

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPTS

Series: Lies We Believe

Part 5 Truth

Tim Armstrong, Senior Pastor

Weekend 11.29-30.08

Over the course of the last several weeks, we've been talking about the lies that trap us. We've talked about self lies and marital lies - the worldly lies that can draw us away from truth. We've also talked about the spiritual lies that play like digital tracks in our minds and cause a sense of life-trap that we feel like we cannot escape. Well today as we draw our...our series to a conclusion, we're going to do a bit of the reverse. We're not going to be talking about lies; we're going to be talking the truth. And my focus is God's truth. I want you take your Bibles and turn with me to a very familiar passage of scripture, II Timothy, chapter 3. We've looked at this passage a number of times. It's one of the most comprehensive passages on the word of God; 2 Timothy 3:16 and 17. Listen carefully. It says: All scripture is breathed out by God, in other words, all...that's encompassing all of...all of God's word. It is originating with God. And it's profitable for teaching...what we're doing now, for reproof, in other words, for changing direction and going in a new direction for correction and for training and righteousness, why? That the man of God or the woman of God may be competent. In other words for that is: complete, lacking nothing. You have everything you need for life. You be confident, equipped for every good work. That's the comprehensive nature of the truth of God. The Phillips translation translates it this way: The scriptures are the comprehensive equipment of the man of God and fit him fully for all branches of his work. Having the right equipment is essential.

My dad used to say that all the time. He would say: You need to find the right tool for the right job. It would drive him absolutely crazy if I tried to use a wrench or rather a pair of pliers when a wrench was needed. And you want to drive the man over the edge...just use a knife for a screwdriver. Ever try that...use a knife for a screwdriver? It doesn't work very well. He would get so angry with me. He would say do you want your surgeon to use a chain saw? You...you know...what? What...what he was saying was that you got to have the right equipment for the job. And as Christ followers, knowing the truth is absolutely essential in our life and the right equipment is the word of God. That's what we're going to be studying this morning.

But I'm not necessarily going to be talking how to study the word of God. Rather I'm going to persuade you to study the word of God. It's not so much this morning of the how, but the why? Why should you be involving your life in the study of this particular book? We have lots of options in our lives. We have a lot of things, especially in our society today, options to choose how we're going to use our time. And the purpose of everything I'm saying this morning is to drive your thinking, to persuade your thinking to use some of your time to study this book because it is a book of truth. Now if I'm successful in persuading you then, you should ask the question, well OK, how? How do I understand this book? There's a number of resources you can involve yourself. We have a class here called Class 201. You can sign up for it at the Grow kiosk. It is a class that essentially helps you in your spiritual maturity. One whole segment of that class is how to study the word of God. Another resource I often suggest to people is Kay Arthur's

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book, “How to Study the Bible.” Very simple, little book. I actually put the resource center on notice. I asked them to buy a case of these books in case you might want some. This is a great book that teaches you the inductive Bible study method. Now what’s that? Well, there are a lot of books that’ll tell you what the Bible says but you want a book that will teach you how to discover it for yourself. That’s the inductive Bible study method. So that you can look at any piece of scripture...you can study it so that you can understand it. And here’s the key: So you can apply it to your life. But this is not a message about how to study, it’s a message about why. And I actually am going to take the consumer mentality, the consumer approach. I want to tell you this morning what you get from studying the Bible. Now when I sat down to start working on this, this week, I came up with thirteen different things that you can get from studying the Bible. We’re not going to look at all thirteen. I’ve narrowed it down to four. Four, I think, critical elements. Critical things that you and I get when we study the word of God.

First thing, you get knowledge. You get simple knowledge. In other words, you start to understand the book, how it’s laid out. You understand its stories, the people, the truths, the principles, the contents of this book. But this book is not just about facts. It’s not just a book of stories. It’s not a book that’s just knowledge based. It’s a book, listen, that contains life skills. It teaches you how to live your life. It’s a book that, without it, you and I could easily fall into falsehoods. That’s why it is the book of truths. That’s why it claims that this book will set you free because it’s true. Now there’s a lot of books that will tell you...it will give you a certain set of life skills. If you walk through any self-help section, go to Barnes & Noble, walk through the self-help section, you’ll find all kinds of books that’ll tell you about life skills. I remember a few that I’ve read in the past. Many, many years ago there was a book that came out called, “The One-Minute Manager.” It was telling you how to focus your life clearly every single day. Another book just a few years ago, those of you in business, men and women who are in business, you’ll know this book. It’s a book called, “Who Moved My Cheese?” And it was...it’s a book that’s about the specifics of your life and what’s really important. One of the books floating around the circuit today is called, “A New Earth—Awakening to Your Life Purpose.” Not necessarily a book I would highly recommend but it’s out there and it’s telling you how to live life. Rick Warren has a book out called, “The Purpose Driven Life”. Most of us know that book fairly well. When I graduated from seminary a whole set of books came out with the title, “Life’s Little Instruction Book.” And it was just a little instruction book. Of what? And after that, they came out with “Pooh’s Little Instruction Book” and the “Zen Little Instruction Book” and “Delbert’s Little Instruction Book” and everything ad infinitum. And there’s all these just little books. But what do all these books have in common? They’re man’s opinion; that’s what they are. Now I’m...I’m not saying that you shouldn’t read these books and you might agree with some and disagree with others. I’m not saying that should read these but you need to understand that all they contain is man’s opinion. And according to Proverbs 14:12, it says: There is a way that seems right to a man but its end is the way to death.

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Conversely, in Hebrews, chapter 4, verse 12, it says: For the word of God is living and active. So you have to ask yourself, do I want a dead book that ultimately will not give me the words of life or do I want a living book that is active, can penetrate my life, can change who I am? Really that's the question that you have to ask. It's like I said, I'm not trying to dissuade you from reading other books. What I'm trying to do is to persuade you to read the one book that claims that is actually living and active and has the power to change lives.

Do you realize that there are more Bibles in print today than at any time in history? This year alone, five hundred million copies in eighteen hundred different languages, the Bible, number one best seller. Yet, it is still the most misunderstood book and probably one of the least studied. According to George Barnus, sixty-two percent of Americans think the phrase, "God helps those who help themselves" is in the Bible. And maybe you thought that. Maybe you quoted that, well, you know, the Bible says: God helps those who help themselves. But that's not in the Bible, that's Ben Franklin - big difference. Actually, that's not even good theology. Really good theology is God helps those who trust in him. And you know what we need to understand is that without understanding the truth, it's very easy to fall into error. God says, through the prophet Hosea, Hosea 4:6: My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. And that idea of destroyed is that you are laid waste. And how many lives can we think of that have been laid waste because they didn't know the truth. They didn't have the knowledge of the word of God.

Not only do you get knowledge but the second thing you get is you get perspective. Perspective...perspective is seeing from a different point of view; that's all that it means. You travel around this building, inside this building, there's all types of perspectives. And there are people out in town square right now who have a different perspective of the service. They're watching it on a large screen; different from what you and I are perceiving. You can go down the hall and there's a tech room and there's a group of volunteers there who are sitting behind monitors and they're not even physically in this room and they have their own perspective of what's going on. Within the sides of these particular four walls, we have different perspectives. We have people all the way back in a booth and a tech booth, a light booth, a sound booth...they have a perspective. People up on tree stands, you know, running cameras, they have a perspective. You have a perspective and I have a perspective. Now I've sat where you've sat and I have listened to other pastors' teach; I know that perspective. But most of you have not stood where I'm standing and have this perspective. It's really rather unique and was trying to think how can I help you understand that and so we came up with a little gismo...a little hat cam...let me turn this on. Is it working? This is my perspective. Now the thing that's interesting about my perspective is a lot of times you think I can't see you because of some of the things that you do. It never fails to amuse me of how many people pick their nose in church. I'm like...I'm standing right here. I'm not that far away, I can see you. I tell you, I can have a screaming baby on full tilt won't bother me a bit, some guy in back

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picking his nose and, suddenly, I lose all train of concentration. You see, I have a different perspective than you do and it tells me a lot about what's going on in this particular room. Well, you realize that when you take on God's perspective, it changes the way you view your life. Because you no longer see it from just your eyes; you now see it from a different perspective.

To give you an example of that. Just flip back just a few pages to the book of James, James, chapter 1 and in James, chapter 1, verse 2, we get a perspective that we would not have unless the word of God taught it to us because it's counter intuitive. In James, chapter 1, verse 2, James introduces us to the perspective of God when it comes to problems, trials, something we all experience. He writes: Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds. Right away, you know this is a different perspective. This is not our normal perspective. We would not think trials are something to be joyous about. He says: But count it all joy, why? For you know, you're going to know something. You know that the testing of your faith produces...produces steadfastness, endurance, the idea of long suffering and let steadfastness have its full effect that you may be perfect and complete, the exact same word used back in II Timothy, lacking nothing. You have a new perspective when it comes to trials because of the word of God. You see, if you don't have God's perspective, I can sum up your life in one word—frustrated. You will be frustrated. You won't understand why different events are occurring in your life. You won't understand how to combat those; you won't understand how to build a sense of defense mechanism. You won't understand how to tell the difference between a lie and the truth. Because what does the word of God teach you? The word of God teaches you God's way. Did you hear that? The Word of God teaches us God's way. I was looking in Psalm 103 this week. I was actually travelling to a different portion in the Psalm. I was getting to Psalm 12, 13 and 14 where it speaks about how God removes our transgressions as far as the east is from the west and he is like a father compassionate on his child, things like that. And I was reading the whole Psalm so I could grab the context, which is just part of a Bible study method. You want to know what comes before and what comes after. And I read through verse 7 and I know I've read it before but I guess it never struck me and that's one of the beauties by the way of long-term studying word of God. You might read something over and over and over again but there'll be certain times in your life when things are lining up and different scriptures will hit you different ways. I'll never forget a conversation that I once had with a young man. And we were talking about the importance of the word of God and he said to me, well, I read it once. He just didn't get it. This is not a book that you just read once because it's living; it's active in our lives. And I just experienced that; I was reading and I came through verse 7 - very easy to miss, because it doesn't seem to fit the context but it actually does. It says: He, that's God, God made known his ways to Moses and his acts to the people of Israel. Now listen to that. God made known his ways to Moses but he made known his acts to the people of Israel. What's going on here in the text? Well, the people saw the acts of God, right? Saw the Red Sea split in half; saw the manna that was

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given every day for their nourishment; saw the miracles over and over again. The people saw the acts of God but God made known his ways; why he did what he did to Moses. There was a sense of intimacy. You see, Moses saw from God's perspective. That's the same thing you and I get when we study the word of God. We might be able to see God's acts but when you study God's word, you know God's ways. You see, that is the difference between 'the what' and 'the why'. Many people see 'the what' that happens but not many people understand 'the why'. And when you immerse yourself into God's word, you'll be people who can see the why through the scriptures. You'll understand the perspective of God.

Not only is it knowledge, not only is it perspective, but you will receive confidence...confidence. Now I'm not...I'm not talking about some kind of generic confidence, not some self-help taught confidence, not some pump you up type of confidence. No, I'm talking about a confidence that leads to convictions. You see, the scriptures have a tendency to cement convictions into our lives. What's a conviction? A conviction is something that we believe so strongly that it changes our behavior. A conviction is something we believe so strongly it changes the way we act. That's what scripture will do. It will change who we are. You see the issue that we have to confront sooner or later in our life is who will be the authority. What is the authority in our life because frankly we live in a culture...ah, that's like a talk show mentality. Right? I mean, you can go to any channel almost any time of the day and you run across some kind of talk show or something like that where they're putting the weirdest people, giving them a stage and letting them defend their life views, right?. And we just get used to this. They are people who get real passionate and they start saying things like, well, I think it ought to be this way or I believe or I feel or they make judgment calls and say this is wrong and this is right. It's that talk show mentality. And we see all these people out there doing it and, after a while, you get this sense, well, this must be the truth. And if you listen to them close enough and, they get real adamant that it is the truth. And we have to say, who says? By what basis of authority are you proclaiming your truth? Is it just opinion, is it public opinion? Is it if the majority of people say it is right, then it must be right? Which is very easy for the church of Jesus Christ to get swept into that mentality. Well, you know, the majority of the people say it's right so it must be right. No. We have an authority source and we can always go back to that authority source. Who's going to be your authority? Is it going to be what God says or what somebody else says? You see, that's how you tell the difference between lies and falsehoods. We go back to the source. That's why Hebrews 5:14 says: We need to be trained to know good versus evil...truth versus lies. And it's founded in the word of God. And what does that do? That gives you confidence...confidence...conviction.

And the last thing it does, this book has the ability to change your character. It has the ability to change your character. Now that might sound trite but it's a reality. Because this is not just some book of wisdom. It's not just some book that has some nice things to

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say, good stories, you know, we can kind of base our life principles on. No. What do we learn? This book is living, active, has the ability to cut deep into us to change who we are. Jude 20 says: But you beloved building yourself up in the most holy faith. How do we build ourselves up? We allow this book to change who we are. You know, I was thinking about character. My character is vastly different from the character I had when I was young. The problem when you grow up in a town your whole life and then you come back and you minister there is people remembering you when you were young and they like to bring up the things you used to do or the type of person you used. I get that all the time. But I'm not the same person as I was when I was young. My character has changed. You know, we're not born with certain character traits, certain good character traits. No, we're born depraved. Character can be changed. Look at the list of character defects that I've put in your program. This might resonate with some of you: Selfishness, self-centered, self-serving, judgmental, angry, prideful. If you want to just cut to the quick, drop down to the last box on bottom right. All of the above? You know, that's my box. I can check that. All of the above. Because really that defines my character defects but that's not necessarily who I am today. And how did that change? That changed through immersing yourself in the word of God. Look over here in Colossians, Colossians, chapter 3. Let me just read this to you. Let me - it's a lengthy passage. Colossians, chapter 3, sixteen verses, but listen. Paul's writing and he says: If then, you've been raised with Christ, in other words, if you're a follower of Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things that are above; not on things that are on earth or earthly. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ and God and when Christ who is your life appears, then you'll also appear with him in glory. But now listen to verse 5, it says: Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desires, covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked. Scriptures are all inclusive. We all fit into this scenario. He says: In these you too once walked, when you lived in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another. You wonder where I got that list. Here's where we get the list. See that you put off the old self with these practices and you put on the new self. How do you put on the new self? Well, it tells us which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Where do you get that knowledge? It's what our creator gave us. It's the word of God. We're going to see that. Here, there is not Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarians, Scythian, slaves, free; but Christ is all, and in all. Verse 12: Put on then, as God's chosen one, holy, beloved, put this on, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. These are character adjustments, new traits. Verse 14: Above all, put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony and let the peace of Christ rule in your heart to which indeed you were called in one body and be thankful. Key verse, verse 16: Let the, what? Say it with me: Word of Christ. Let the word of Christ dwell in you

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richly. That's this book teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. You see, why do we do that? Because this is the book of truth. It has the ability to change who we are. Is there something about your life you don't like? Is there some aspect of your spiritual development, your questioning you feel guilty about. Bring it to the Lord. Bathe it in prayer; study about it in scripture. You start the path to character change. You want to come full circle. You don't necessarily have to turn there. It's not in your programs or on the side screens, but listen. 2 Timothy, chapter 2, verse 15: With all that you've heard, keep this in mind, do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. There it is over and over again. You want to stem the tide, keep yourself away from falsehood. You must understand, know, study the book of truth.

Let me pray for you. Lord, I thank you for this book. I thank you for the way it has an impact in our lives that's beyond just some self-help book...that it's not just some earthly wisdom or fairy tale but that it's your word. That your Spirit empowers it and it has the ability...gives us the ability to change who we are where we get to meet you in its pages and we get to reflect and see ourselves. And then as we travel through day after day, week after week, year after year, unraveling the mysteries of this book, we look back and we see we're changed. We're not who we used to be. We grow more and more like your Son. Thank you for the power of this book. May your people be persuaded to use their time to study it. I pray these things in Jesus' Name. Amen.