

## Inspiration

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What inspires you? Who is your inspiration in life? Questions like these convey the primary way that we understand the concept of inspiration. The word is typically used to describe a motivating influence in one's life. For example, we might be inspired by a story of someone overcoming all odds. Stories of overcoming are certainly inspiring.

In the Bible, the concept of inspiration is used in a much different sense. While we can read empowering accounts of people overcoming, the subject of inspiration is used in a more basic way. Inspiration means "breath." This meaning of inspiration is significant. In this article, we will trace the development of inspiration throughout the Bible.

**1. Creation.** The first indication we find about the significance of inspiration is noted in Genesis. In the Garden of Eden, God made man from the dust of the ground. Then, God breathed into man the breath of life. When God breathed life into man, man became a living soul (Gen. 2:7).

The origin of humanity demonstrates a critically important aspect of our existence. God inspiring man shows our total dependence on God for sustaining body and soul. God is our lifeline. Without Him, we are nothing more than inanimate, lifeless dust on the ground.

**2. The messages of the prophets.** God used prophets to communicate His will to people. Mainly, God sent prophets to call the nation of Israel to repent. When we distance ourselves from God, we endanger our bodies and souls. For the sake of our safety and salvation, we must obey His word.

In the New Testament, the apostle Peter reflected on the historic work of the prophets. Israel rarely listened to the prophets. Typically, they ignored the messages they preached. This was foolish for a simple reason. The messages of the prophets were inspired by God: "For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21).

This text gives us important information about the concept of inspiration. God used the Spirit to breathe His word into the hearts of the prophets. When the prophets spoke, they frequently used expressions like, "The Lord says..." The message of the prophets was the word of God.

**3. Jesus and the Spirit.** In the Gospel of John, there are significant components of inspiration that are often overlooked. For example, while the prophets spoke the word of God, Jesus was the living Word (John 1:1-5, 14). Jesus was the physical manifestation of divine inspiration. The writer of Hebrews would later state that the greatest means by which God has spoken to us was through Jesus (Heb. 1:1-2).

Also, in John's Gospel, he explains how Jesus was going to give the Spirit to believers (John 1:32-34). After being raised from the dead, the resurrected Lord breathed the Spirit into the apostles: "And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22). The scene is reminiscent of God breathing into the nostrils of man. This represented the resurrected Lord's ability to give new life by the Spirit. This act of inspiration was the beginning of the fulfillment of God offering new life and a new heart to the world (Ezek. 36:22-32).

**4. The Scriptures.** The subject of inspiration is typically associated with the actual formation of the Scriptures. The apostle Paul stated, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God..." (2 Tim. 3:16). This means that the words and composed thoughts of the Bible came from God. We can learn about God's will for our lives when we read the Bible (Eph. 3:3-4).

### **What Does Inspiration Teach Us?**

**1. From Creation, we learn that the inspiration of God is our lifeline.** Without His word to give us life, we will die. His word is needed for us to have harmony in body and soul. Like Adam and Eve, if we ignore the inspiration of God, we will be cast out and die.

**2. From the prophets, we learn the need to listen to inspiration.** God lovingly and patiently called His people to repent through the preaching of the prophets. God's punishment never came by surprise or without due course. Yet, Israel ignored inspiration. Like Israel, if we ignore inspiration, we do so at our peril.

**3. From Jesus and the Spirit, we learn that we cannot live without believing in Jesus.** Jesus was the physical manifestation of inspiration: the Word. He gives words of life. However, the life He offers is only given to believers. The life giving Spirit was only given to believers. If we reject Jesus and the life He offers, we opt for death.

**4. From the Scriptures, we learn the importance of how we use the Scriptures.** The Bible is much more than an ancient text. The Bible is the word of God. By obeying its teaching, God will breathe new life into us. We will become new creations, refashioned in His image. We must treat the Scriptures with great care. They are a gift from God and must be obeyed.

### **Conclusion**

The apostle Peter wrote, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God..." (1 Pet. 4:11). With a more expansive analysis of inspiration, this text should have a deeper meaning to us. Obviously, no one can speak without inspiration, without breath. Peter emphasizes the need for us to speak the breath, utterances, or inspiration of God.

Speaking the breath of God involves teaching people about their Creator. We have been made in the image of God. He is our life source. Without His breath, we will die physically and spiritually. Speaking the breath of God is about calling people to return to a faithful, covenant relationship with Him. Speaking the breath of God is about telling people about Jesus, the Spirit,

and the need for new birth. Speaking the breath of God is about carefully using the Bible to bring our hearts into harmony with God.