

Why We Have Confidence in the Bible

by Charles R. Swindoll

What is your final authority in life? I mean, when you're cornered, when you're really up against it, when you're forced to face reality, upon what do you lean?

Before you answer too quickly, think about it for a few moments. When it comes to establishing a standard for morality, what's your guide? When you need an ethical compass to find your way out of an ethical jungle, where's north? When you're on a stormy, churning sea of emotions, which lighthouse shows you where to find the shore?

There can be no more reliable authority on earth than God's Word, the Bible. This timeless, trustworthy source of truth holds the key that unlocks life's mysteries. It alone provides us with the shelter we need in times of storm.

But we need to understand why. Why does this book qualify as our final authority?

God's Word Is Truth

"Your word is truth," Jesus said as He prayed to the Father ([John 17:17](#)). Truth, real truth, truth you can rely on, truth that will never shrivel up or turn sour, truth that will never backfire or mislead, that's the truth in the Bible. That is what the Bible is about. That is why the Bible provides us with *the* constant and *the* needed support.

God's Book Is God's Voice

Scripture is "God's message." It is, in fact, "God's Word." The apostle Paul testified clearly to that truth in his first letter to the Thessalonians:

For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe. ([1 Thessalonians 2:13](#))

Think of it this way: God's Book is, as it were, God's voice. If our Lord were to make Himself visible and return to earth and speak His message, it would be in keeping with the Bible. His message of truth would tie in exactly with what you see in Scripture — His opinion, His counsel, His commands, His desires, His warnings, His very heart, His very mind. When you rely on God's voice — His very message — you have a sure foundation; you have truth that can be trusted; you have power that imparts new life and releases grace by which you can grow in faith and commitment.

God's Word Will Endure

Do you realize there are only two eternal things on earth today? Only two: people and God's Word. Everything else will ultimately be burned up — everything else. Kind of sets your priorities straight, doesn't it? The stuff we place on the shelf, the things we put frames around, the trophies and whatnots we shine and love to show off, the things we're so proud of — it's all headed for the final bonfire ([2 Peter 3:7, 10-12](#)). But not God's Book! Peter reminds us that the truth "stands forever" ([1 Peter 1:25](#)). Grass will grow and then it will wither; flowers will bloom

and then they will die. But God's written message, the truth, will abide forever. All His promises will be fulfilled. His redemptive truth cannot be annulled or changed. His powerful Word will accomplish what He desires and achieve the purpose for which it was sent ([Isaiah 55:10-11](#)). His Word will endure!

God's Word Is Inspired

But wait. Doesn't all this talk about the Bible lead to an important question that must be asked? The question goes like this: *How can anyone get so excited about something that was written by men?* We have no problem with the Giver of truth. He gave it . . . but wasn't the truth corrupted when He relayed it to earth through the hands and minds of sinful men?

This is the perfect moment for you to become acquainted with three doctrinal terms: *revelation*, *inspiration*, and *illumination*. *Revelation* occurred when God gave His truth. *Inspiration* occurred when the writers of Scripture received and recorded His truth. Today, when we understand and apply His truth, that is *illumination*.

The critical issue — your confidence in the Bible — is directly related to your confidence in its inspiration. How then can we be sure that God's Word is free from error, absolutely true, and therefore, deserving of our complete trust? Paul provides great help in answering this question:

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#))

When God revealed His truth for human writers to record, He “breathed out” His Word. When we dictate a letter to someone, we “breathe out” a message and someone else types what we've said. But did the writers of Scripture simply take dictation?

If you know much about the Bible, you realize that it was written by many different people with many different personalities. Peter doesn't sound like John; John doesn't sound like David. Somehow each writer's personality was preserved without corrupting the text with human weakness and error. That rules out the idea of dictation.

So how did God cause this to happen? [Second Peter 1:21](#) gives us a further clue: “For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

The English phrase *moved by* is translated from an ancient Greek nautical term (*phero*) describing ships at sea. When a ship was at the mercy of the winds, waves, and currents of the sea, it was “moved by” a power apart from its own. That's the word used here. They raised, as it were, their sails, and the Holy Spirit filled them and they were “moved by” His desires.

God's Word Will Hold You Up

So our conclusion is this — in the Bible we have the preservation of a completely dependable, authoritative, inspired text. The question each of us must ask ourselves is this: *Can I rely on it,*

especially when I go through those chaotic experiences in life? My answer, and I pray it is your answer, is absolutely and unreservedly! The wonderful thing about relying on God's Book is that it gives you stability. It gives you that deep sense of purpose and meaning. No other counsel will get you through the long haul. No other truth will help you stand firm in the storms of doubt and uncertainty. No other reality will give you strength for each day and deep hope for tomorrow. No other instruction has the power to give new meaning to your life.

Adapted from *The Living Insights Study Bible*, Charles R. Swindoll, gen. ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), pp. 1312-1315.

Article Summary:

Chuck Swindoll assures us of the authority and reliability of Scripture as the very words of God. And although God used many different human instruments, the Holy Spirit directed each author to perfectly record each word of God's truth. This article teaches us about the incredible, unchanging tool God has placed in our hands to guide us through life.