

Text: 2 Timothy 3:14-17. (Anderson) It's time to build! Equip yourself.

July 9, 2017.

Grace and peace are yours through Jesus. Amen.

Well, it's that time of year again. Know what I'm talking about? Ironman Triathlon season. Saturday mornings, one mile from here, you will see more bikes go by than cars. It's really amazing how much gear you need for a triathlon, to be fully equipped. There's obvious things like the fancy bike that probably cost more than my car, even when my car was new. There's the bike accessories and the running shoes. Then there's the little stuff only a triathlete would know, like cream for your saddle sores. I even saw a list once that said, "Be sure to bring Pam non-stick spray. Spray it on your arms and legs to help your wetsuit go on and off more quickly." Triathlon bags are huge. You need a lot of gear to be fully equipped.

What about for life? What does it take to be fully equipped? Do you need a huge bag, a lot of stuff, a bike, a wetsuit, non-stick spray? No. You need the Bible. The Holy Bible gives you the wisdom which brings you salvation. You don't need a lot of stuff. One thing is needful: the Bible. You only need a bag big enough to carry one thing: God's Word. God's Word makes you complete. God's Word makes you fully equipped for every good work. It's time to build. Be equipped with God's Word. Be equipped with God's Word.

You have to stick with the things you have learn. Don't cover yourself with Pam so God's Word can't stick. Instead, spray on the glue of the Bible so God's Word will stick. God is calling for a continual and habitual way of life. It's not enough to say, "I learned that in Catechism class. I was confirmed. I'm good." Do you finish eighth grade at school and say, "I know it all. I'm good"? No way! You went to high school, probably college, maybe more. Kept on learning. God wants us to keep on learning his Word. We have troubles that go beyond an eighth- grade faith. We face situations for which we need stronger, better tools. We need to use the tools more often so those tools stick with us.

You know who your teachers were. And God of course isn't talking about teachers for earthly subjects. God is talking about teachers of God's Word. For Timothy, his teachers were his mother and grandmother. Were you blessed with parents and grandparents who taught you God's Word? Was it their job to make you fully equipped? Well, you might say, "Yes. That's part of being a Christian parent." You might say, "No. They weren't getting paid." So why did mom and dad and grandparents teach you God's Word? Because they loved you. They wanted you to know Jesus. They wanted you to go to heaven. They didn't have some ulterior agenda. They wanted you to be saved.

That's why they taught you even since you were a small child. Now, this word for small child most often talks about a child in the womb. A child in the womb. Think about that. Children in the womb are children. Children in the womb need to hear God's Word and can hear God's Word and can have faith in Jesus. The signs say, "If you are pregnant or might be pregnant, don't drink or smoke. Don't even be in a room with someone who's smoking. Your baby is being exposed and might be harmed." Well, if you are pregnant or might be pregnant, listen to God's Word. Read your Bible out loud. Sing and pray out loud. Your baby is being exposed to God's Word. Your baby is hearing God's Word and faith comes from hearing the message. It's never too early to start. You are never too young. It's also never too late to start. You are never too old. Never too old to start reading your Bible on your own. Never too old to start coming to Bible class. Never too old to know more of the Holy Bible.

I just have to point something out. The Word for Bible here usually refers to letters, individual letters. Not only is the whole Bible God's Word, and every book and chapter and verse and even word, but every single letter is a letter from God. How much reading will it take to learn every letter? How many

Bible studies will be enough to learn every letter? A few weeks ago, I started reading the Bible again. I lost exact count, but I know I've read the entire Bible at least 30 times. And I still don't know every letter. When I've read it enough times that I know every letter, I'll let you know how many times is enough. It's never enough. Never enough knowledge of the Bible, never enough knowing all the words, all the letters. The goal of these letters is to give us wisdom, the most important wisdom, the wisdom that brings salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Every word in the Bible was breathed into the writers' minds by God. Every Word is God's Word. Every word was breathed by God. I saw a funny article. Satire. The headline read, "Man prays for God to speak to him, when his Bible is literally three feet away." Why pray for God to speak to you, when God already has spoken? He has already spoken in his Word. He breathed every word, every letter of the Bible. He's given us all we need to be saved, all we need for faith in Jesus.

God has given us his Word that has all these uses. God's Word is like the ultimate Swiss army knife. And here's where this translation is really cool in simply explaining all these kind of complex terms. God's Word is useful for teaching us something. First we need to be taught, we need instruction. No one knows God's Word naturally from birth. In fact, if you read the Bible you will see that we are sinful from birth.

And that's another thing the Bible is useful for. God's Word shows us our sins. This is the most serious SOS. Shows Our Sins! Honor your father and mother. But God, my room is clean enough. Anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. But God, I can't help that wish app pops us with the women in swimsuits? I was just playing solitaire! We should fear and love God that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, or give him a bad name. But God, it's just a little venting. Everybody does it! Yeah, God's Word is useful for showing our sins.

You know what else God's Word is useful for? Showing our salvation. There's the perfect SOS that solves the first SOS. God's Word Shows Our Salvation. There's only one way to have salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus. God's Word gives that faith. God's Word gives that salvation. God's Word is the best wetsuit. God's Word doesn't show all our fat. God's Word covers all our sins. Jesus covers us completely with his holiness. Baptism is the suit that makes us wet with God's love, washes away our sin, washes in a new status: you are God's child. God's Word is the best non-stick spray. Spray on God's forgiveness, and none of those sins, none of them, stick to you! Spray that cross on your heart. Spray that forgiveness on your soul. God's Word brings salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

And once God's Word has done that most important work, SOS shows our sins and SOS, shows our salvation, Then God's Word can correct our faults. God's Word doesn't correct our faults and then God loves us. No! First God gives us salvation, then we can see the love in God correcting our faults. God sets us up straight again. God's Word straightens us out.

God's Word shows us how to live the right way. Now, this isn't a quick and painless process, showing us how to live the right way. This talks about training, discipline. Think back to those triathletes. Those people didn't spend several thousand dollars on a bike so it can hang up in the garage. That bike is a useful tool to help them cover 112 miles. Some of those triathletes put more miles on their bike than on their car. So would it be too much to spend \$50 or \$100 on a special study Bible, not so it can sit on the table and look impressive, but so you can read it, learn, mark, inwardly digest it? When I see those guys on their bikes, I can see every cut in their muscles, sculpted by miles and hours and days and weeks. I don't think any of those guys says, "I'll ride an hour a week, the weekends I'm in town, as long as the kids don't have any sporting events." This is training. This is discipline. God showing us how to live the right way, God giving us the full equipment, isn't a one hour a week proposition. It's daily training. It's

every day knocking off a few more words of the Bible. Every day, studying a few more letters, letting God sculpt your spiritual muscles over days and weeks and months and years.

Then the person who belongs to God's family will be a complete Christian who is fully equipped to do every kind of good work. I love how this translation explains it. A complete Christian who is fully equipped to do every kind of good work. But there are things about this no translation can bring out. Complete is first in the phrase and fully equipped is last. It's double emphasized. Complete means able to meet all demands. What demands do you have on you: parent, child, job, boss, facing high school for the first time, maybe college, new baby, marriage? God's Word gives you the tools to meet every demand. God's Word gives you every tool to be fully equipped to do every kind of good work. The first step is getting comfortable with this tool, reading, studying, discussing with fellow Christians. You can't do what you don't know. If you don't know what God calls good, how can you possibly do every kind of good work?

But God's Word isn't just for knowing, reciting in Sunday School or Catechism class. God's Word is for doing every kind of good work. Maybe you have a Christian friend who has spent time in the hospital. God's Word says, "I was sick and you came to visit me." What about a neighbor who has trouble paying the bills? Here's the tool from God's Word. "Share with those who are in need, practice hospitality. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." It's going to take time to put on these tools. That's ok. God's Word will give you the tools. It's going to take a lifetime to study every word and letter of the Bible. That's ok. We've got a lifetime here to be fully equipped. Amen.