

## Theology 101 – An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine

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### Sufficiency of Scripture

#### I. The Sufficiency of Scripture

##### A. The Concept of Sufficiency

1. Everything necessary for God's glory, man's salvation, faith, and life is provided in Scripture, either expressly laid out, or able to be deduced from its clear teaching.
2. Scripture contains all the words of God that He intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history. Scripture contains all the words of God that are necessary for salvation, faith, and obedience.
3. The authors of Scripture teach that Scripture is sufficient for living a life pleasing to God
  - a. 2 Tim. 3:15-17
    - 1) "...the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation..."
      - i. The 'sacred writings' (Scripture) is where we learn all we need to know for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ
      - ii. Paul has no qualifiers on this statement, no other place one needs to look
    - 2) "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness..."
      - i. Again, Paul directs us to Scripture for all our spiritual needs
      - ii. Paul's emphasis is clearly on the spiritual sufficiency of Scripture, there is no claim that all we need for life is in the Bible, only all we need for eternal life
    - 3) "...that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."
      - i. 'Good works' are works we do in service to Christ
      - ii. 'Good works' provides the context for the 'completeness' that Scripture offers – it is a spiritual completeness
  - b. Luke 24:25-27
    - 1) Jesus points the disciples toward Scripture to understand what has happened
    - 2) Even with Jesus in their midst, the implication is that Scripture provided a sufficient explanation
  - c. John 20:30-31

- 1) There are many things that are not recorded in Scripture
  - 2) However, what we do have in Scripture is sufficient for believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and eternal life through Him
4. Warnings not to add to or remove from Scripture
- a. Deut. 4:2
  - b. Deut. 12:32
  - c. Prov. 30:5-6
  - d. Rev. 22:18-19
  - e. Scripture is sufficient in its own right – there is no need for additional revelation (i.e. Book of Mormon, Mary Baker Eddy, Ellen G. White, etc.)

## **B. Some Implications of Sufficiency**

1. What 'Sufficiency' Does NOT mean
  - a. Scripture is the only revelation
  - b. The Bible contains the answer for every question we might ask
    - 1) Deut. 29:29
    - 2) 1 Cor. 13:12
  - c. There is no real knowledge outside of Scripture
2. What 'Sufficiency' DOES mean
  - a. There is no need for a 'third testament' – the two we have are sufficient
  - b. Traditions, confessions, doctrinal statements, etc. are not authoritative in themselves, final authority is always Scripture
  - c. Everything we must know for salvation and life with God is in the Bible.
  - d. There is no need for further teaching from the church or prophets for salvation
3. Sufficiency Applied
  - a. Extra-biblical sources may add clarity or nuance, but are not necessary for understanding.
  - b. If the Bible is silent on a topic, we have freedom regarding that topic, within the constraints of what Scripture does say.
  - c. The Bible typically teaches at a 'world-view' level, but may be silent on personal application specifics
    - 1) How many Elders should we have at church? Silent
    - 2) What do I do to overcome depression? Mostly silent, beyond prayer, etc.
  - d. It isn't sin unless the Bible forbids it explicitly or implicitly

- 1) The Pharisees legalism was adherence to an extra-biblical law
  - 2) The sufficiency of Scripture gives us confidence that such legalism isn't necessary, nor justified
- e. God does not require it unless Scripture explicitly or implicitly commands it
- 1) The Catholics ideas of penance isn't required by Scripture, therefore it is not required by God
  - 2) Eve made this mistake in Gen. 3:3 when she added to God's requirements for the Tree in the midst of the Garden

**C. A corollary to sufficiency is 'clarity' – Scripture is understandable by laypersons**

1. The clarity of Scripture means that the Bible is written in such a way that its teachings are able to be understood by all who will read it, seeking God's guidance and with a willingness to understand.
2. The Clarity of Scripture is also affirmed by Scripture
  - a. Deut. 6:6-7 – even children are able to understand it
  - b. Paul writes not to church elders, but to the churches themselves
    - 1) 1 Cor. 1:2 – “To the church of God that is in Corinth...”
    - 2) Gal. 1:2 – “To the churches of Galatia...”
    - 3) Col 4:16 - Paul intended for these letters to be read to the people and distributed to other churches as well
    - 4) 2 Cor. 1:13 – Paul believes that the people of the church can read and understand his letters and the rest of Scripture as well.