way, when you lie down, when you rise up, you should bind the commandments of the Lord on your hand, on your forehead, on the doorpost of your home. But God Himself is instructing the nation of Israel as they are about to walk into the promised land, that they must bind the entire law, all of God's Word on their heart.

And not only on their individual hearts, but it must be taught to the next generation so that they too would also bind them on their heart. God Himself is the best argument for the necessity of Scripture. He literally, by audible voice, to Moses says, my words are necessary. We see this all throughout the Old Testament that should say the prophetic teaching. Joshua 1:8, remember, "The book of the Law shall not depart your mouth." So Moses hands the baton to Joshua. Joshua is going to take the people into the promised land. And we're told there that the word of the Lord, the book of the law, shall not depart from anyone's mouth. But rather, you should meditate on it day and night.

That takes us back to Psalm 1. Another reference that we could look at, if time allowed, you can jot this down, is Nehemiah chapter 8. Nehemiah chapter 8, the revival at the Watergate.

Remember, Ezra takes the book of the law, he stands up on a podium, and he opens up the book of the law, he reads the book of the law, he explains the book of the law, and all the people respond to the book of the law in worship. See, I want you to see what's going on in terms of the necessity of Scripture. In Deuteronomy 4, or Deuteronomy 6, rather, in the wilderness, the people of God are told to rely on the Bible. As the people make it into the promised land in Joshua, the people are told to rely on the Bible. Some 1,000 years later, Ezra's standing up on a platform, opening up the Bible, telling people to rely on the Bible, that it is absolutely necessary

and vital for their own souls. This is just what God's people do. They find their urgent need is the Scripture. They must come to understand it.

A third argument is Jesus Christ Himself. Think of Jesus' own life and ministry. We mentioned it earlier, but when Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, He responded with Scripture. Turn to Luke 4. Let me show you just one example of Jesus' life and ministry. Let me show you one example. Most scholars believe Luke 4, particularly verses 14 through 30—possibly 14 through the end of the chapter—lay out a basic template for the life and ministry of Jesus, what He did day in and day out. But if you just look across verses 14 through 30, you'll notice that Jesus Himself found it necessary to anchor his preaching and teaching ministry in Scripture.

In fact, look at verses 18 and 19. In verses 18 and 19, Jesus directly quotes from Isaiah 61, verses 1 and 2, and He says, today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing. Jesus makes crystal clear that what the people needed that day in the synagogue and subsequent days was the Word of God. This is how Jesus lived. Another argument for the necessity of the Bible is the apostles. Now, one that you maybe haven't thought about in terms of necessity and the apostles is the fact that in Acts chapter 1, after Judas had committed suicide, what did the apostles assess they needed to do based on the Old Testament, particularly Psalm 109? Judas had died and they knew they needed to do what? They needed to fill his spot. That's based on an Old Testament text. So the apostles found it necessary after Judas had died to review the Old Testament Scripture to see what needed to be done next, and they determined in order to fulfill Psalm 109 that they needed to add Matthias to their group. And by the way, this is a great defense for the fact that there are no apostles today. Judas dies in Acts 1, and so they fill his spot. So when Acts 2 begins, there are 12 apostles. Never again after another apostle dies, do they what? Fill a spot. Never. That only happened one time, and it was based on Psalm 109. Any other time an apostle died, they never fill his spot. In fact, James later on in Acts, James dies. His death is documented in the text, and they never fill that spot again. So as the apostles died off in the first century, what else died off? Well, the office of apostleship.

What about the first century church? Did they find the Bible necessary? Well, what was the first thing that the Bereans did after they heard a message from the apostle Paul? “They searched the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.” This is, men, now I know you know this,

right? We've been talking about this for two hours, so you've got it. You're locked in. This is hopefully ingrained in your heart. But this is what Christians have always been doing. They have always found the Scripture to be absolutely necessary. The Apostle Paul preaches to the Bereans. They listen to His word, and then they examine the Scriptures. It's an amazing pattern for us.

What about church history? Outside of the New Testament, post-apostolic age, the church age, John Chrysostom writing about people who have tried to withdraw from community, he says, "This belief has ruined you because you need it much more than they do. For those who live in the world and each day are wounded are the ones who have the most need of medicine. The things that are contained in Scripture, do you not think they are highly necessary?" So this is John Chrysostom writing in the 4th century. He's saying, look, the Bible is absolutely necessary. John Calvin, 16th century, he says, "Scripture is the school of the Holy Spirit. Just as nothing is omitted, that is both necessary and useful to know. So nothing is taught except what is expedient to know." John Gill, 17th century particular Baptist. I did not intentionally just pick John's. You know, John, John Gill, he said, "The biblical writings related all things necessary to salvation, everything that ought to be believed and done, and our complete perfect standard of faith and practice." Men, Scripture is absolutely necessary.

So, let's now consider secondly, the relevancy of Scripture. Is the Bible relevant? Let's look at a key definition real quick. How would we define relevancy? We would say that the eternal God has given us His eternal word, whose truths transcend time and are always profitable. Listen to that again. The eternal God has given us an eternal word, whose truths transcend time and are always profitable. Now, you can jot down a reference here. We've looked at it several times this semester. 2 Timothy 3, 15 through 17, particularly verse 16. "All Scripture is inspired by God and [here's our word] profitable." Now, that word profitable means useful, beneficial, advantageous. At all times, the Bible has been relevant.

Now, what are some key arguments for the relevancy of the Bible? Let's talk about some primary arguments quickly. What makes the Bible relevant? What makes the Bible relevant? I mean, why are we still reading Deuteronomy 6, which was written a couple thousand years ago? More than that. Why are we still reading that? Well, we're reading that because of the character of God. We have an eternally relevant word because we have an eternal God. 1st Timothy 1:17, "Now to the

King eternal.” We understand this. An attribute of the triune God is that God Himself is eternal. He is an eternal being. Therefore, when he gives His eternal, everlasting word, it is always relevant at all times. Again, by way of example, the Book of Leviticus. It was relevant then, it is relevant now, contrary to popular opinion. So, a key argument or a primary argument is the character of God.

Secondly, the nature of Scripture, the nature of the Bible. What does the Bible say about itself? Does the Bible itself say that it's relevant? Does the Bible itself say that its words are eternal? Just listen to these verses. Psalm 119:89. “Forever, O Lord, your word is settled in heaven.” Isaiah 40:8. “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.” We'll study this text in the Sermon on the Mount, but Matthew 5:18, Jesus says, “For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the law until it is all accomplished.” Luke 21:33, one final reference. “Heaven and earth will pass away, Jesus says, but my words will not pass away.”

A third argument is the duty of the church. In 2 Timothy 4, Paul tells Timothy to “preach the word in season and out of season.” What does that mean? Preach the word all the time. And Paul wrote that in the mid-60s AD. We're still doing that today. Preach the relevant Word of God in season and out of season.

Another argument would just be the history of the church. The history of the church. The church has always seen the Bible as relevant. In fact, you can go back to Justin Martyr, a 2nd century apologist. He documents in his writings that the early Christians were gathering together on the Lord's Day, and they were reading from the prophets of the Old Testament and the memoirs of the apostles. We understand that to be that the early church got together, and they opened up the Old Testament, and they opened up the New Testament, and as the people of God who met on Sunday morning, they read from the Word of God because they understand it to be the authoritative, inerrant, relevant, all-sufficient Word.

And again, brothers, that's why you're here tonight, right? Thank you. That's why we're here, guys. What we're here because we delight in this book. So we've seen the necessity and the relevancy of Scripture. Let's thirdly look at the infallibility of Scripture. Now, lock in with me here. I've got just one page of notes left. Now, if you read through systematic theologies or

you've engaged in theological discussions, oftentimes, you come across two words, inerrancy and infallibility, inerrancy and infallibility. And for the longest times, these two words were essentially used as synonyms. Inerrancy on the one hand means that Scripture in the original autographs, so say Paul, for example, when he wrote the Book of Romans, in that original autograph, it is without error. That's inerrancy. And I think in December, Pastor Tom's going to talk about the inerrancy of Scripture. So that's inerrancy.

Infallibility, it's not the same as inerrancy. It's related. But infallibility means that the Bible cannot fail in what it's trying to accomplish. You see the difference? So inerrancy says, in the original autographs, those documents were without any error. Infallibility says that the Bible will always accomplish what it sets out to accomplish. The Scripture cannot be broken, is how Jesus puts it in the Gospel of John. John MacArthur defines infallibility this way. "Infallibility means unable to mislead or fail in accomplishing the divinely intended purpose." So the doctrine of infallibility teaches that what Scripture says, Scripture will do. And what Scripture reveals, Scripture will accomplish. For example, when 2nd Timothy 3.16 says that God's Word, that Scripture is God-breathed, and it is able to equip the man of God for every good work, men, do we believe that God's Word can equip us for every good work? Yeah, absolutely.

That's why Philippians 2 tells us that we must "work out our salvation with fear and trembling." Don't miss that first part, not to be saved, but as part of our sanctification. God's Word says that if we will delight in His word, we will invest in His word with the power of the Holy Spirit. If those two realities are true in our own lives, that we will be equipped for every good work. God's Word will accomplish exactly what it says it will accomplish. Because Scripture is inspired, because Scripture is authoritative, because it is sufficient and necessary and relevant and inerrant, it is therefore infallible, and it will accomplish exactly what God has intended it to accomplish.

So what does all this mean for us tonight? How do we apply these realities in our own life? Well, that brings us to fourthly, just the appropriation of these perfections of Scripture. The appropriation of these realities. And I really want to take us where I did two weeks ago. I just want us to think through, think through the necessity of Scripture, the relevancy of Scripture, and the infallibility of Scripture as it relates to these categories on the screen. How can you apply? How can you appropriate? How can you map these crucial perfections of Scripture onto your

own life in these various categories? You know your context. You know your own heart, your own soul. You know your family. Do you believe that Scripture is able to heal and cure and perfect your soul? Do you believe that Scripture is able to guide you into leading and shepherding your wife and your family? I mean, do you believe the Bible is relevant and can do that today? What about in your career? What about in your community? Your country?

All of these categories, men. We've got to think how to take what we have learned theologically from God's Word and to apply these things to our own lives. If we go back to where we started with Augustine in the City of God, let me ask you, are you a citizen of the city of God? And if you claim that, if you proclaim to have repented of your sins and believed in Christ and trusting in Him and Him alone for salvation, if that is true, if that's your profession, do you right now, do you right now delight, delight in the Word of God? Let's pray.

Father God, we love you. We are grateful for you. We are amazed that you would condescend in your son, Jesus Christ, that He would become one of us, fully God and fully man yet without sin, and that our Savior would hang on a cross for our sins, and that His righteousness would be given to us, and that our unrighteousness would be credited to him. That great exchange, that double imputation, that wonderful reality, God, that has not only forgiven us of our sins but has brought us into a relationship with you.

But God, you have not left us without a guide. You have not left us without a lamp, but you have given us your word. Father, I pray that we would understand that we desperately need it, and that it is ever relevant for our lives today, and it will accomplish everything that you have set it out to accomplish. Father, do that in our own lives, to the praise of your glory. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.