

### Profiting From God's Word (Part 3)

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (II Timothy 3:16-17). The word "profitable" denotes something that is useful, beneficial and advantageous. In these two verses we find areas in which we can profit spiritually from our knowledge and application of the Bible. In the previous article we considered the doctrinal profitability of God's Word. Now we turn our attention to its usefulness in correction.

The Greek word translated "correction" in the passage cited above is used only this one time in the New Testament. It means, "restoration to an upright or right state, improvement of life or character." The Bible has the ability to bring us back to God.

Have you ever gotten lost while on a trip? If so, what did you do to get back on course? Did you consult a map or a GPS? Did you stop at a store or someone's house and ask for directions? If you chose one of these options, then you know what it means to have your course corrected. You consulted something or someone who knew better than you the direction in which you should be going to reach your destination.

The application of the preceding paragraph is obvious. As accountable human beings, we are lost (Luke 19:10; Romans 3:23). We are indeed headed in some direction, but certainly not the right one if we want to be saved in eternity (Matthew 7:13-14). In order to correct our course, we need a guide. Jeremiah 10:23 says, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." That guide we need cannot be found by using our own standards. It cannot be found by using any man's standard. The only way that we can correct our course is to go to the guide written by the One who is already in the place we want to be, namely, heaven. Thus the Bible, being the product of Divine inspiration, is profitable to us because it corrects us when we are walking on the path to damnation and shows us the path to eternal life.

Before one can correct his course, he first has to realize that he is going the wrong way. Proverbs 16:25 says, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Matthew 7:13 says, "wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction." Proverbs 5:5 speaks of the adulterous woman whose "feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell." There is a path to eternal damnation. The Bible tells us there is. The role of God's Word is to show us that deadly road so that we can see the results of following it (Romans 6:23). In that sense, it seeks to correct our downward walk.

God's Word is not a book made up just of things we are not supposed to do. Being the perfect book of correction that it is, it not only tells us which way NOT to go, but also informs us of the right road to travel. Matthew 7:13 begins, "Enter ye in at the strait gate." Verse 14 adds, "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Interestingly enough, the Lord's church in the first century was occasionally referred to as "the way" (Acts 19:23; 22:4; 24:22). These references remind us of the great truth Jesus stated regarding Himself in John 14:6 when He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." God's Word profits us in that it tells us about the way to eternal life, how to get in that way and how to stay in that way. If we are willing to accept the truth, we can be corrected while on our errant course to damnation and walk confidently and faithfully on the road to glory.

Accepting the correction offered by the Bible requires humility. James 4:10 says, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." Solomon wrote in Proverbs 15:10, "Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die." Hopefully, none of us wants to be lost. With God's Word as our guide to correct us, we can find the way to eternal salvation and walk therein throughout life.

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