

Less Is More

In 2 Timothy 3:16-17 the apostle Paul wrote, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." This passage makes some astounding claims. First and foremost, God himself is the author behind the human authors of the Bible; their writings are "inspired." This may not set well with modern critics, but nevertheless that is what the text says. This leads to other necessary truths.

Second, the Bible is useful for "teaching." Teaching what? Presumably, God's will, if he is behind it all. Third, the Bible is useful for "rebuking," that is, to point out wrongdoing and error. This presupposes it contains what is right and truthful. Therefore, in the fourth place, the Bible is useful for "correcting"; it provides the antidote for sin and falsehood. This all leads to "training in righteousness." Righteousness is the need of every sinner, i.e., to be right with God. It does not stop at becoming right with God, the "man of God" must continue being right with God. Therefore, the Bible enables him to do "every good work." What more is needed?

Why then human creeds, councils, and catechisms? Why church hierarchies that tell believers what to believe? Why follow Augustine, Luther, Calvin, or other latecomers? Why not just follow Jesus, Paul, Peter, James, and the other writers of Scripture that had the decided advantage of being inspired by God? Why add all this other stuff to the Bible if it can do all it claims? What more is needed? Truly, in this case, less is more.