

## Why Did God Give Us the New Testament?

Franklin Church of Christ  
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### Introduction:

Why did God give us the New Testament scriptures? Why did God send His Spirit to reveal truth to His apostles and prophets and have them write it down? Why did God preserve these writings for us? Since we accept the New Testament as the message God wants us to have in a form upon which we can rely, we must ask why He gave it to us. When we answer this question, we will know how to us the New Testament. To help answer, let's look at what the New Testament authors said about why they wrote. Not all gave specific reasons for writing, but several did. Let's examine those and then see what lessons we learn from their statements.

### Discussion:

- I. Why they wrote.
  - A. **Luke 1:1-4**—Luke wrote his books (**Luke** and **Acts**) to let us know the exact truth about Jesus and His church.
  - B. **John 20:30-31**—John wrote so we might believe Jesus is the Christ and have life though believing in that name.
  - C. **Romans 16:25-26**—Paul said the prophetic writings revealed the mystery about Jesus Christ to make Jesus known to all nations and through that to bring about the obedience of faith.
  - D. **I Corinthians 2:7-13**—Paul said he was imparting words of wisdom revealing the mind of God by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. He was writing so we can know the mind and will of God.
  - E. **I Corinthians 14:37**—Paul said he was writing the commands of God.
  - F. **I Corinthians 4:14**—However, we learn Paul was not writing about God's mind or writing God's commands to shame his readers, but to admonish them. However, we learn this is an ellipsis. In both **I Corinthians 6:5** and **15:34**, Paul said he was writing to their shame. Thus, Paul was saying, "I am not writing merely to make you ashamed, but primarily to gently, kindly, but firmly warn you." Thus, we should be ashamed when we err and are warned to change.
  - G. **II Corinthians 2:9**—Paul said he was writing to put the Corinthians to the test to see if they would be obedient in all things.
  - H. **II Corinthians 13:10**—Paul said he wrote the letter so when he came he would not have to be severe with them using the authority God had granted him to build them up. Thus Paul implied, he was writing with severity so they would repent before he arrived in person.
  - I. **Ephesians 3:1-12**—Paul wrote so we might understand his insight into the mystery of Christ, that Gentiles would be fellow heirs in one body with Jews and to bring to light to everyone that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might be made known to all.
  - J. **Philippians 3:1**—To repeat the same warnings that will make the Christians safe from those who would twist the word. NASU calls it a "safeguard."
  - K. **I Timothy 3:15**—To let us know how we ought to conduct ourselves in the church which is the pillar and support of the truth.
  - L. **II Timothy 3:16-17**—Paul says all scripture was written in order to teach, reprove, correct and train us in righteousness. Further, he said all scripture equips us for every good work.
  - M. **Hebrews 13:22**—The Hebrew writer said he had written in brief to offer an exhortation. An exhortation is a comforting message of encouragement prompting positive action.
  - N. **I Peter 5:12**—Exhorting and declaring the true grace of Christ that we may stand firm in it, not being moved by anyone or anything.
  - O. **II Peter 1:12-15; 3:1-2**—To remind us of the predictions of the prophets and the commands of Jesus Christ.
  - P. **I John 1:1-4**—John wrote so his readers might have fellowship with him and through that, his joy might be made complete.
  - Q. **Jude 3-4**—Jude wanted to write about our common salvation, but found it necessary to write that we contend for the faith against those who creep in and distort the truth.
  - R. To summarize, we learn God gave us the New Testament to correct present error, warn us of and protect us from potential error, safeguard us from erring teachers, encourage us, admonish us, instruct and motivate us to proper behavior as members of His church.

II. What then should we do with the New Testament?

- A. *We must read the New Testament.* Consider **II Corinthians 1:13; Ephesians 3:3-5; Colossians 4:16; I Timothy 4:13**. God did not give us our New Testaments as decoration. He revealed this message through His Spirit to the apostles and prophets so that we might read it. We need to immerse ourselves in the revelation from God, for this is the only way that we will know Him and His will (**I Corinthians 2:7-13**).
- B. *We must understand the New Testament.* Paul said by reading we could understand what he wrote in **Ephesians 3:3-5**. Further, he commanded us to understand the will of the Lord in **Ephesians 5:17**. I know there are things hard to understand (**II Peter 3:16**), but they are, nevertheless, understandable. I know we are growing and our understanding improves every day (**II Peter 1:5**). However, we must not allow the difficulty to understand and the fact that understanding is a growth process make us think understanding God's word is optional. That means we must work at knowing and understanding what it says and teaches.
- C. *We must believe the New Testament.* John said he wrote so we might believe in Jesus (**John 20:30-31**). For us to believe in Jesus through the writing, we need to believe the writing. In fact, for any of the purposes of the New Testament to be accomplished, whether exhortation, comfort, instruction, warning, correction or saving we have to believe what was written. The reality is, if we don't believe it, we won't be comforted by it, instructed by it or corrected by it.
- D. *We must take comfort in the New Testament.* Too often, we get the feeling the New Testament was written to provide us with numerous potholes into which we may fall and be lost forever. That is not the case. The New Testament was written to demonstrate God's love for us in sending His Son. If He loved us that much, then He is not in heaven trying to figure out how to send us to hell, He is in heaven providing us what we need to be saved (cf. **Romans 8:32**). Take comfort in its grace. Take comfort in its promises. Take comfort in its blessings.
- E. *We must heed the New Testament's warnings and corrections.* God's warnings and corrections are not suggestions. They must be heeded. Paul essentially said he was severe in his writing so he need not be severe in person (**II Corinthians 13:10**). God had His apostles and prophets be severe in their writing so God would not have to be severe when we meet Him in person. We must heed His warnings and corrections now because one day it will be too late.
- F. *We must obey the New Testament's commands and instructions.* Paul said he wrote to test the Corinthians' obedience (**II Corinthians 2:9**). God is writing to test our obedience. Will we submit to His will His way? Or will we go our own way? Will we do things the way God says, or will we do things the way we want to? Will we trust God's commands and instructions are best? Or will we think our ideas can improve on God's?
- G. *We must be limited by the New Testament's authorization.* Paul said all scripture equips us for every good work (**II Timothy 3:16-17**). We can go into the Bible to learn how to serve God His way, how to accomplish the good deeds He has prepared for us (**Ephesians 2:10**) and how to prove what the will of God is, that which is good, acceptable and perfect (**Romans 12:2**). We do not await prohibition to limit our actions. We await authorization to permit our actions.
- H. *We must apply the New Testament's teaching in our personal lives and in our congregations.* I am getting the feeling from some brethren these days that since a great deal of the New Testament was written to guide our personal lives, congregations are not bound by the warnings, instructions and authorization of the New Testament. However, please keep in mind, a great deal of the New Testament was written to local churches. That implies congregations are just as bound by the aspects of the New Testament that we have seen as are the individual members who make them up. Consider **I Corinthians 16:1-2**. Paul was directing churches as well as their individual members.

**Conclusion:**

The New Testament, in fact, the Bible, is God's communication to us. Let us use it the way He intended. It is not a set of suggestions. It is not to let us know He loves us and we are ok no matter what we do. Let us use it as the guide filled with comfort, exhortation, instruction, warning and commands that God gave it to us to be. Let's get into it. Let's learn it. Let live it.