

OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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SERMON TITLE

The Whole Truth

SERIES

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KEY SCRIPTURE

2 Timothy 2:15

SYNOPSIS

The Word of God transforms us when it's lived, not just learned.

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ THE WHOLE TRUTH

If you've ever watched a courtroom drama, you've heard that famous line: "Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?" That's a powerful statement because it reminds us that *partial truth* can still be a *total lie*.

You can tell part of the story and still mislead someone. You can quote something that's technically right and still use it wrong. And if we're honest, that's what's happening in our world today. We live in an age where people love to quote Scripture, just not always *correctly*. They'll post half a verse on Instagram, slap it on a coffee mug, or build an entire belief system on a single sentence.

We talked about these last week: "Money is the root of all evil." "God won't give you more than you can handle." "Judge not." Those are either misquotes or actual quotes taken out of context. And, ☞ here's the danger: **when you take God's Word out of context, you can take God's heart out of focus.**

God's Word is not a soundbite, and you can't build a life on a slogan. That's why Paul told Timothy ☞ in **2 Timothy 2:15**: "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who **correctly handles the word** of truth."

In other words, "*Timothy, don't just tell the truth, tell the whole truth.*" If a courtroom demands the whole truth, how much more should God's people handle the truth completely and correctly? When we twist the truth, we weaken its power. But when we tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, lives are changed, faith is strengthened, and Christ is revealed.

Paul is saying: "Timothy, don't play fast and loose with Scripture. Cut it straight. Handle it right. Teach it true." And church, that's not just for pastors. That's for *all* of us. Every believer should learn how to handle God's Word with honor. So today, let's talk about what that means.

☞ RECOGNIZE THE CONTEXT

Before you quote it, locate it. Context is everything. You can make the Bible say almost anything if you rip it out of where it belongs. For example: Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you..." We love that verse, but it was written to a people in exile, in Babylon, under judgment. God's plan included seventy years of waiting before restoration. It wasn't a quick blessing, it was a long obedience. I believe God wants to bless and not harm his people, but it's not just an automatic or immediate promise.

As we saw last week, even the Devil can quote scripture. When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness in Matthew 4, the devil didn't show up with a pitchfork, he showed up with a Bible verse. He took a verse about God's protection for the obedient and tried to use it to justify testing God's patience.



But Jesus knew the context of the verses being quoted and basically said, “Nice try, but you’re leaving out the rest of the story.”

☞ Here’s the lesson: If you don’t *know the setting, the speaker, or the situation*, you might think God is saying something He never actually said.

Acts 17:11 says the Bereans “examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.” Even the Apostle Paul was fact-checked! They didn’t just take *his* word, they studied *the* Word.

☞ They didn’t just listen to sermons, they *checked the source*, because context guards us from deception. If you only read half the verse, you might end up following the wrong voice.

☞ So here’s the principle: When you recognize the context, you *safeguard the truth*. And sometimes, protecting the truth means slowing down to read the lines before and after the verse, asking, “Who said this? Why did they say it? Who were they saying it to?” Always recognize the context.

☞ RESPECT THE CONTENT

Scripture doesn’t bend to our opinions, we bow to its authority.

☞ *Don’t make Scripture say what you want it to say. Discover what God already said.*

That’s the difference between *using* the Bible and *being shaped* by the Bible. Many people today treat the Bible like a buffet... they take a little grace, a little blessing, skip the repentance section, and leave conviction on the counter.

But 2 Timothy 3:16–17 says, “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.”

Notice, it’s “all Scripture,” not just the parts that make us feel good. If you only highlight the comforting verses, you’ll miss the convicting ones that change your character. It’s all for our good.

Jesus modeled this perfectly. When Satan tempted Him in the wilderness (Matthew 4), the devil quoted Scripture *out of context*. He said, “Throw yourself down, for it is written...” (Psalm 91) But Jesus replied, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

☞ Notice what Jesus did? He *let Scripture interpret Scripture*. He didn’t twist it, He *rightly divided* it. That’s what it means to respect the content. Don’t wrestle with the Word to make it say what you want, wrestle with yourself until you’re aligned with what *it* says. Respect the content.

☞ RESPOND WITH COMMITMENT

If the Word doesn’t change how you live, you haven’t handled it right.



You ever meet someone who's got all the right answers, but none of the right actions? They can quote Scripture, they can finish your verses, they even have a few Bible study notebooks at home... But their personal lifestyle is not very representative of Christ. Well, James has something to say about that...

James 1:22 says, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." We deceive ourselves when we think hearing is the same as doing. We can quote Scripture and still not live Scripture, because it's never moved from our head to our heart and hands.

Spiritual deception doesn't always come from the devil. Sometimes, it comes from hearing truth without obeying it. When we listen but don't live, we create a gap between belief and behavior,  and that's where hypocrisy grows. **We need to *listen to the Word* and *live the Word*.**

The Pharisees knew Scripture better than anyone. They could quote Moses backward and forward, but they missed the Messiah standing right in front of them, because they *studied the Word*, but didn't *live the Word*.

Psalms 119:11 says, "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." The Word was meant to be consumed and then carried out. If we study the Bible correctly, it will correct us. If we handle it honorably, it will transform us. That's what "correctly handles" really means, not just a perfect interpretation, but a proper *response*.

Joshua 1:8 says, "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."

Joshua didn't just need courage for war, he needed consistency in the Word. God didn't tell him, "Study occasionally." He said, "Meditate day and night." Many people are spiritually malnourished because they snack on Scripture instead of feeding on it. They grab a *verse for inspiration* instead of a *chapter for instruction*. But if you want your life to be aligned with God's will, you've got to  **stay in His Word daily.**

Luke 8:15 says, "But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop." That phrase "*by persevering*" is key. Living  the Word isn't about quick results, it's about **consistent obedience**. You can't microwave spiritual fruit. You've got to plant, water, wait, and obey... and then comes the harvest.

In John 8:31–32 Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." We often quote verse 32 by itself, but that's only half the story. Jesus says the truth doesn't set you free until you *live it*. Freedom isn't in *hearing* the



Word, it's in *holding* to it. Many believers live spiritually bound because they know the truth  intellectually but haven't **walked it out practically**.

You've probably heard these before... *"I can't believe I forgot to go to the gym today. That's like 7 years in a row now."* or, *"My gym membership didn't help me get fit at all; turns out you have to go there."* You can own a Bible and still live in bondage if you never apply it. The Word works, but only when you work it. So, respond with commitment.

REFLECT CHRIST

Church, there are plenty of Bible translations in print — NIV, ESV, KJV, NLT, NASB... But the one the  world needs most is you. **Be the translation** they can see. Be the verse they can *feel*. Be the chapter that shows them *Jesus*. Be the translation known as "CIMV... Christ In Me Version."

1 John 2:5–6 says, "But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This  is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must **live as Jesus did**." That's the call, not just to *study* Jesus, but to *live* like Jesus.

When Paul tells us to "correctly handle the word of truth," the Greek word literally means "to cut straight." It's the word a tentmaker would use, which is perfect, because Paul was one. If you cut the fabric crooked, the tent leaks. If you cut it straight, it holds tight.

Church, when we cut God's Word straight, our faith stands firm, our families stand strong, our witness stays pure. But when we twist it, skip it, or shrink it, we end up with a faith that can't withstand the storm.

So let's be the kind of people who tell the Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth; people who handle the Word with honor: recognize the context; respect the content; respond with commitment; reflect Christ, be the CIMV. Because the goal isn't to use the Bible to win arguments,  it's to **let the Bible win our hearts and make us more like Jesus**.