

## Scripture contains all the divine words necessary for human decisions.

The [Westminster Confession of Faith \(1.6\)](#) says, “The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.”

Here the Confession contrasts the sufficiency of Scripture with the views of its two main opponents, the Anabaptists (who sometimes advocated “new revelations of the Spirit”) and the Roman Catholics (whom the Protestants accused of absolutizing “traditions of men”).

We should note that in this view the sufficiency of Scripture is quite general: Scripture is sufficient for all things necessary for God’s [glory](#). Some have sought to limit this sufficiency to matters of [salvation](#) or [worship](#). The Confession does refer specifically to “salvation.” But insofar as every human decision is a decision to glorify God ([1 Cor 10:31](#)), the Confession’s view of the sufficiency of Scripture must pertain to every human decision.

Scripture itself warns against living by human [wisdom](#) rather than God’s. The [Pharisees](#) adhered to their own traditions so rigidly that they rejected the com-

mandments of God. So [Paul](#), in his famous statement about the [inspiration of Scripture](#), also speaks of its sufficiency: through Scripture, “the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” ([2 Tim 3:16](#)).

Some will object that this does not seem reasonable. There are many human activities in which we need information from outside the Bible. The Bible does not teach how to make bran muffins. It does not teach plumbing, or auto repair, or how to play the violin. Even in [theology](#), scholars often need more than the Bible itself, for the work of theology requires them to apply the Bible to areas of life that were not envisaged by the biblical writers. The theologian, moreover, needs to go beyond the Bible to learn such things as Hebrew grammar, the geography of [Israel](#), the cultural influences on biblical concepts, and the uses of various doctrines in postbiblical church history.

That objection misses the point. Scripture is sufficient not to provide all manner of information but to provide God’s authoritative words. It is right that people gain information from many sources (of course, God is the provider of these sources too, in general [revelation](#)). But words of ultimate authority are found in only one place, the Holy Scriptures. The Bible is sufficient to give us words of this kind, the very words of God.

The sufficiency of Scripture stands against the present temptation of the

church to assign more and more weight to church historical traditions in theology and worship. The church's task today, as always, is to adhere more closely to the word of God, in opposition to human intellectual fashions, even when God's word is opposed to traditions within the church itself.

## Passages

### KEY VERSES

- [Is 29:13–14](#) (God's wisdom, versus wisdom taught by men.)
- [Mk 7:8](#) (The Pharisees reject the commandment of God for the traditions of men.)
- [2 Th 2:2](#)
- [1 Co 10:31](#) (Do all to the glory of God.)
- [2 Ti 3:16–17](#) (Scripture sufficient for "every" good work.)

### ADDITIONAL VERSES

[Jas 1:18](#); [1 Pe 1:23](#)

## Recommended Resources

- 🔒 [The Doctrine of the Word of God](#) (Frame), 220–238.
- 🔒 [Reformed Dogmatics](#) (Bavinck), Vol. I, 481–494.
- 🔒 [Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine](#) (Grudem), 127–138.