

The Power of the Word, Study 7

The Divine Purposes of the Word, Part 4

In this study we will look at the 4th divine purpose of the Word of God. Let's review first:

I Timothy 3:15 gives us the 1st divine purpose: the Bible is able to make us wise for _____ through faith in Christ.

II Timothy 3:16 gives us 4 more divine purposes.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

This study looks at the 3rd purpose listed in verse 16. Before beginning the study, take some time to pray, asking the Holy Spirit to teach you and to cause His Word to live in you.

The Strong's Concordance definition of the third word is this:

ἐπανόρθωσιν (epanorthōsin) = straightening up, rectifying, restored to its rightful condition, correction, improvement of life and character

This third purpose in II Timothy 3:16 goes far beyond the common translation of "correction." God wants to restore us to His original design, bringing us into alignment with His perfect will and intent for our lives. Will we allow Him to "rectify" us, to restore us to His image as He designed us to be?

I Peter 5:10 unpacks this concept for us. It says:

But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. (NKJV)

The book of I Peter is all about suffering, particularly unjust suffering and suffering for being a follower of Christ. In this verse placed right at the end of the book, Peter gives 4 purposes for suffering—4 very powerful and transforming purposes! List God's 4 good and lofty objectives for the trials we go through from I Peter 5:10:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

The Greek word for "perfect" (NKJV) means to "thoroughly repair or adjust, to mend, make perfect, restore." Sounds very similar to the definition of this third word we're looking at in II Timothy 3:16, doesn't it?

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The Greek word for “establish” (NKJV) means “to set fast, to turn resolutely in a certain direction, to confirm, to steadfastly fix, to make solid and sure.” This carries a similar meaning and purpose as “reproof,” the second word we looked at in II Timothy 3:16. But it also has the connotation of setting in “a vertical, upright position” – just as this third word “correction” can mean “straightening up.”

The Greek word for “strengthen” (NKJV) means “bodily vigor, to impart strength, to confirm in spiritual knowledge and power.” As in the definition of “correction,” this is how God “rectifies us and continually “improves our character.” God’s correction isn’t harsh punishment or frustrated, disappointed-in-us scolding. Rather it is patient instruction that imparts strength; it reaffirms the truth to our hearts and enables us to live in light of that truth by His indwelling power.

The Greek word for “settle” means “to ordain, to settle, to commit, to ground, to lay the basis or foundation for.” There is solid peace in this word, a confirming conviction of truth. Settledness fosters trust in what God is doing in our lives and the character He is shaping within us. God is restoring us to His original design.

Using the definitions of these 4 words, write in your own words an explanation of what God is doing in your life through the trials you have faced and are currently facing:

You might think: These words from I Peter are all well and good, but Peter is talking about the outcomes of suffering and II Timothy is talking about the effects of God’s Word. So how can you use the one to support the other? Because of this: The Bible is all about people responding to God in their individual circumstances. It’s all about how we handle the things life throws at us. Will we trust Him and believe His Word? Will we truly base our lives on His revealed truth? Or will we choose our own natural ways of thinking, forging our own path, distrusting His character and Word, casting it aside to rely on our own understanding? God’s Word teaches us to trust Him in our sufferings—the trials of life—whether big life-slamming events or small irritating frustrations. In the midst of real life, God’s Word counsels us, corrects us, establishes us, and makes us true image bearers again.

Using the definitions from the word in II Timothy 3:16 and in I Peter 5:10, take time to pray for God to do this great work in your own heart and life. Ask Him to help you see the value and necessity of His Word in “rectifying” your thinking and your responses.