

## OUTLINE

- I. Every one of you has a philosophy—whether you realize it or not.
  - A. Philosophy is simply the basic set of ideas, beliefs, and values that you live by.
  - B. It's your outlook, or the filter, through which you view life.
  - C. Every piece of information that comes to you and every situation you face are filtered through your philosophy.
  - D. In a sense, your philosophy predetermines your response to the things happening around you and the results you see in life.
  - E. Yet many people are unaware of their philosophy.
  - F. They have never combined their separate beliefs into a single value system through which they view the world and interpret life.
- II. Pessimism and optimism are two simple examples of opposite philosophies.
  - A. Pessimists look toward the future and expect the worst, while optimists hope for the best.
  - B. You could sit a pessimist and an optimist side by side, expose them to identical circumstances, and the optimist would find some positive way to spin what has happened, while the pessimist would focus on the negative.
  - C. The optimist would look for some opportunity to take advantage of the situation, and the pessimist would focus on the negative and be more likely to get depressed and discouraged.
  - D. Philosophy is the reason identical situations can produce completely different responses in different people.
  - E. Your philosophy filters every experience you have and every piece of information that comes your way.
  - F. The Apostle Paul emphasized this truth to the Colossians when he warned them to be on the lookout for anyone who would “**spoil**” them through philosophy.
  - G. A wrong philosophy causes wrong responses to circumstances, and it can cause you to draw wrong conclusions about events and information in life.
  - H. Christians need a philosophy that is modeled after Christ and not after the traditions of men, vain deceit, or the principles of this world:

*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

COLOSSIANS 2:8

- I. Paul was writing to Christians, but he had never ministered to the Colossians directly, and he wanted to make sure they had everything they needed to live the abundant lives God intended for them.
- J. Paul warned them to beware in case they didn't get the full truth, because it would make them susceptible to all of the ways Satan tries to steal the benefits of the Word of God.
- K. His advice is just as applicable to us today as it was 2,000 years ago.
- III. The English word “**beware**” in that verse means “To be on guard (against); be wary (of)” (*The Houghton Mifflin American Heritage Electronic Dictionary [HMAHED]*).
  - A. It comes from two Middle English words “be” and “war” (*HMAHED*), which is signifying to be at war.

- B. In a spiritual sense, many Christians are not heeding Paul’s warning to **“beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy.”**
  - C. They don’t know they’re in a spiritual battle and that Satan is attacking their values every day.
  - D. He is trying to get them away from the godly way of looking at things that is established in the Word of God.
  - E. I believe the attack on Christian values is greater now than it has been at any other time in history.
  - F. Television, radio, printed news, cell phones, and the internet are continuously parading the problems and philosophies of the world in front of us.
  - G. We are being bombarded with the negative philosophy and thoughts of this world more than any generation of Christians that has ever lived, so it is especially important for us to be on our guard.
- IV. *Spoil* means to carry off the plunder of war, or to carry a person off as a captive and slave.<sup>1</sup>
- A. In a battle, the victor strips the enemy of everything valuable, so Paul was using military terms to say, “Beware lest Satan take from you some of the things that God has given you!”
  - B. God has already given us everything that pertains to life and godliness through knowing and having intimate relationship with Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 1:3-4), but we won’t experience those benefits if we allow the world to seduce us into viewing life from an ungodly, unbiblical perspective.
  - C. Many people aren’t experiencing the blessings of God, because they believe the lies society is being bombarded with, and it is robbing them of victory.
  - D. Christians are missing out on what Jesus has purchased for them, because they haven’t recognized that they are in a battle.
  - E. Satan has come into many people’s lives and led them away captive, exactly as Paul warned he would: **“through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”**
- V. The devil doesn’t overpower Christians—because he can’t.
- A. With Adam and Eve, he didn’t use a lion to overcome them and force them to obey.
  - B. No, what he did was come against them with words and with thoughts, and he corrupted their way of thinking—that’s how original sin entered into this earth.
  - C. This is exactly the point Paul was making to the Colossians, that they should look out lest somebody rob them of what Jesus had provided, seducing them with words and thoughts that corrupt their way of thinking.
  - D. It’s not just changing their individual thoughts but their entire outlook on life, their worldview.
- VI. Paul went on to say that we can be spoiled by **“the tradition of men.”**
- A. Traditions are tied in with our philosophies; i.e., ways of thinking and behavior that are handed down from generation to generation.
  - B. It is “the handing down of opinions, doctrines, practices, rites, and customs from...one generation to another.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Strong’s number G4812 as defined at [www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org)  
<sup>2</sup> Century Dictionary

- C. Obviously, secular traditions present an ungodly perspective and are therefore an obvious threat to seduce Christians, but religious traditions can also keep us from experiencing God's best.
- D. Not every religious opinion, doctrine, and custom that works its way into the church comes from God—some of them come from people who are mistaken or, worse, self-seeking and deceitful.
- E. During one debate with the Pharisees, Jesus told them they were making the Word of God of none effect through their tradition, which they had handed down, and they did many things like that (Mark 7:13).
- F. The Pharisees were the religious leaders of the day.
- G. They were trying to serve God, and by all outward appearances, they were. Yet they made their traditions—all of the customs and opinions they had added to the Word of God—equal to God's Word.
- H. Jesus said that by elevating their traditions above the Word of God, they neutralized the positive power of His Word.
- I. The world, and even the church, are full of philosophies, vain deceit, and traditions of men that will carry you away captive if you aren't careful.
- J. They will rob you of the blessings that Jesus purchased with His atonement.
- K. One of my goals is to expose those philosophies for what they are: deception from the Enemy.

VII. Everything in the Christian life revolves around the way they think.

- A. Proverbs says,

*For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.*

PROVERBS 23:7A

- B. It's as you think at the heart level—not a surface level.
- C. Surface-level knowledge is like the information you acquire when you go to school and learn stuff just to pass a test, but it never impacts you in a significant way—you might not even really believe what you learned.
- D. Back in school, you might have stored that information in your short-term memory so that you could pass a test, but there's no way you could still pass those tests today.
- E. It was information you never meditated on or used, and it didn't go down to the heart level.
- F. Heart-level knowledge is different, because Scripture says that as you think in your heart, that's the way you are.
- G. In other words, your life is going in the direction of your dominant thoughts, or your dominant philosophy—not individual thoughts, but the pattern, or model, you have combined your opinions and life experiences into, which then shapes how you view the world.
- H. This is how your philosophy ends up determining your response to life, and how you will act.

VIII. "Beware!" Paul said, because if you let circumstances in this life affect you and create a response in you that is different from God's outlook, then your wrong perspective is going to rob you of happiness and success.

- A. Once you establish a philosophy that causes you to prejudge situations, the same circumstances that caused you to come up with the philosophy in the first place are going to follow you wherever you go.
- B. You will filter everything that happens in your life through your philosophy, and it will make you prejudiced to see, hear, and find what you are looking for.

- C. You'll form opinions, make decisions, and base your actions on the things that are happening around you, but if your philosophy is incorrect, then your conclusions are going to be wrong.
  - D. This is exactly what is happening with so many people today.
    - i. If you can't maintain relationships, then I guarantee you have a wrong philosophy that is causing those results.
    - ii. If you can't succeed in business, even when you have ability and know you should be doing better, it's because you have a wrong philosophy that is defeating you.
  - E. Philosophies become self-fulfilling prophecies, and if you want to change the results in your life, you have to start by changing the way you think.
  - F. Philosophy is relevant to your daily life, and establishing a Christian philosophy, or a godly way of thinking, will have tremendous benefit to you.
  - G. It could literally revolutionize your life.
- IX. Many people know separate truths from God's Word, but they don't combine the truths into a way of thinking that impacts their overall outlook on life.
- A. That's why I joke that most Christians don't let the Bible get in the way of what they believe.
  - B. They are just tagging on truth after truth to some sort of hodgepodge system of thought, but there is no organization—no intentional effort to create godly worldview.
  - C. In other words, many believers do not have a solid Christian philosophy—they have a jumble of unorganized thoughts.
  - D. Simply tacking on more and more separate truths to a wrong philosophy isn't going to create a godly worldview.
  - E. This is why some people can go to church for decades and memorize half of the Bible but never see any real fruit in their lives.
  - F. You have to allow God's Word to get down to the foundation of your philosophy, and to do that, you must make a deliberate effort to change the way you think.
  - G. You have to renew your mind (Rom. 12:1-2).
  - H. Individual truths are not going to change your philosophy unless you make the effort to embrace those truths.
  - I. The Word says, "**And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free**" (John 8:32), but it's only the truth you *know* that sets you free.
  - J. To be set free, you have to have more than a mere mental awareness of truth; you need a heart-level understanding.
- X. Recently I was talking to some friends who told me they know people who have studied every one of my teachings, and they study the Word, but they still aren't operating in faith.
- A. They could quote all of the things I say about trusting God, but they don't trust God.
  - B. The truths they have learned haven't changed their philosophy, and I think that's tragic.
  - C. You have to get beyond merely possessing individual pieces of information.

- D. You need more than facts to set yourself free. You have to combine those facts, connect the dots, and pull them all together so that they change the way you look at life.
- XI. We have a tendency to think that our problems are our problem, but they aren't.
- A. Often, our problems are just symptoms of deeper heart issues.
  - B. We're looking for physical or natural reasons to explain why our lives are the way they are, but the condition of our lives is a result of the way we think—not what is going on around us.
  - C. Outside forces have an impact on us for sure, but they aren't the determining factor.
  - D. The Apostle Paul said, "**We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed**" (2 Cor. 4:8-9).
  - E. It's the way we respond to what happens to us that determines the condition of our lives, and the way we respond is a direct result of our philosophies.
    - i. If we just give money to people who have a poverty attitude, they will be poor again.
    - ii. They need a new way of thinking, a new philosophy.
- XII. The most important thing you will ever do is renew your mind and form a Christian philosophy, or a Christian worldview.
- A. Once you have a Christian way of looking at things, then your philosophy becomes a filter through which you see and experience life.
  - B. Everything gets filtered through what God has said, and you see the positive instead of the negative.
  - C. You'll be encouraged when other people are panicking.
  - D. You'll operate in faith when other people are running scared.
- XIII. I don't deny the economic challenges out there, but I'm not a pessimist either.
- A. I'm not fearful and preparing for the worst-case scenario.
  - B. Scripture says that perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18).
  - C. If you are secure in the Lord and you know God is your source—not this world system—then you can prosper while the whole world is falling apart.
  - D. It doesn't matter what condition the world economy is in, because the world economy isn't your source—God is your source.
  - E. My personal finances are prospering, and so is our ministry.
    - i. While the stock market has been in decline, my portfolio has been increasing.
    - ii. While many organizations are making cutbacks, our ministry is seeing the greatest growth and income we've ever seen.
    - iii. We're reaching more people with the Gospel than ever before, and things are working for us.
    - iv. Our experiences are completely contrary to what the world is saying should be happening.
  - F. The reason we are prospering is because I have a philosophy that is based on years and years of walking with God and seeing Him bring me through.

- G. My faith and hope are in the Lord—not in the world economy.
- H. My Christian philosophy causes me to filter information differently than the world does.
- XIV. The dominant worldview in modern society is humanistic—which tries to explain life and truth purely from the perspective of what matters to humans.
- A. Humanism rejects God totally, but aspects of humanistic philosophy have worked their way into many Christians' belief systems.
- B. Instead of filtering life from God's perspective, many Christians are filtering life through mental reasoning.
- C. Instead of trusting in God, society is conditioning believers to lean unto their own understanding (Prov. 3:5).
- D. Instead of walking by faith, Christians are being encouraged to walk by sight (2 Cor. 5:7).
- E. It is a direct attack from the devil to rob us, as believers of God's promises for us, **“through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ”** (Col. 2:8).
- XV. Putting our hope or trust in the principles and elements of this world is a wrong philosophy.
- A. It's a wrong outlook, and the long-term effect is the deterioration of society.
- B. A large segment of society doesn't believe in God, and even if they believe in *a* god, they don't believe in heaven or hell.
- C. We've taken prayer out of schools and instead teach children to trust in the principles of this world.
- D. It's no wonder our society is heading downhill fast.
- E. Now we have police officers and metal detectors in schools, but we're seeing terrible violence.
- F. It has nothing to do with gun restrictions; it has to do with the removal of moral restrictions as a result of the ungodly worldviews being promoted in society today—it's a philosophy issue.
- G. In the absence of Christian philosophy, they are trying to come up with controls to limit immorality, but that is the wrong approach.
- H. Society doesn't need more laws; the people in society need to embrace morality—specifically, a biblically based way of thinking.
- XVI. You'd think all Christians would understand the need to have an outlook that conforms to the Word of God, but I'm amazed at how many believers don't seem to get this.
- A. Everyone wants to be politically correct.
- B. People don't want to tell anybody else that they are wrong or that it is immoral to act in certain ways.
- C. The irony is that in a society where everyone is free to act however they want, the government is forced to intrude more and more into civil liberties in order to restrict unwanted behaviors.
- D. People without moral restraint have to be controlled by other means.
- E. Unfortunately, you can see this process taking place in the United States and other Western countries.
- F. Some people seem to think that being free means being liberal in the way you think, but that's not true—you have to control the way you think.
- G. The way people act is a result of how they think, and a thought process that says everything is permissible promotes immoral behavior, which then leads to the deterioration of society.

- XVII. When the Apostle Paul wrote that we will be spoiled through philosophy, vain deceit, the traditions of men, and the rudiments of this world, he was saying, “Don’t think like a lost person. Don’t think the way the world thinks.”
- A. The world is filled with people who have no relationship with God and therefore have a very ungodly philosophy.
  - B. People who think according to the principles of this world say that God doesn’t exist, and they believe that humans evolved by accident over billions of years.
  - C. They don’t acknowledge God, and they don’t understand that they were created and designed by Him. So, to think as the world thinks is to think like a lost person.
  - D. The world’s way of thinking is not a comprehensive and rational philosophy.
    - i. For instance, how does a society that goes to great lengths to promote the environment and protect even the most obscure animal species arrive at the conclusion that it’s okay to abort babies?
    - ii. Some of the same people who yell about recycling think that having a baby is a choice, and if having a baby is inconvenient, they think it’s okay to kill the baby.
    - iii. Society needs to get its priorities straight.
    - iv. God gave us life.
    - v. We are not just like the rest of creation, and we are not equal to animals.
  - E. I’ll be dealing with specific philosophies later on, but right now I just want to show how behavior comes from philosophy and why having a Christian philosophy is important for believers.
- XVIII. Many believers today are establishing a philosophy independent of God and separate from what the Word of God teaches.
- A. I read a survey that was given to people who identified themselves as born-again Christians, and they were asked how they formed their opinions.
  - B. The majority of people said they are just coming up with their own philosophy based on life experiences and their own way of thinking.
  - C. One question was if they adhere to the Word of God as being absolute, and only a small percentage answered yes.
  - D. Instead of getting their philosophy from the Word of God, they are basing it on how they were raised, what they have been taught in school, books they’ve read, and the study of principles from other world religions.
  - E. They have established their philosophy piecemeal.
  - F. People are taking a buffet-style approach to the assembly of ideas, and that’s not a good idea.
  - G. If you do that, Satan is going to spoil you; i.e., take from you what Jesus has already purchased and what belongs to you by right of inheritance.
- XIX. A Christian philosophy must be rooted in the Word of God.
- A. You can’t form a proper Christian worldview without renewing your mind in the Word of God.
  - B. When Jesus was praying to the Father, He said, “**Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth**” (John 17:17).

- C. I just can't overemphasize how important it is for you to conform your mind to the Word of God and not to the philosophies and principles of this world.
  - D. Unfortunately, a lot of Christians aren't looking to the Word for their philosophy.
  - E. They have bought into Satan's deception that the Word of God contains bits and pieces of truth but that it isn't completely accurate.
  - F. They think it's outdated because it was written 2,000 years ago and that it can't possibly have wisdom for modern society.
  - G. In fact, some don't believe that the Bible is the inerrant word of God or that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation—they say He is one of many ways.
  - H. That's a wrong philosophy, and Satan will use that perspective to come into your life and steal from you.
- XX. Psalm 91:4b says, **“His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.”**
- A. The Word of God and the promises it contains are our armor and protection against the attacks of the Enemy.
  - B. The Word is 100 percent accurate, it's totally relevant, and it is the only thing Christians should be basing their lives upon.
  - C. The way you change your core values and obtain a Christian philosophy is by conforming your worldview to the Word of God—instead of just leaning on your own understanding.
- XXI. If you want to see the results that the Word of God promises, then you have to adopt God's way of thinking.
- A. I have conformed my philosophy to the Word and it's working.
  - B. My health is great, I'm seeing the miraculous power of God, my stock investments have gained 61 percent in value while the world has been crying about a financial crisis, I'm happy, I'm joyful, my relationships are good, life is good, and God is blessing me in every area of my life.
  - C. I'm not bragging; I'm just trying to give an example that conforming your way of thinking to the Word of God works.
  - D. I'm not special—you can have the same results because God doesn't play favorites.
  - E. All I've done is put God first and recognize that I'm not smart enough to direct my own life.
  - F. I just do what God tells me to do, instead of doing what makes sense to me or what I feel like doing.
  - G. Being a Christian isn't about changing your outward appearance or what you do and how you act.
  - H. If you don't change the wrong concepts and the belief system on the inside, then you're going to have the same results in your life you had before you were saved.
  - I. That's why God gave you His Word—to change the way you think.
  - J. The Word of God contains His thoughts, His values, and His way of thinking.
  - K. It's your ticket to a new life.
- XXII. I don't care what society says is right or wrong; I follow what God says.
- A. Society may say homosexuality is just another lifestyle or that a homosexual union is just as important as a marriage between a man and a woman, but God's Word says differently.



- B. If you subscribe to the world's view instead of God's, then the devil is going to steal from you.
- C. The world is trying to say that there are many paths to God and that you need to embrace other philosophies.
- D. God's Word says you should be on your guard against any philosophy that isn't modeled after Jesus Christ.
- E. The world wants to pretend that the human race has "evolved" beyond the Bible and that now you should just embrace life.
- F. The world's philosophies are simply an attempt by the devil to undermine the Word of God—that same thing Satan did to Adam and Eve.
- G. The Enemy wants to strip you of the armor and protection of God's Word so that he can plunder your life and steal what Jesus has already won for you.

XXIII. The fruit of a tree is directly related to the tree itself (Matt. 7:18-19).

- A. In the same way, you aren't going to get the fruit of God's manifold blessings if your core belief system is conformed to the world's way of thinking.
- B. If you aren't seeing the fruit in your life that you would like to see, then all you have to do is change the way you think in your heart and adopt God's way of looking at life.
- C. Once you do that, the fruit will come.
- D. Conforming your way of thinking to God's Word will bring a harvest of blessings in your life, but they don't all come overnight.
- E. The natural law of sowing and reaping means that it takes time for a seed to grow into a fruit-bearing plant, and there is a similar spiritual law of sowing and reaping.
- F. God provides miracles when there isn't time to wait for a harvest, like healing sickness, but God's best is for you to walk in His blessings.
- G. For instance, it is better to walk in health and never need healing than it is to get sick and need a miracle.
- H. Likewise, it is better to have money in the bank to meet all of your needs than it is to need a miracle to pay your rent every month.
- I. Even after you renew your mind, it may take time to get to where you don't need a miracle every month, but don't get discouraged.
- J. Scripture says,

*And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*

GALATIANS 6:9

- K. This means you have to stay focused on God and meditate on His Word to maintain your Christian perspective and reap the fruit God desires for you.
- L. If you are willing to do that and you change the way you think at the heart level, then you will see God's blessings in your life—guaranteed.
- M. I challenge you to prayerfully consider the Christian philosophies I present in the rest of this study guide and embrace them.
- N. It will change the way you think, which will change the rest of your life.

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. Discussion Question: In your life, how has your philosophy determined your response to the things happening around you and the results you see in life?
2. What does your philosophy filter?
3. Read Colossians 2:8. Your philosophy needs to modeled after whom?
4. Which two would try to spoil you?
5. Discussion Question: What do you think you have to beware of?
6. A godly way of looking at things is established where?
  - A. In your heart
  - B. At church
  - C. In the Word of God
  - D. All of the above
  - E. None of the above
7. Read 2 Peter 1:3-4. How do you have everything that pertains to life and godliness?
8. Discussion Question: What have you missed out on because you haven't recognized you're in a battle?

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**COLOSSIANS 2:8**

*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

**COLOSSIANS 2:1**

*For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh.*

**COLOSSIANS 2:4**

*And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.*

**COLOSSIANS 2:6**

*As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.*

**MATTHEW 28:19-20**

*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: [20] Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

**2 PETER 1:3-4**

*According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: [4] Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

**DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS**

9. True or false: Satan can overcome you and force you to obey him.
10. How does he try to seduce God's people?
11. Where can religious opinion, doctrine, and custom come from?
12. Read Mark 7:13. How was the Word of God made of none effect?
  - A. Because of the devil
  - B. Because no one believed it
  - C. Because of the persecution
  - D. Because of man's tradition
  - E. Because no one preached it
13. Read Proverbs 23:7. Why does everything in the Christian life revolve around the way you think?
14. What is heart-level knowledge?
15. Discussion Question: What right philosophy have you had that has produced a good result?
16. You have to \_\_\_\_\_ the truths into a way of thinking that impacts your overall outlook on life.

**SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS****MARK 7:13**

*Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.*

**PROVERBS 23:7**

*For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.*

**DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS**

17. Read Romans 12:1-2. Who has to renew your mind?
18. According to John 8:32, what sets you free?
- A. Will power
  - B. The truth
  - C. The jailer
  - D. Being bailed out
  - E. The truth you know
19. Why isn't it enough to study Andrew's teachings and study the Word?
20. How do you change the way you look at life?
21. What determines the condition of your life?
22. What is the most important thing you will ever do?
23. Discussion Question: What do you think this will do for you?
24. What can you learn from Andrew's experience?
25. Discussion Question: What has worked its way into many Christians' belief systems?

**SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS****ROMANS 12:1-2**

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. [2] And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

**JOHN 8:32**

*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

**2 CORINTHIANS 4:8-9**

*We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; [9] Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.*

**1 JOHN 4:18**

*There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.*

**DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS**

26. Discussion Question: Read Proverbs 3:5. How have you been conditioned to lean on your own understanding?
27. True or false: Society doesn't need more laws, but the people need to embrace a biblically based way of thinking.
28. Why is the government forced to intrude more and more into civil liberties?
29. You shouldn't be liberal in the way you think; you should what?
30. If you have relationship with God, what will you have?  
A. A very godly philosophy  
B. No time for other things  
C. Power others will notice  
D. All of the above  
E. None of the above
31. Give one reason that societies' priorities aren't straight.
32. Discussion Question: How do you usually form your opinions?
33. If you base your philosophy on how you were raised, what you have been taught in school, books you've read, and the study of principles from other world religions, what will happen to you?

**SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS****PROVERBS 3:5**

*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart;  
and lean not unto thine  
own understanding.*

**2 CORINTHIANS 5:7**

*For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

**DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS**

34. If you don't renew your mind to the Word of God, what will happen?
35. Read John 17:17. How are you sanctified?
36. What is truth?
37. If you think the Word of God contains bits and pieces of truth but that it isn't completely accurate, you are \_\_\_\_\_.
38. The only thing Christians should be basing their lives upon is what?
39. What do you have to do if you want to see the results that the Word of God promises?
40. If you don't, what will you have?
41. Discussion Question: Why shouldn't you care what society says is right and wrong?
42. The world's philosophies are simply an attempt by the devil to \_\_\_\_\_ the Word of God.

**SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS****JOHN 17:17**

*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

**PSALM 91:4**

*He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.*

**DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS**

43. Read Matthew 7:18-19. You aren't going to get the fruit of God's manifold blessings if your core belief system is conformed to what?
44. Even though conforming your way of thinking to God's Word will bring a harvest of blessings in your life, why don't they all come overnight?
45. Read Galatians 6:9. What does this mean?
46. Discussion Question: Why is it so important to change the way you think at a heart level?

**SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS****MATTHEW 7:18-19**

*A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. [19] Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.*

**GALATIANS 6:9**

*And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*

## OUTLINE

- I. Everyone has a philosophy, whether they acknowledge it or not, and all philosophies produce fruit.
  - A. A philosophy is a filter that determines how you act.
  - B. When Proverbs says that you will be as you think in your heart (Prov. 23:7), I believe it's talking about your philosophy.
  - C. The system of thought that you hold in your heart determines the course of your life.
  - D. As I've said, your life right now is a product of the way you have been thinking.
  
- II. People don't generally desire divorce, bankruptcy, or sickness, so experiencing those things doesn't mean you desired them.
  - A. It just means you had a philosophy that made you susceptible to those experiences.
  - B. For instance, you could have been thinking *Lord, I'm only human. I'm just a man*, instead of thinking about who you are in Christ and conforming your thoughts to the Word, which says, **"Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world"** (1 John 4:4).
  - C. Forgetting that you are a child of God and thinking that you are a nobody makes you susceptible to attacks from the Enemy.
  
- III. The root word (*philosophos*) for the Greek word translated **"philosophy"** in Paul's admonition to the Colossians (*philosophia*) was used in only one other place in Scripture.
  - A. It was when Paul was speaking to the Greeks, and it says,
 

*Then certain philosophers [philosophos] of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babblers say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.*

ACTS 17:18, BRACKETS MINE
  - B. We are still encountering these philosophies today.
  - C. Epicureans derived their teaching from the philosopher Epicurus who founded a school in Athens, Greece, around 300 B.C.
  - D. Epicurus taught that "the world is a random combination of atoms and that pleasure is the highest good."<sup>1</sup>
  - E. His followers soon devolved into a materialistic group, a lot like the materialistic and pleasure-seeking society that the modern philosophy of evolution is giving rise to.
  - F. Having fun and seeking pleasure pretty much sums up most people's philosophy today.
  - G. In fact, the theory of evolution is simply a new presentation of the Epicurean belief that life is the result of the random collision of atoms.
  - H. A Christian philosophy puts relationship with God above pleasure.
  - I. I have a philosophy that pleasing God is more important than pleasing myself.
  - J. If seeking God means doing something that isn't pleasurable, I'll suffer the consequences because I don't make my decisions based on what makes me feel good.
  - K. The world promotes buying the biggest house you possibly can, owning the biggest car, and indulging every sense you have.

<sup>1</sup> Definition from Princeton's WordNet, online at <http://wordnet.princeton.edu/>



- L. The world's philosophy is "Get all you can, can all you get, and sit on your can."
- M. But God teaches that it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35), and Jesus said that a man's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions (Luke 12:15).
- N. People are more important than possessions, and I want to make my life count.
- O. That means serving others, not gathering stuff together for myself.
- IV. The second part of Epicurus' philosophy was to avoid pain at all costs.<sup>2</sup>
- A. Unfortunately, pain is sometimes necessary to accomplish good.
- B. Freedom, for example, has a cost.
- C. A lot of pain was endured during World War II to provide the freedom that we enjoy today.
- D. A self-seeking philosophy doesn't allow for sacrifice like that; it leads people to put their heads in the sand and hope that problems will just go away.
- E. Today people are hoping their problems will go away just like Europe hoped Hitler would.
- F. People are putting their heads in the sand and ignoring attacks upon society—such as abortion and the promotion of the "lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual" agenda—in the hopes that they will all go away.
- G. But those attacks aren't going away unless individuals in society make a stand for morality.
- H. Ignoring these warning signs is a recipe for disaster.
- I. It's a wrong philosophy.
- V. The reference to "**Stoicks**" in the scripture from Acts refers to the Greek philosopher Zeno who founded a competing school of thought at the same time as Epicurus.
- A. The Stoics believed that virtue was sufficient for happiness and that the ultimate goal in life was to become free from the fluctuations of emotion—pleasure or pain.<sup>3</sup>
- B. They sought to calmly accept all circumstances as the unavoidable result of divine will or the natural order.<sup>4</sup>
- C. A lot of Christians today are stoic in their philosophy.
- D. The extreme-sovereignty-of-God doctrine is a perversion of Scripture that falsely teaches that everything that happens in life is preordained by God.
- E. It's nothing more than a stoical worldview.
- F. People who teach that doctrine think absolutely everything that happens in life is God's will—even evil things such as murder, rape, and sickness.
- G. Those people believe that even if God didn't cause the event directly, He must have allowed it to happen because He is all-powerful, and He could have stopped it if it was against His will.
- H. It's true that God is all-powerful, but His Word teaches that He has no part in evil (James 1:13-17).
- I. It is the devil who comes into our lives to steal, kill, and destroy.
- J. God only comes to give us life, and to give us life abundantly (John 10:10).

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Wommack, Living Commentary Bible software, note for Acts 17:18.

<sup>3</sup> From the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, online at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/stoicism/>

<sup>4</sup> The American Heritage College Dictionary, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, "stoic."

- K. Everything that happens in life is not the result of God's will.
- L. Some things are just attacks from the devil.
- M. Thankfully, God has given us the authority to rebuke and resist those attacks. God's Word says,  
*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

JAMES 4:7

- VI. Any teaching that doesn't conform to the Word of God is false, no matter how popular it may be.
  - A. You have to evaluate your philosophy and make sure it is based on the Word of God, and not on the philosophies of this world or the traditions of men.
  - B. Everything that God has shown me has helped to form my philosophy.
  - C. It is all woven together into one dominant way of thinking.
  - D. The Word of God has dictated my philosophy, and my response to life is in turn dictated by my philosophy.
  - E. So, the blessings in my life are simply a result of filtering life through God's perspective.
- VII. Stoicism and Epicureanism aren't the only philosophies out there.
  - A. The philosophy that your parents had when they raised you also has an impact on your belief system—not merely their worldview, but the philosophy they instilled in you by the things they said, by the way they treated you, and through the behavior you witnessed.
  - B. All of us have been influenced by the philosophies that we were raised with or that we picked up through experiences.
  - C. Racism is an example of a philosophy that is handed down from one generation to the next—it's a kind of tradition.
  - D. If children raised in a racist environment don't replace those lies with the truth, they will incorporate prejudice into their worldview, and it will affect their experience of life.
- VIII. America had a tradition of racism that was hard to overcome.
  - A. Martin Luther King Jr. made a stand for morality and led our country through some difficult times.
  - B. He stood up for a Christian philosophy that says all men are created equal, and he helped to change a nation.
  - C. Today society often fails to recognize that Martin Luther King Jr. wasn't merely a civil rights leader; he was a Christian leader.
  - D. In the same way that society persecuted Martin Luther King Jr. for his stand against racism, I can guarantee that Christians are not going to be universally loved for making a stand against current wrongs in our society.
  - E. Abortion is a heinous crime, but the majority of society supports it—and there are elements who promote it aggressively.
  - F. Still, we shouldn't be focused on how other people are going to respond.
  - G. Our goal should be to do the will of God and to stand for what is right—that's Christian philosophy.

H. Proverbs says,

*Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.*

PROVERBS 14:34

- I. *Righteousness* is conforming your character and conduct to a right standard.
  - J. It's conforming to the Word of God, not to philosophies of this world and the traditions of men.
  - K. What the majority of society says is or is not right is irrelevant.
  - L. The majority is often wrong. The Word has to be the standard we build our philosophy upon.
- IX. Too many of those who call themselves Christians aren't building their philosophy on the Word.
- A. Some of them might not truly be born again, but some sincere Christians just haven't become disciples of the Lord Jesus.
  - B. They haven't learned what the Word says, and they aren't following Him.
  - C. They haven't made an effort to conform their hearts and actions to a godly standard of righteousness.
  - D. All they have done is accept Jesus to avoid going to hell.
  - E. They often have philosophies that are completely contrary to the Word of God, but they don't see any problem with that.
  - F. Obviously, if you have a philosophy that is contrary to the Word of God, you don't have a Christian philosophy.
  - G. Some of this is the fault of the church.
- X. We have been preaching salvation in order to go to heaven when we die, but we haven't been making disciples as the Lord commanded us.
- A. So, some people are truly ignorant of God's values, but others are willfully ignorant.
  - B. Those people are choosing not to subscribe to God's viewpoint, because it doesn't fit with their lifestyles.
  - C. Either way, ignorance isn't good for us.
  - D. God loves us no matter what because He doesn't relate to us based on our performance, but ignorance isn't going to excuse us from the devil's attacks.
  - E. The world's philosophy says that "what we don't know won't hurt us," but the truth is that ignorance kills (Hos. 4:6).
- XI. You can see the influences of Epicurean philosophy in those who aim to please themselves no matter the consequences.
- A. The overwhelming majority of abortions are performed on women who aren't married.
  - B. They are having sexual relations outside of marriage and are using abortion as a form of birth control.
  - C. God's command restricting sex to a marriage relationship is given to protect you emotionally and to protect children.
  - D. Sadly, 70 percent of women getting an abortion in the United States identify themselves as Christians at the time of the abortion.<sup>5</sup>

5

Alan Guttmacher Institute, Characteristics of U.S. Abortion Patients, 2008 cited on [abortionblackout.com](http://abortionblackout.com)

- E. This shows the degree to which men and women who have a philosophy putting pleasure first are doing what they want and not worrying about the consequences—even when it means killing an unborn baby.
  - F. Christians should not be getting abortions.
  - G. I'm not saying God is mad at you or that He won't love you anymore if you've ever had an abortion.
  - H. God dealt with sin when He poured out His wrath on Jesus on the cross, and He isn't dealing with sin anymore.
  - I. God is a good God who is full of mercy and unfailing love.
  - J. So, I'm not condemning women who have had an abortion.
  - K. God's grace is more than enough to cover all of your sins.
  - L. I'm simply saying that abortion is wrong.
  - M. Abortion kills innocent children, and there is no room in a Christian philosophy for the tolerance of abortion.
- XII. We can't just entertain the information that suits us.
- A. A ragbag collection of truths and half-truths will never add up to a unified worldview that is godly and righteous.
  - B. We need to get our philosophy from the Word of God.
  - C. Filtering our lives through Scripture and basing our decisions on the philosophy that comes from the Word will keep us on the right path and prevent us from falling into hypocrisy.
  - D. The reason there is such a wide variance in convictions among Christians is that not everyone is getting their philosophy from the Word.
- XIII. Your citizenship in heaven can have more influence over you than your upbringing or the worldly ideas that surround you.
- A. As the Apostle Paul said, **“Let God be true, and every man a liar”** (Rom. 3:4).
  - B. Even the religious instruction you received should be tossed aside if it doesn't conform to the Word of God.
  - C. You might have been taught that God is angry and that He is just waiting to punish you the moment you step out of line or that He uses sickness to correct you.
  - D. Those are wrong doctrines, and they will allow the Enemy to steal from you.
  - E. Your beliefs need to be established upon what the Word says, not upon someone else's interpretation of it.
- XIV. The Bible isn't just another book; it is a supernatural book through which God speaks to you.
- A. The Word of God is true.
  - B. Once you get into the true Word of God and let the Holy Spirit instruct you, you'll see that it is the greatest revelation the world has ever been given.
  - C. The Bible is a tremendous gift from God that contains the greatest philosophy known, and if you base your life upon the Word, you'll get supernatural results.

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. Discussion Question: Why do you think the system of thought that you hold in your heart determines the course of your life?
2. Discussion Question: Why shouldn't you think you're only human?
3. Discussion Question: Read 1 John 4:4. Why is it better to conform your thoughts the Word, which says, "**Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world**"?
4. Discussion Question: Give examples of how what Epicurus taught is still being taught today.
5. A Christian philosophy puts relationship with God above \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Discussion Question: What's the problem with making decisions based on what makes you feel good?
7. Read Acts 20:35 and Luke 12:15. It is more \_\_\_\_\_ to give than to receive. A man's \_\_\_\_\_ does not consist in the abundance of possessions.
8. Discussion Question: Why is it that to accomplish good, pain is sometimes unavoidable?

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**PROVERBS 23:7**

*For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.*

**1 JOHN 4:4**

*Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

**ACTS 17:18**

*Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.*

**ACTS 20:35**

*I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

**LUKE 12:15**

*And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

9. Why can't we just put our heads in the sand and hope that the moral problems of the world will go away?
10. What did the Stoics believe?
11. What group of people tends to be stoic?
- Philosophers
  - Christians
  - Drill sergeants
  - Pastors
  - Boxers
12. Give an example and explain it.
13. Read James 1:13-17 and John 10:10. Everything that happens in life is \_\_\_\_\_ the result of God's will.
14. Read James 4:7. True or false: We shouldn't submit to everything that happens in life.
15. Popular teaching does not make it what?
- Practical
  - Understandable
  - True
  - Comprehensive
  - Simple

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**JAMES 1:13-17**

*Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: [14] But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. [15] Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. [16] Do not err, my beloved brethren. [17] Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

**JOHN 10:10**

*The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

**JAMES 4:7**

*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

**DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS**

16. Discussion Question: How has what God has shown you helped form your philosophy?
17. Besides Stoicism and Epicureanism, what else could have had an impact on your belief system?
18. What would happen to children raised in a racist environment if they don't replace those lies with the truth?
19. It's a guarantee that you will not be universally \_\_\_\_\_ for making a stand against current wrongs in our society.
20. Discussion Question: Why do you think that is?
21. Read Proverbs 14:34. What is righteousness?
22. What's one reason that too many of those who call themselves Christians aren't building their philosophy on the Word?
23. If you have a philosophy that is contrary to the Word of God, then obviously what?
24. True or false: The church is to blame for all this.

**SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS****PROVERBS 14:34**

*Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

25. Discussion Question: Besides abortion and homosexuality, what lifestyles do people hold to instead of subscribing to God's viewpoint?
26. Read Hosea 4:6. From this verse, what do you learn about ignorance?
27. True or false: God is not mad at you if you've had an abortion.
28. What did God pour out on Jesus on the cross to deal with sin?
- Wrath
  - Grace
  - Power
  - All of the above
  - None of the above
29. There is no room in a Christian philosophy for the \_\_\_\_\_ of abortion.
30. True or false: A ragbag collection of truths and half-truths could add up to a unified worldview that is godly and righteous.
31. Discussion Question: How can your citizenship in heaven have more influence over you than your upbringing or the worldly ideas that surround you?

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**HOSEA 4:6**

*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.*

**ROMANS 3:4**

*God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.*



**DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS**

**SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**

32. What do your beliefs need to be established upon?

33. What will happen once you get into the true Word of God and let the Holy Spirit instruct you?

34. You'll get supernatural results if you what?

## OUTLINE

- I. **“For the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart”** (1 Sam. 16:7b).
- A. Although people focus on behavior and appearance, the Bible approaches change from the heart level.
  - B. Humans want to deal with external things, but God’s way is to deal with the heart.
  - C. The heart is the source of your external behaviors.
  - D. It’s where your speech and actions come from (Luke 6:45).
  - E. Man puts emphasis on cleaning up the outward appearance, but God says clean the inside, and the outside will be clean also (Matt. 23:26).
  - F. If you want your external circumstances to change, you have to go to the heart and change your philosophy.
  - G. The way you do that is by meditating on the Word.
  - H. Religion consists of man’s thoughts about God, but the Bible isn’t a compilation of people’s thoughts—it contains God’s thoughts, and His philosophy, for you.
- II. Satan has been pretty successful in robbing many Christians of the blessings that God has provided.
- A. The reason he has been so successful is that our philosophy is wrong.
  - B. We have developed philosophies based on our upbringing and the ungodly influences of this world rather than on the Word of God.
  - C. By challenging the way we think, Satan comes to steal and to deprive us of what God has given.
  - D. This is evident even from his first dealings with mankind.
  - E. Concerning the dangers of wrong thinking, the Apostle Paul said,  
*But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*  
2 CORINTHIANS 11:3
  - F. The devil doesn’t have any new tricks; he’s still doing the same old thing.
  - G. It’s not like he has a million different ways of tempting people.
  - H. His only method always boils down to lies and deception.
- III. Temptation falls into just three basic categories: **“the lust of the flesh,” “the lust of the eyes,”** and **“the pride of life”** (1 John 2:16).
- A. Those are the areas Adam and Eve were tempted in (Gen. 3:6), those are the areas Satan tried to tempt Jesus in (Luke 4:1-13), and they are the same three things the Enemy is trying to tempt us with today.
  - B. We’re being tempted in exactly the same ways that Adam and Eve were tempted.
  - C. The devil just takes the same old stuff and repackages it, which is helpful in a way because we can avoid making the same mistakes Adam and Eve made by looking at the tactics Satan used against them.

- IV. The first thing we notice is that Satan is subtle.
- A. Scripture says, “**Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made**” (Gen. 3:1).
  - B. We know that Satan was behind using the serpent to lie, because the Word says that Satan is the father of all lies (John 8:44).
  - C. The devil created lying, and every time someone lies, they are under the influence of the devil.
  - D. Satan didn’t have any power whatsoever to force Adam and Eve into disobeying God.
  - E. Instead, what he did was choose the subtlest animal—the most cunning, the craftiest, and the slickest creature—because it was a battle of wits.
  - F. The battle against temptation has always been in the mind.
  - G. We’ll sometimes hear people talk about “spiritual warfare” in the sense of going out and doing battle in the heavens.
  - H. It’s a misunderstanding of a verse that says we are battling evil powers in “**heavenly places**” (Eph. 6:11-12, *New King James Version*).
  - I. People have actually chartered planes so they could “take their prayers to the sky,” or they have gone to the top of skyscrapers to do battle “in heaven.”
  - J. That isn’t what this passage of Scripture is talking about.
  - K. The battle against the Enemy isn’t somewhere out in the atmosphere; the battle is right between our ears.
  - L. Satan comes at us through our thoughts with lies and deception.
  - M. It’s the same way he has always operated, and that’s the reason he chose the serpent to speak to Eve.
  - N. It was able to twist and to deceive better than any other animal, so Satan motivated the snake to go and tempt Adam and Eve.
  - O. This is really significant. It shows how deception was Satan’s only weapon.
  - P. It demonstrates that he doesn’t have the power to make people do anything.
  - Q. **Satan can’t do anything without our consent and cooperation.**
  - R. We have to reject his lies.
  - S. We need to quit consenting to his deception, quit cooperating with him, and we’ll leave him powerless.
  - T. He won’t be able to steal our health, our finances, or our peace of mind.

- V. When Satan came against Adam and Eve through the serpent, he said,

*Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*

GENESIS 3:1B

- A. Satan’s primary method of attack is to challenge the Word of God: “Did God *really* say that?”
- B. Satan asks, “Are you sure He didn’t mean something else?” Satan always challenges the Word, asking, “Is the Word really true?”
- C. The answer is YES!

- D. If Adam and Eve had responded “Yes, God did say that—now, get out of here,” that would have been the end of the story.
  - E. There would have been no Fall, no sin, and suffering wouldn’t have entered the world.
  - F. This reveals a fundamental principle of establishing a Christian philosophy, or a Christian way of thinking: Never forget that God’s Word is always true.
  - G. If you compromise on this point, Satan is going to rob you blind, and nothing else is going to work.
  - H. God’s Word is the only sure foundation to build a Christian philosophy upon.
- VI. Here’s another tip: You can save yourself a lot of trouble by not even getting into conversations with the devil.
- A. When he attacks the Word, don’t bother arguing with him. Just state the truth and move on.
  - B. But Eve didn’t do that; she decided to have a chat with the serpent and said,
 

*We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.*

GENESIS 3:2-3
  - C. The problem with what Eve said is that God never said they couldn’t *touch* the fruit; He said not to *eat* it.
  - D. Eve added to what God had said, and she thought that if she even touched the fruit, she would die.
  - E. When she was enticed by the lust of her eyes and flesh to reach out and touch it and nothing happened, she thought maybe nothing would happen if she ate it too.
  - F. She discovered that the thoughts she added to what God had said were false—she didn’t die when she touched the fruit—and it tempted her to question all of what she believed about God’s commands.
  - G. This same thing is happening today.
- VII. Religion has added to the Word of God and nullified it in order to hand down traditions.
- A. It’s exactly what Jesus accused the scribes and the Pharisees of doing (Mark 7:13).
  - B. Religion is always adding rules and regulations to the Word of God.
  - C. It’s saying, “Don’t even touch it or you’ll die!”
  - D. Religion creates manmade traditions, and when people break the manmade traditions and don’t die, they go ahead and break God’s Word, too, thinking that everything was just a hoax.
  - E. For example, some religious systems today are saying women shouldn’t wear makeup or jewelry—which is a misunderstanding of the scripture that says women shouldn’t be concerned with outward adorning but rather be concerned with the beauty of their hearts.
  - F. The scripture says not to be concerned with the **“outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart”** (1 Pet. 3:3-4).
  - G. If you interpret this to mean that there should be no plaiting of the hair or wearing of gold, then you have to say there shouldn’t be any wearing of apparel either.
  - H. Obviously, God doesn’t want you running around without any clothes on.
  - I. The intent of this scripture is to encourage people to focus on the condition of their hearts instead of their outward appearance.

- J. Preaching that women should wear their hair in a certain way and dress a certain way or God won't love them anymore isn't true.
  - K. When a young girl who has grown up hearing those things fails to live up to the supposed dress code but doesn't feel any different (judgment from God)—because God *does* still love her—she calls into question everything she has ever learned about God.
  - L. This is how religion and the traditions of men can nullify the Word of God.
- VIII. Satan didn't come right out and say, "Hey, Adam and Eve, eat this forbidden fruit."
- A. No, he cast doubt by criticizing what God had said.
  - B. Similarly, Satan's biggest triumph in recent centuries has been to make it unfashionable to believe in and trust the Word of God.
  - C. The world system, inspired by the devil, has come against the Word and put doubt in people's minds about its accuracy and relevance, so the majority of people in society are off doing their own thing.
  - D. But the doubt and uncertainty Satan has raised are all lies and deception.
  - E. Christians have to establish in their hearts that the Bible is the inspired Word of God.
  - F. As I will show later, the Word is accurate, it is God breathed, and it is God inspired.
  - G. If you ever start thinking the Bible is merely a book written by men *about* God, Satan is going to eat your lunch and pop the bag.
  - H. You'll be in serious trouble if you ever adopt the mindset that the Bible has some truth in it but that it also has all kinds of error—leading you to go through and only pull out the parts that *you* think are relevant.
  - I. If you do that, Satan will have you as surely as he had Adam and Eve.
- IX. I think the reason Satan tempted Eve instead of Adam was that Adam heard God's command directly.
- A. Genesis says, "**And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die**" (Gen. 2:16-17).
  - B. The next verses describe how God decided Adam shouldn't be alone, and He created Eve to be a companion for Adam and instituted marriage between a man and a woman.
  - C. So, God gave the command not to eat the forbidden fruit before Eve was even formed, which means she might never have actually heard God give the command.
  - D. Any time you have one person repeating what someone else has told them, there is the possibility that they won't repeat it correctly.
  - E. They might leave something out or add something that the first person never said.
  - F. Adam heard God in an audible voice tell him not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, but Eve got her information secondhand from Adam.
  - G. It would have been much harder for the serpent to convince Adam of what God did or didn't say, because Adam heard God directly.
  - H. So, it was easier for the devil to make Eve doubt that Adam had repeated God's command accurately than it would have been to make Adam doubt what he had heard.

- X. This story shows that you need to get your philosophy from God directly and not depend upon other people to repeat it for you.
- A. You need to personalize the Word and make it real to you.
  - B. It can't be just a book written to people in general but not necessarily to you in particular; you have to believe that the Bible is God's Word to *you*.
  - C. The majority of people read the Bible like it's an interesting book about God, but they don't read it like it is God speaking to them.
  - D. The Holy Spirit will use the words in the Bible to speak directly to you, and you have to read the Word with a sense of expectancy that God is going to speak to you through it.
  - E. I can't tell you how many people I have dealt with over the years who knew what God's Word says, but they were leaning on their own wisdom.
  - F. They thought their opinion was better than God's, and they were doing things their own way.
  - G. Some of those people crashed and burned before they recognized that God was right, but they didn't have to learn by the school of hard knocks; they could've just believed the Word of God.
  - H. The Bible says,
 

*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17
  - I. God has spoken to me through thousands of scriptures as I have prayed and asked Him for wisdom.
  - J. He has used what is written in the Bible to speak directly to me.
  - K. For instance, God has shown me how Moses' desire to accomplish God's plan in his own strength cost him forty years in the wilderness, and the nation of Israel spent an extra thirty years in bondage.
  - L. Those things happened to Moses, but God has taken the scriptures and spoken them to me.
  - M. He brought the words alive and gave me revelation knowledge that impacted my heart and shaped part of my Christian philosophy.
  - N. The Bible is a book *from* God, He speaks to me through it, and I believe in the inspiration of Scripture with all of my heart.
- XI. God's Word will change you to the degree that you let it dominate your thoughts and life.
- A. I certainly haven't renewed my mind perfectly, but I'm also a long way from where I started.
  - B. God's Word is working in my life.
  - C. It has changed me, and I see the supernatural power of God as a result of believing what the Word says.
  - D. God has been speaking to me through His Word for more than forty years—ever since He told me that the way to find His perfect will for my life was to make myself a living sacrifice and to renew my mind by conforming it to the truths in His Word (Rom. 12:1-2).
  - E. The easiest way to prove to yourself that the Bible is God's Word and that He will speak to you through it is just to read it.
  - F. Begin by reading the entire New Testament.

- G. You might not understand everything the first time, but the Bible is its own commentary, and the more you read, the more you will understand.
- H. Approach it with a sincere heart and say, “God, if this is really inspired by You and it isn’t just the thoughts of men about You, then speak to me through it.”
- I. If you pray in that way and remain open to the possibility that God will speak to you, I guarantee you will be inspired by God.

XII. The author of Hebrews wrote,

*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

HEBREWS 4:12

- A. The Word of God is alive, and it will come alive for us if we read it expectantly.
- B. Eve was the focus of Satan’s temptation because God’s command was secondhand to her.
- C. But we shouldn’t be too hard on Eve for falling into temptation, because she didn’t really understand Satan or evil.
- D. She didn’t know what was at stake.
- E. She didn’t know what dying was or what the effects of sin would be.
- F. In a sense, we can give her a pass because she was innocent and didn’t realize what was happening when she succumbed to the lies of the devil.
- G. But we don’t get a pass.
- H. We understand the reality of evil.
- I. It doesn’t make sense for us to bury our heads in the sand and say, “Well, you know, I’m just not sure God speaks to me through the Bible. I’m not sure I can really trust this.”
- J. We need to come to the resolution that God’s Word is alive and that He speaks to us personally through it.

XIII. You can’t get your knowledge secondhand from me or another preacher.

- A. You need to go to the Word and hear God speak to you directly, and then you’ll have enough firsthand knowledge to be safe from the deception of false doctrines, traditions of men, and wrong philosophies.
- B. Some Christians are relying on bits and pieces of Scripture that they heard decades ago as children in Sunday school.
- C. They are relying on the pastor of their church or another teacher to tell them what the Word says, but they aren’t reading it for themselves.
- D. Those people are prime targets for the devil.
- E. The devil goes about like a roaring lion seeking people to devour, and just like a lion, he looks for the weak (1 Pet. 5:8).
- F. He looks for people who don’t have the armor and protection of knowing God’s Word.
- G. This is one reason it is so important to know what God’s Word says firsthand.

- H. I'm not saying you can't learn from other people, but it shouldn't be the foundation of your relationship with God.
- I. Babies begin by being dependent upon their mothers to feed them, but they don't stay that way.
- J. Babies can't grow up to be fully functioning adults if they stay dependent upon other people to feed them.
- K. In the same way, all Christians need to learn how to feed themselves from the Word of God.
- L. You can't remain dependent upon your pastor to feed you revelation.
- M. I know that the cares of this life keep people busy, but if you understand how vital it is to study the Word, you'll find the time to do it.
- XIV. When the Apostle Peter was getting toward the end of his life, he wrote a letter to believers in which he stressed the inspiration of Scripture and the confidence we can have that God is speaking to us through it.
- A. Peter knew that he was going to die shortly, and he was giving final encouragement to the believers.
- B. He said,
- For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.*
- 2 PETER 1:16-18
- C. Peter was saying, "I'm about to die, but I'm going to write these things down so you can always have this to remember."
- D. He was making known that the account he gave of Jesus wasn't something he devised on his own.
- E. He wasn't just telling stories.
- F. The words he had written down were inspired by God, and they told of Peter's experiences.
- G. Peter was with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration and heard the audible voice of God say, "**This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased**" (Matt. 17:5).
- H. He saw Jesus radiate light that no earthly power could produce.
- I. But then Peter wrote,
- We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*
- 2 PETER 1:19-21
- J. Peter said we have something even better than seeing with our eyes or hearing with our ears—we have the written Word of God!
- K. Most people would rather see what Peter saw and hear what he heard than read the Bible.
- L. Large crowds will turn out to hear a person speak if he or she advertises that they had a vision and heard the voice of God.
- M. But far fewer people show up when a person advertises that he or she is going to be sharing what Scripture says.



- N. The reason is that Christian culture puts more emphasis on what they can perceive with their senses than on the Word of God.
- O. Peter said you should be doing just the opposite.
- P. Peter clearly stated that the Word of God was not written by men—it was not of **“any private interpretation.”**
- Q. The Holy Spirit inspired men to write the Scriptures.
- R. The Apostle Paul made the same point in his letter to Timothy when he said,

*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

- S. The Greek word for **“given by inspiration of God”** is literally translated “divinely breathed.”<sup>1</sup>
  - T. This clearly states that the Word of God didn’t come from the thoughts of men. God breathed His thoughts into men, who then put them in writing.
  - U. The Bible is not a human book; it’s God’s book written for people.
- XV. I believe Scripture, and I’ve studied it enough to verify for myself that it is the Word of God.
- A. I don’t need any further proof, but plenty of scholars have also authenticated the Bible from a historical and scientific view.
  - B. Many books have been written about the accuracy and inspiration of the Bible.
  - C. I can’t cover all of the evidence here, but I want to share a few facts that will give you confidence in the accuracy and inspiration of Scripture.
  - D. To begin with, the manuscript evidence supporting the New Testament far outstrips any evidence for secular writings of ancient times.
  - E. One researcher has said, “The New Testament documents have more manuscripts, earlier manuscripts, and more abundantly supported manuscripts than the best ten pieces of classical literature *combined*.”<sup>2</sup>
  - F. For example, Caesar’s *Gallic War* was written between 58 and 50 B.C.
  - G. Ten copies of that original work remain, and the earliest was written 900 years after Caesar’s day.
  - H. Livy wrote a 142-volume *History of Rome* sometime between 59 B.C. and A.D. 17, but only 35 volumes survived, in not more than twenty different manuscripts.
  - I. The text of Tacitus’ 14-volume *Histories* and 16-volume *Annals* survives in only two manuscripts written 900 and 1,100 years *after* the original works.
  - J. The earliest manuscripts of renowned Greek historians Thucydides and Herodotus that are complete enough to be of use to scholars were written more than 1,300 years after the originals.<sup>3</sup>
  - K. Homer’s *Iliad* is the secular work that has the most supporting evidence, with 643 copies (the earliest being written around 500 years after the original), but it doesn’t even compare to the New Testament evidence we have.
  - L. The number of differences between the copies of the *Iliad* is also greater—even though there are more than twenty times as many New Testament manuscripts being studied and compared.

<sup>1</sup> James Strong, *The New Strong’s Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Nelson Publishers, 2001), 114. G2315, *theopneustos*.

<sup>2</sup> Norman Geisler and Frank Turek, *I Don’t Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2004), 225.

<sup>3</sup> F.F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* 5<sup>th</sup> ed. rev. (Grand Rapids: The InterVarsity Press, 1988), 16.

- M. In contrast to the copies of secular histories given above, *more than 5,600 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament have survived in whole or in part.*
- N. Those manuscripts vary in age, the more complete having been written within 150 years, with the earliest manuscript portion written within 30 years of the original (keep in mind that the New Testament wasn't written as a single book but is composed of many letters written by multiple authors at different times).
- O. The fact that so many copies of the New Testament scriptures have survived, combined with the fact that they were written close to the same time as the originals, firmly establishes the historical accuracy of the scriptures we have today.

XVI. From a purely human perspective, the chance for error is increased when a document is copied over and over again thousands of times.

- A. The more times something is copied, the more errors you should see.
- B. This is true in the case of secular works, but not with the Bible.
- C. The abundance of ancient New Testament manuscripts have been compared, and there are very few differences—and they contain no differences whatsoever that contradict the Gospel message of Jesus or the historical facts of Christian faith.<sup>4</sup>
- D. *Scholars have placed the comparative accuracy between the more than 5,600 manuscripts at 99.5 percent!*<sup>5</sup>
- E. This is astounding, and it shows how God has supernaturally preserved the integrity of the Bible through time.

Work	Time Written	Earliest Copies	Time Span between Original and Copy <sup>6</sup>	Number of Copies
Plato	427-347 B.C.	A.D. 900	1,200 years	7
Thucydides	460-400 B.C.	A.D. 900	1,300 years	8
Herodotus	488-428 B.C.	A.D. 900	1,300 years	8
Caesar	58-50 B.C.	A.D. 900	900 years	10
Livy	59 B.C.- A.D. 17	?	?	20
Tacitus	A.D. 100	A.D. 1100	1,000	20
Aristotle	384-322 B.C.	A.D. 1100	1,400 years	49
Homer ( <i>Iliad</i> )	900 B.C.	400 B.C.	500 years	643
Greek copies of the New Testament	A.D. 50-100	A.D. 300 and earlier	150 <sup>7</sup>	5,686

- F. The nearer in time a copy was made to the original, the more likely, in a purely natural sense, the work is to be correct.
- G. Also, the greater number of copies in existence, the easier it is to compare for accuracy.
- H. (It should be noted that in addition to the Greek copies of the New Testament, there are thousands more copies of New Testament books produced in other languages during the same timeframe. In fact, researchers have discovered more than 9,000 copies of New Testament manuscripts in other languages—bringing the total number of manuscripts to well over 14,000.)
- I. The abundance of ancient manuscripts and the nearness of their composition to the actual events make the New Testament the most verifiable document of antiquity.

4 Bruce, *New Testament*, 20.

5 Norman Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 532.

6 The information in this chart is from Bruce, *New Testament*, 16-20; Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia*, 527-538; and The Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry online at <http://carm.org/manuscript-evidence>

7 One small fragment of papyrus that has been discovered, known as the John Rylands papyri, was written only 30 years after the original Gospel of John.

- J. Not only do we have copies of the scriptures themselves, but leaders in the early Christian church (often called the Church Fathers) wrote prolifically between A.D. 90 and 160.
- K. Their familiarity with the New Testament scriptures we still read today is proven by the fact that *all but eleven verses from the New Testament are quoted in their writings!*<sup>8</sup>
- XVII. Non-Christians have also given evidence of Jesus as a historical figure in their writings.
- A. In A.D. 93, the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus wrote,
- Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.<sup>9</sup>
- B. Josephus also wrote about the persecution and death of James when he said that the Sanhedrin...
- ...brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, [or, some of his companions]; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned.<sup>10</sup>
- C. The Roman historian Tacitus described how the emperor Nero set fire to Rome, and in an effort to deflect the wrath of its citizens, he blamed the fire on the Christians.
- D. Tacitus said,
- Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judæa, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired.<sup>11</sup>
- XVIII. Without taking into account the evidence contained in the New Testament, we can still show from non-Christian writers that Jesus was a historical figure who lived in Palestine in the early years of the first century, that He gathered followers, and that He was crucified under Pontius Pilate.<sup>12</sup>
- A. In fact, within 150 years of Jesus' life, ten non-Christian writers mentioned Jesus.
- B. Over that same time span, only nine mentioned the Roman emperor who ruled during Jesus' life—Tiberius Caesar.

8 Geisler, *Enough Faith*, 229.

9 Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, trans. William Whiston (Buffalo: John E. Beardsley, 1895), 18.3.3 online at [www.perseus.tufts.edu](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu)

10 Josephus, *Antiquities*, 20.9.1.

11 Cornelius Tacitus, *The Annals*. Tacitus, ed. Alfred John Church et. al. (New York: Perseus, Random House, 1942), 15.44 online at [www.perseus.tufts.edu](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu)

12 Bruce M. Metzger, *The New Testament: Its Background, Growth, and Content*, 15<sup>th</sup> ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), 78.

- C. Not even considering Christian authors, Jesus is more documented than the Roman emperor!<sup>13</sup>
- D. It is undeniable that Jesus was a man who lived and walked the earth precisely when Scripture says He did.
- XIX. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, between 1946 and 1957, in several caves on the shores of the Dead Sea has given us further evidence of the accuracy of the Scriptures that have been handed down to us.
- A. Among the Dead Sea Scrolls was an intact copy of the entire book of Isaiah (known as the Great Isaiah Scroll).
- B. It is dated at 100 B.C. and is 1,000 years older than the copies that were used to compose the book of Isaiah we read in our Bibles today.
- C. After 1,000 years of being copied and recopied by hand, the number of differences between the Great Isaiah Scroll and our book of Isaiah are miniscule—the variations consisting mostly of spelling mistakes and simple copying errors.<sup>14</sup>
- D. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls also proves that the Messianic prophecies we read in Isaiah were definitely written prior to the birth of Jesus, which reinforces the case that Scripture makes for Jesus as the Messiah.
- XX. The bottom line is that the Bible has been handed down through the ages with such accuracy that it can't be just a human book.
- A. The different copies we have of ancient secular writings have significant differences in them because they were simply copied by men—they weren't inspired and preserved by God.
- B. The Bible, on the other hand, has been supernaturally preserved by God, and all of the evidence we have supports that it was written by the inspiration of God.
- XXI. "We still can't trust the Bible," some will argue, "because it's only a translation, and translations aren't inspired."
- A. Well, Jesus didn't share that opinion, as He quoted from the Septuagint, which was a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, and He equated Scripture with words proceeding from the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4).
- B. Jesus' use of Scripture throughout the Gospels also shows that He believed it was the final authority, particularly when the devil was challenging God's commands.
- C. Additionally, the Apostle Paul hinged the thrust of his letter to the Galatians on the fact that God made His promise to the seed (singular) of Abraham, instead of to his seeds (plural) (Gal. 3:16).
- D. Paul made an argument for Jesus as the promised seed of Abraham based on the singular form of one word from a translation of the original scripture—which shows that God is well able to preserve the truth in His Word for us, even through translations.
- E. I spend nearly all of my time studying the Word.
- F. Scripture says, "**Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee**" (Ps. 119:11).
- G. It doesn't tell us to hide historical information about New Testament manuscripts.
- H. Nevertheless, scholarship and historical inquiry *do* support the claims of Christianity.
- I. Ancient manuscript discoveries show that the scriptures we read today are the same as the original inspired writings, and further research shows that the New Testament is completely unique among the books of antiquity.

13 Geisler, *Enough Faith*, 222.

14 Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia*, 187-189.

- J. No other book in history is as verifiable as the Bible—which is exactly what is expected from a book given to us by God.
- XXII. But even if there was no evidence outside the Bible that the Word of God is inspired, I would still be fully convinced.
- A. I don't have enough space to tell you every way that the Word of God has been proven true in my life.
  - B. It has shown me how to deal with sickness, problems, and rejection.
  - C. The Word showed me how to find a wife and how to stay married after I found her!
  - D. I couldn't tell you how many times I have applied the truths from God's Word in my life and watched God's promises come to pass.
  - E. I have verified for myself beyond all doubt that Scripture is the inspired Word of God, and it is accurate in all of its detail.
- XXIII. People sometimes don't understand how the Bible can say things in different books that seem to be in opposition to one another.
- A. Atheists love to pick out scriptures meant to balance one another and pretend that the statements are mutually exclusive, and therefore—they say—the Bible is flawed and can't be from God.
  - B. But that isn't true—certain passages in the Bible might appear to be contradictions, but opposite statements are sometimes intentional.
  - C. The Bible is its own commentary, and separate—apparently opposing—scriptures can hold a single truth in balance by presenting it in different ways.
  - D. For example, one scripture says, **“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast”** (Eph. 2:8-9).
  - E. Another says, **“But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”** (James 2:20).
  - F. Both statements are true, and each is a commentary on the other—they describe the balance of grace and faith.
- XXIV. Every Christian needs to come to the conclusion that the Word of God is accurate and inspired.
- A. The Word has to be the foundation of your worldview, or Satan is going to steal from you.
  - B. The devil is roaming about looking to devour people who doubt God's Word—just as he was able to spoil Eve because she wasn't absolutely convinced that God's command was true.
  - C. The Word of God is 100 percent trustworthy.
  - D. Personally, I doubt my little peanut brain before I question the accuracy of the Word.
  - E. I haven't figured everything out, but I know the problem isn't with the Word—it's with my inability to interpret and comprehend the depths of God.
- XXV. Accepting God's Word as being absolute truth and authority goes against cultural norms today.
- A. In most Western nations, the majority of people who say they believe the Bible is God's Word do not seem to believe that it is accurate and trustworthy enough to base their lives upon it.
  - B. The majority of believers are getting their philosophy elsewhere, and that's why their worldview doesn't line up with God's perspective.

- C. You will not prosper in the Lord unless you accept the Bible as God's Word.
  - D. You may have periods in your life when it looks like you are doing fine, but deviating from the Word of God leads to wrong ways of thinking, and eventually, those wrong thought patterns are going to cause you trouble.
  - E. Eve was fine for a while too—until she began to question God's Word, and then Satan gained a foothold into her life and plunged the entire human race into the destruction we see today.
- XXVI. The best thing you can do for yourself and for your relationship with God is trust that His Word is inspired and accurate in all of its detail.
- A. If the Word of God says something is okay, then it's okay—and when His Word says something is wrong, then it's wrong.
  - B. Basing your worldview on the Bible will lead you to respond to life in a positive way and put you on the path to prosperity.
  - C. It will also prevent the devil from gaining access to you through wrong philosophies, the traditions of men, or the wisdom and principles of this world.
  - D. The Word of God is the only sure foundation to build your philosophy on, and it is your ticket to the blessed life.

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. Discussion Question: What are some ways God has dealt with you on a heart level?
2. Read Matthew 23:26. What happens when the inside of something gets clean?
  - A. The outside is ready to be cleaned
  - B. The outside will be clean as well
  - C. The inside is ready to be inspected
  - D. All of the above
  - E. None of the above
3. Read 2 Corinthians 11:3. Satan tries to corrupt you from what?
4. Read 1 John 2:16. What three categories does temptation fall into?

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**1 SAMUEL 16:7**

*But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.*

**LUKE 6:45**

*A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.*

**MATTHEW 23:26**

*Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.*

**2 CORINTHIANS 11:3**

*But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

**1 JOHN 2:16**

*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

5. Read Genesis 3:6 and Luke 4:1-13. What do you learn about how Satan tempts man?
6. How is this helpful?
7. Where has the battle against temptation always been?
8. Why is it significant that Satan motivated a snake—a creature that was able to twist and deceive better than any other animal—to tempt Adam and Eve?
9. Discussion Question: Give some examples of how knowing God's Word is true is fundamental to establishing a Christian philosophy.
10. You can save yourself a lot of trouble by not even getting into \_\_\_\_\_ with the devil.
11. True or false: God only said don't eat the fruit.
12. Discussion Question: What happens when you add to what God has said?
13. What does religion always do?

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**GENESIS 3:6**

*And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*

**LUKE 4:1-13**

*And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, [2] Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. [3] And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. [4] And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. [5] And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. [6] And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. [7] If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. [8] And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. [9] And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: [10] For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: [11] And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. [12] And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. [13] And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.*



## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

14. Read 1 Peter 3:3-4. What is the intent of this scripture?
15. What do people tend to do if they don't experience God's wrath for violating man's rules?
- They tend to never break the rule again
  - They tend to keep the violation to themselves
  - They tend to repent in sackcloth and ashes
  - They tend to question everything else they learned about God
  - They tend to ridicule the person who taught them about the rule
16. Discussion Question: How has your life been countercultural because of God's Word?
17. It's easier to be deceived if what you've heard is what?
18. You have to read the Bible like it is God speaking what?
- Hebrew
  - At you
  - To you
  - Greek
  - Latin
19. True or false: Whenever you read the Word, you shouldn't always have a sense of expectancy that God is going to speak to you through it.
20. Discussion Question: Share how God has spoken to you as you've read the Word.

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**GENESIS 3:1-3**

*Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? [2] And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: [3] But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.*

**JOHN 8:44**

*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

**EPHESIANS 6:11-12 (NEW KING JAMES VERSION)**

*Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. [12] For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

**MARK 7:13**

*Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.*

**1 PETER 3:3-4**

*Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; [4] But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

21. God's Word won't change you if you don't let it what?  
 A. Dominate your thoughts and life  
 B. Sow and reap in your life  
 C. Replace your personality  
 D. All of the above  
 E. None of the above
22. What's the easiest way to prove that the Bible is God's Word and that He will speak to you through it?  
 A. Compare it with other religions  
 B. Leave it to your pastor to interpret it  
 C. Read it with a sincere heart  
 D. All of the above  
 E. None of the above
23. Discussion Question: Read Hebrews 4:12. How have you experienced the Word being alive?
24. Discussion Question: Why doesn't it make sense for you to bury your head in the sand and say, "Well, you know, I'm just not sure God speaks to me through the Bible. I'm not sure I can really trust this"?
25. When you go to the Word and hear God speak to you directly, you'll have enough firsthand knowledge to be what?

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**GENESIS 2:16-17**

*And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: [17] But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*

**ROMANS 12:1-2**

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. [2] And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

**HEBREWS 4:12**

*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

26. Read 1 Peter 5:8. True or false: The devil can devour all.
27. Learning from other people shouldn't be the foundation of your relationship with \_\_\_\_\_.
- Them
  - Churches
  - God
  - All of the above
  - None of the above
28. You'll find time to study the Word if you understand what?
29. Discussion Question: Why is it more important to put more emphasis on the Word of God than on what your senses tell you?
30. Discussion Question: Read 2 Peter 1:19-21 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Discuss what these passages mean to you.
31. "The New Testament documents have more manuscripts, earlier manuscripts, and more abundantly supported manuscripts than the best ten pieces of classical literature \_\_\_\_\_."
32. How many Greek manuscripts of the New Testament have survived in whole or in part?
33. True or false: The New Testament was written as a single book.

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**1 PETER 5:8**

*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*

**2 PETER 1:16-21**

*For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. [17] For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. [18] And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. [19] We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: [20] Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. [21] For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

**2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17**

*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: [17] That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

**MATTHEW 17:5**

*While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.*

**DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS**

34. Why is it important that the New Testament scriptures were written close to the same time as the originals?
35. True or false: When a document is copied over and over again thousands of times, the chance for error is likely decreased.
36. Why isn't it true that error has crept into the Bible, since it's been copied thousands of times?
37. The Church Fathers quoted all but \_\_\_\_\_ verses from the Scriptures still read today.
38. True or false: A non-Christian gave evidence of Jesus as a historical figure.
39. What things did he give evidence of?  
A. Jesus' wonderful works  
B. That Jesus was the Christ  
C. Jesus' persecution and death  
D. All of the above  
E. None of the above
40. Tacitus' account verifies not only the existence of Jesus and His death but also the multiplication and persecution of whom?
41. Not even considering Christian authors, Jesus is more documented than whom?

**SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS****2 SAMUEL 23:2**

*The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.*

**MATTHEW 4:4**

*But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

**DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS**

42. Discussion Question: The fact that Jesus is so well documented in history means what for today?
43. What was found with the Dead Sea Scrolls when they were discovered?
44. How many years older was it than the book of Isaiah read in Bibles today?
45. Comparing the two, how many errors were found?
46. What else does finding the Dead Sea Scrolls prove?
47. Why isn't the Bible just a human book?
48. This shows that it was \_\_\_\_\_ preserved by God.
49. Even though the Scriptures have been translated, why can we still trust the Bible?
50. Read Galatians 3:16. What did Paul say to further validate translations?

**SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS****GALATIANS 3:16**

*Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.*

**PSALM 119:11**

*Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

51. Even if there was no evidence outside of the Bible that the Word of God is inspired, why would Andrew still be fully convinced that it is?
52. Discussion Question: What personal experiences have you had to verify that the Word of God is inspired?
53. Read Ephesians 2:8-9 and James 2:20. Even though certain passages in the Bible might appear to be contradictions, why are opposite statements sometimes intentional?
54. Who does the devil look to devour?
55. What does Andrew doubt before he questions the accuracy of the Word?
56. Discussion Question: Why is it that the majority of people who say they believe the Bible is God's Word do not seem to believe that it is accurate and trustworthy enough to base their lives upon it?
57. Deviating from the Word of God leads to wrong ways of \_\_\_\_\_, and eventually, those wrong thought patterns are going to cause you \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. Studying/Damage
  - B. Giving/Pain
  - C. Motivation/Grief
  - D. Listening/Problems
  - E. Thinking/Trouble

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**EPHESIANS 2:8-9**

*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: [9] Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

**JAMES 2:20**

*But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?*

**DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS****SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**

58. Discussion Question: If the Word of God says something is okay, then it's okay—and when His Word says something is wrong, then it's wrong. Give an example from your life how this is true.
59. Basing your worldview on the Bible will prevent the devil from what?
60. The Word of God is the only sure foundation to build your philosophy on, and it is your what to the blessed kind of life?
- A. Responsibility
  - B. Ticket
  - C. Gift
  - D. All of the above
  - E. None of the above

---

**OUTLINE**

- I. Instead of looking to God for guidance, many Christians today are turning to science or the principles of this world to answer their questions—but that is exactly what the Apostle Paul warned not to do (Col. 2:8).
- A. The Word of God is a far more reliable place to look for answers and a much surer foundation for our worldview.
  - B. Jesus didn't go around citing the traditions of the Pharisees or the laws of the scribes; He quoted the Word of God as the final authority.
  - C. Science itself is not bad; it is merely the observation and interpretation of data.
  - D. The problem lies in the interpretation, which is sometimes based on the assumption that God doesn't exist—an obvious problem for Christians.
  - E. Unfortunately, many people today have chosen to put their faith in science, which really means they are putting their faith in the interpretations and opinions of man rather than God.
  - F. However, despite efforts by atheists to disprove the existence of God, not a single scrap of scientific evidence has ever been produced that invalidates Scripture.
  - G. The word science is used by many to imply "incontrovertible laws," but nothing could be further from the truth.
  - H. Throughout history, what was promoted as being unassailably true by science one day has often been disproven the next.
  - I. Scientific theories are in a constant state of revision.
  - J. The principles of this world are here today and gone tomorrow, but the Bible has stood the test of time.
  - K. The Word of God remains unchanged.
  - L. Jesus said,

*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*

MATTHEW 24:35

- II. The Bible is not a science textbook, nor does it attempt to answer questions of mathematics and natural science, but the Bible has always proven accurate in all of its prophecies and details.
- A. This is remarkable when you consider that Scripture was written during a time when the world was steeped in superstition and ignorance, and it once again underscores the fact that the Bible was written by God through men.
  - B. For instance, the Bible teaches that the universe had a beginning (Gen. 1:1), when the common ancient view was that the universe was eternal.
  - C. Isaiah wrote in 800 B.C. that the earth was round (Is. 40:22), but Western society didn't embrace that truth for another 2,000 years.
  - D. The Word teaches that no new matter is being created in the universe (Gen. 2:2), and the first law of thermodynamics states the same thing.



- E. Also, the second law of thermodynamics claims that the amount of energy in the universe is decreasing, and that is what the Psalmist declared:

*Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.*

PSALM 102:25-27

- F. I don't base my faith in God on the ability of scholars to reconcile the Word of God to current scientific theories, and I don't believe we should, because the Bible is more trustworthy than the fashionable ideas of any time period.
- G. God is unchanging and His Word has proven true over and over again.
- H. However, the scientific accuracy contained in the Bible—which was written well ahead of any contemporary discovery—is another indication of its supernatural origins.
- III. Even more than any external evidence, I think Scripture itself is the greatest proof that the Word of God is accurate and inspired.
- A. Back when I first started walking with God, before I had proven the Word true in my life, the one thing that really convinced me about the inspiration of the Bible was the amount of prophecy fulfilled in Scripture—and the accuracy of those prophecies.
- B. Merely human predictions are usually so vague that they can be fulfilled in a hundred different ways.
- C. A horoscope in the newspaper, or a fortune cookie from a restaurant, can do that.
- D. The prophecies of the Bible are on a whole different level.
- E. The Bible is in a category all by itself.
- F. The Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah were written 400 years or more before New Testament times, and Jesus fulfilled them down to every last detail.
- G. The total number of prophecies Jesus fulfilled is in the hundreds, but I'll just mention a few of them here.
- i. It was prophesied in Scripture that the Messiah would not see corruption (meaning that His body wouldn't decay [Ps. 16:9-10]), which was fulfilled when Jesus rose from the dead (Acts 2:27, 31; and 13:35).
  - ii. Scripture says that Christ would feel forsaken (Ps. 22:1), and when Jesus was on the cross, He called out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46 and Mark 15:34).
  - iii. It says that the Messiah would be mocked and ridiculed (Ps. 22:7-8), and that came to pass exactly (Luke 23:35).
  - iv. It says they would pierce His hands and His feet (Ps. 22:16). You can't get any more specific than that—and at the time this prophecy was written, the Romans hadn't even invented the punishment of crucifixion yet! Yet Scripture describes Jesus' crucifixion perfectly (Mark 15:25; Luke 23:33; John 19:37, and 20:25).
  - v. Scripture prophesies that people would divide Jesus' garments and cast lots for them (Ps. 22:18). The soldiers at the cross did precisely that (Luke 23:34 and John 19:23-24). They divided His clothes among themselves, and when they got to His robe, they discovered it was an expensive robe woven as one piece without a single seam. Rather than tear it apart, they cast lots for it.
  - vi. Scripture prophesies that not one of Jesus' bones would be broken (Ps. 34:20). The Romans often broke the leg bones of those being crucified to hasten death, but when they came to Jesus, they saw that He was already dead, so they didn't break His bones (John 19:33 and 36).

- vii. Scripture prophesies that Jesus would be hated without cause (Ps. 35:19) and be betrayed by a close friend (Ps. 41:9). The Word says that He would be despised and rejected by people (Is. 53:3), people passing by would wag their heads at Him (Ps. 109:25), He would be given vinegar mixed with gall to drink (Ps. 69:21), He would die but rise from the dead, and He would ascend to the right hand of God. All of those prophesies were fulfilled (Matt. 27:34, 39; Luke 22:47-48; John 1:10-11, and 15:24-25).
- viii. It says the Messiah would bear our sicknesses and carry our diseases (Is. 53:4-5). Jesus' life demonstrated God's desire to heal us, and many scriptures confirm that Jesus purchased health for us in His atonement (Matt. 8:16-17 and 1 Pet. 2:24).
- ix. The Word prophesies that Christ would cause the deaf to hear, the blind to see, the dumb to talk, and the lame to leap (Is. 35:4-6). The entire New Testament is a record of **“how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him”** (Acts 10:38). And He's still doing it. The Holy Spirit is continuing Jesus' earthly ministry by giving sight to the blind, health to the sick, and liberty to captives (Luke 4:17-18).
- x. Scripture says Jesus was wounded for our transgressions (Is. 53:5).
- xi. It says He would stay silent before His accusers (Is. 53:7), which is completely contrary to human nature. An innocent person facing a severely painful and cruel death would try to make some kind of a defense to get out of it, but Jesus didn't say a word (Matt. 27:12, 14; Mark 14:61, 15:5; and 1 Pet. 2:23).
- xii. Scripture prophesies that the Messiah would be killed with sinners and buried with the rich (Is. 53:9 and 12). Jesus was crucified between two thieves (Mark 15:27-28) and buried in a rich man's tomb (Matt. 27:57-60).
- xiii. Like the virgin birth, being born in Bethlehem, or the manner of His death, these are prophesies that no man can control through his own effort.

<b>Old Testament Scripture</b>	<b>Some Prophecies Regarding the Messiah that Were Fulfilled in Jesus</b>	<b>New Testament Fulfillment</b>
Ps. 16:10	He would not see corruption	Acts 2:27-31
Ps. 22:1	He would feel forsaken	Matt. 27:46, Mark 15:34
Ps. 22:7-8	He would be mocked and ridiculed	Matt. 27:29, Mark 15:19-20 Luke 23:35
Ps. 22:16	His hands and feet would be pierced	Mark 15:25, Luke 23:33
Ps. 22:18	They would cast lots for His clothing	Matt. 27:35, Mark 15:24, Luke 23:34, John 19:24
Ps. 34:20	None of the Messiah's bones would be broken	John 19:31-36
Ps. 35:11	He would be falsely accused	Mark 14:57-58
Ps. 35:19	He would be hated without cause	John 15:24-25
Ps. 41:9	He would be betrayed by a close friend	Luke 22:47-48
Ps. 69:21	He would be given vinegar mixed with gall to drink	Matt. 27:34, 48; Mark 15:36; John 19:29
Ps. 109:25	Those who looked upon Him would wag their heads	Matt. 27:39
Ps. 49:15, 16:10	He would conquer death by resurrection	Acts 2:24-36, Mark 16:6-7
Ps. 68:18	His ascension to the right hand of God	Mark 16:19, Acts 1:9-10, Eph. 4:8
Mic. 5:2-5	Be born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea	Matt. 2:1-6
Is. 7:14	He would be born of a virgin	Matt. 1:18-23, Luke 1:26-35
Is. 35:4-6, 29:18	He would cause the deaf to hear, the blind to see, the dumb to talk, and the lame to leap	Matt. 11:5, 15:30, 21:14; John 5:8-9; Acts 3:2-8
Is. 52:14	Others would mar His appearance, and He would be so disfigured that He hardly looked human	Matt. 26:67, 27:26, 29-30; Mark 15:15-19; John 19:34
Is. 53:3	He would be despised and rejected of men	John 1:10-11
Is. 53:4-5	He would bear our sickness and carry our diseases	Matt. 8:16-17, 1 Pet. 2:24
Is. 53:5-6	He was wounded for our transgressions (" <b>offences</b> ")	Rom. 4:25, 1 Pet. 3:18
Is. 53:7	He would be silent before His accusers, as a lamb led to the slaughter	Matt. 27:12-14; Mark 14:61, 15:5; 1 Pet. 2:23
Is. 53:9	He would be buried with the rich	Matt. 27:57-60
Is. 53:11	His death would justify many	Rom. 5:18-19, 1 John 2:1-2
Is. 53:12	He would be numbered with transgressors in His death	Matt. 27:38, Mark 15:28, Luke 22:37
Zech. 9:9	He would come to Jerusalem riding on a donkey	Mark 11:1-10, Matt. 21:1-5, Luke 19:28-38, John 12:12-15
Zech. 11:12-13	He would be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver, and it would be used to buy a potter's field	Matt. 27:3-10

- IV. One mathematician famously calculated the probability of just eight of these Old Testament prophecies being fulfilled accidentally as 1 in 100 quadrillion, or  $10^{17}$ —a number beyond comprehension.<sup>1</sup>
- A. In other words, the odds that the following could have happened by chance to one man is 1 in 100 quadrillion: Jesus was born in Bethlehem; had a prophet go before Him and prepare His way; was a ruler who entered Jerusalem on a donkey; was betrayed by a friend and had that betrayal result in wounding His hands; was betrayed for exactly thirty pieces of silver; His cost of betrayal (thirty pieces of silver) was thrown on the temple floor and used to buy a potter's field; He made no defense when on trial for His life, though He was innocent; and was one of the few men in all of history who was killed by crucifixion.
  - B. One hundred quadrillion is an *absurdly* large number.
  - C. Then consider that Jesus fulfilled hundreds of prophecies—not a mere eight—and you begin to understand what a testimony to the inspiration of Scripture Jesus' life truly was (in addition to certain proof that He is the Messiah).
- V. Other prophecies in the Bible predicted events unrelated to the Messiah that were also fulfilled historically.
- A. For instance, about 200 years before Cyrus, king of Persia, was born, the prophet Isaiah said that God would raise up a Gentile king named Cyrus who would facilitate the rebuilding of the temple (Is. 44:28)—and that is exactly what happened (2 Chr. 36:22-23).
  - B. Another prophecy arose when Jeroboam, king of Israel, was offering sacrifices to a demon god, and a prophet stood before the altar and cried, **“O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee”** (1 Kin. 13:2)—about three hundred years later, the prophecy was fulfilled by the righteous King Josiah (2 Kin. 23:15-20).
    - i. By the time Josiah was born, the nation of Israel had fallen far from God.
    - ii. The ten northern tribes in Israel had already been led into captivity by Gentiles, but the southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin were still in existence.
    - iii. Josiah was king over both tribes, but he only learned how far they had strayed from God after a copy of the book of the Law was found in the temple—most likely a copy of the Pentateuch; i.e., the first five books of the Bible, written by Moses (2 Kin. 22:8).
    - iv. After reading the Old Testament scriptures, Josiah became convicted about the condition of the kingdom and set out to restore righteousness.
    - v. He put a stop to pagan worship, and then he dug up the graves of the false prophets and burned their bones on the very altar that Jeroboam had sacrificed to idols on.
    - vi. You can't get any more specific than that.
  - C. No book written by a human has prophesied events hundreds of years in advance down to every last detail.
  - D. The supposed prophecies of people like Nostradamus are so vague that they can be fulfilled in a multitude of ways.
  - E. In contrast, the Word of God describes in precise detail events that are fulfilled hundreds of years later.
  - F. The difference is that the Bible is inspired by God.
  - G. It wasn't created by the minds of mere humans.
- VI. Christians who aren't basing their philosophy on the Word of God need to “rediscover” Scripture much like Josiah did.

<sup>1</sup> Peter Stoner, *Science Speaks* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976) online at [sciencespeaks.dstoner.net/Christ\\_of\\_Prophecy.html#c9](http://sciencespeaks.dstoner.net/Christ_of_Prophecy.html#c9)

- A. The Bible was written by men but inspired by God, and it contains God's thoughts for us.
- B. It shows us how God looks at the world, and everything we need to know about current social issues is in the Bible.
- C. It tells us God's perspective on murder, lying, stealing, homosexuality, divorce, integrity, abortion, and every other issue.
- D. The Bible is God's philosophy written out for us to understand.
- E. Many Christians today are basically ignoring God's way of thinking and coming up with their own way of looking at things.
- F. They are trying a little of this and a little of that, doing whatever works for them.
- G. That is a recipe for disaster.
- H. Satan comes against us through the way we think.
- I. We give the Enemy free access to our lives when we base our philosophy on the world's viewpoint.
- J. The Word of God needs to become the standard we use to judge everything.

VII. God said to Joshua,

*This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*

JOSHUA 1:8

- A. You aren't going to prosper and succeed until you take the Word of God and put it in your heart and meditate on it.
- B. Some people in the world appear to be prospering—they have power and possessions—but those things don't last.
- C. You can prosper momentarily outside of pursuing God, but that kind of prosperity isn't going to fulfill you.
- D. Tabloids are filled with stories of the rich and famous trying to commit suicide.
- E. Many wealthy and powerful people who don't know God are more miserable and bitter than the poorest of the poor.
- F. Jesus said, "**For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?**" (Matt. 16:26).
- G. There is a right and a wrong way to prosper.
- H. If you want to prosper God's way—in a way that doesn't take away your life—then you're going to have to base your prosperity on the Word of God.
- I. You have to take God's values and do it His way.
- J. When you do things God's way, life isn't all about acquiring possessions—it's about relationship with God and experiencing His love.
- K. Scripture says that if you seek God's kingdom first, then He will give you everything you need (Matt. 6:33).
- L. God will take care of you when you are seeking Him first.

- M. The Word contains God's instructions to you on how to prosper.
  - N. It gives His revelation on how to make your marriage work, how to walk in health, and how to have joy and peace.
- VIII. The evidence we have examined leaves no doubt that the Bible is the inspired Word of God.
- A. The Bible contains God's instructions for our success, and it is accurate in every detail.
  - B. We have to put our faith in the Word of God, above all other information or ideas.
  - C. If we compromise on this point or begin to doubt that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, then we start down a slippery slope that will undermine our faith in God.
  - D. The Bible is not a book about God; it is a book *from* God, and it has to be the foundation of all Christian philosophy.

**DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS**

1. When you choose to put faith in science rather than God, you are really putting your faith in the interpretations and opinions of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. Evolution
  - B. Clergy
  - C. Man
  - D. All of the above
  - E. None of the above
  
2. Discussion Question: If scientific theories are in a constant state of revision, what does that tell you about science?
  
3. Even though the Bible does not attempt to answer questions of mathematics and natural science, it has always proven accurate in all of its \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
  
4. Read Genesis 1:1, Isaiah 40:22, Genesis 2:2, and Psalm 102:25-27. Give some examples of where the Bible is accurate and science was either proven false or supportive of Scripture.
  
5. True or false: The Bible is more trustworthy than the fashionable ideas of certain time periods.
  
6. Jesus fulfilled prophecies that were made when?
  
7. Discussion Question: List some of the prophecies that are important to you and explain why they are.

**SCRIPTURES TO USE WITH QUESTIONS****COLOSSIANS 2:8**

*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

**MATTHEW 24:35**

*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*

**GENESIS 1:1**

*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

**ISAIAH 40:22**

*It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.*

**GENESIS 2:2**

*And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.*

**PSALM 102:25-27**

*Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. [26] They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: [27] But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.*

**DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS**

8. The odds of just eight of the prophecies happening to one person are what?
9. But Jesus fulfilled \_\_\_\_\_ of prophecies.
10. How are prophecies in the Word of God different from other prophecies?
11. Everything you need to know about current social issues is where?
  - A. In school
  - B. In the news
  - C. In church
  - D. In heavenly places
  - E. In the Bible
12. What happens when we base our philosophy on the world's viewpoint?
13. Read Joshua 1:8. What do you have to do to prosper and succeed?
14. True or false: You can prosper momentarily outside of pursuing God.
15. Discussion Question: Why wouldn't you be fulfilled by prospering that way?

**SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS****JOSHUA 1:8**

*This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*



**DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS**

16. Read Matthew 16:26. If you want to prosper God's way—in a way that doesn't take away your \_\_\_\_\_—then you're going to have to base your prosperity on the Word of God.
- A. Time
  - B. Money
  - C. Energy
  - D. Life
  - E. Job
17. What leaves no doubt that the Bible is the inspired Word of God?
18. Discussion Question: Why should you put your faith in the Word of God, above all other information or ideas?
19. If you compromise on this point or begin to doubt that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, then you start down a slippery slope that will what?
20. Discussion Question: Why is it important to know that the Bible is a book from God?

**SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS****MATTHEW 16:26**

*For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

**ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES****PSALM 16:9-10**

*Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. [10] For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

**ACTS 2:24-36**

*Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. [25] For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: [26] Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: [27] Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. [28] Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. [29] Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. [30] Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; [31] He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. [32] This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. [33] Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. [34] For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, [35] Until I make thy foes thy footstool. [36] Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

**ACTS 13:35**

*Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

**PSALM 22:1**

*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?*

**MATTHEW 27:46**

*And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

**MARK 15:34**

*And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

**PSALM 22:7-8**

*All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, [8] He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.*

**LUKE 23:33-35**

*And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. [34] Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. [35] And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.*

**PSALM 22:16**

*For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.*

**MARK 15:24-25**

*And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take. [25] And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.*

**ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES****JOHN 19:31-37**

*The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. [32] Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. [33] But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: [34] But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. [35] And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. [36] For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. [37] And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.*

**JOHN 20:25**

*The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.*

**PSALM 22:18**

*They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.*

**JOHN 19:23-24**

*Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. [24] They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.*

**PSALM 34:20**

*He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.*

**PSALM 35:19**

*Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.*

**PSALM 41:9**

*Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.*

**ISAIAH 53:3-7**

*He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. [4] Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. [5] But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. [6] All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. [7] He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*

**PSALM 109:25**

*I became also a reproach unto them: when they looked upon me they shaked their heads.*

**PSALM 69:21**

*They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.*

**MATTHEW 26:24**

*The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.*

---

**ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES****MATTHEW 27:34-35**

*They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. [35] And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.*

**MATTHEW 27:38-39**

*Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. [39] And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads.*

**LUKE 22:47-48**

*And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. [48] But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?*

**JOHN 1:10-11**

*He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. [11] He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*

**JOHN 15:24-25**

*If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. [25] But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.*

**MATTHEW 8:16-17**

*When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: [17] That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.*

**1 PETER 2:23-24**

*Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: [24] Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*

**ISAIAH 35:4-6**

*Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. [5] Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. [6] Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.*

**ACTS 10:38**

*How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.*

**LUKE 4:17-18**

*And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, [18] The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.*

**MATTHEW 27:12-14**

*And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. [13] Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? [14] And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.*

---

**ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES****MARK 14:61**

*But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?*

**MARK 15:5**

*But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.*

**ISAIAH 53:9**

*And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.*

**ISAIAH 53:11-12**

*He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. [12] Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*

**MARK 15:27-28**

*And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. [28] And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.*

**MATTHEW 27:57-60**

*When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: [58] He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. [59] And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, [60] And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.*

**MATTHEW 27:29-30**

*And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! [30] And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.*

**MARK 15:15-20**

*And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified. [16] And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Praetorium; and they call together the whole band. [17] And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head, [18] And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! [19] And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him. [20] And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.*

**PSALM 35:11**

*False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not.*

**MARK 14:57-58**

*And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying, [58] We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.*

**MATTHEW 27:48**

*And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.*

**ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES****MARK 15:36**

*And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down.*

**JOHN 19:29**

*Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.*

**PSALM 49:15**

*But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah.*

**MARK 16:6-7**

*And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. [7] But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.*

**PSALM 68:18**

*Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.*

**MARK 16:19**

*So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.*

**ACTS 1:9-10**

*And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. [10] And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel.*

**EPHESIANS 4:8**

*Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*

**MICAH 5:2-5**

*But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. [3] Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. [4] And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. [5] And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men.*

**MATTHEW 2:1-6**

*Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, [2] Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. [3] When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. [4] And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. [5] And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, [6] And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.*

**ISAIAH 7:14**

*Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

**ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES****MATTHEW 1:18-23**

*Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. [19] Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. [20] But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. [21] And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. [22] Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, [23] Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.*

**LUKE 1:26-35**

*And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, [27] To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. [28] And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. [29] And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. [30] And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. [31] And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. [32] He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: [33] And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. [34] Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? [35] And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*

**ISAIAH 29:18**

*And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.*

**MATTHEW 11:5**

*The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.*

**MATTHEW 15:30**

*And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them.*

**MATTHEW 21:14**

*And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.*

**JOHN 5:8-9**

*Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. [9] And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.*

**ACTS 3:2-8**

*And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; [3] Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. [4] And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. [5] And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. [6] Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. [7] And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. [8] And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.*

---

**ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES****ISAIAH 52:14**

*As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.*

**MATTHEW 26:67**

*Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands.*

**MATTHEW 27:26**

*Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.*

**JOHN 1:10-11**

*He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. [11] He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*

**ROMANS 4:25**

*Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*

**1 PETER 3:18**

*For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.*

**ROMANS 5:18-19**

*Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. [19] For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*

**1 JOHN 2:1-2**

*My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: [2] And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

**LUKE 22:37**

*For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.*

**ZECHARIAH 9:9**

*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.*

**MARK 11:1-10**

*And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples, [2] And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him. [3] And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither. [4] And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him. [5] And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? [6] And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go. [7] And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him. [8] And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way. [9] And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: [10] Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.*



## ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES

### MATTHEW 21:1-5

*And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, [2] Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. [3] And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. [4] All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, [5] Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.*

### LUKE 19:28-38

*And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem. [29] And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, [30] Saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither. [31] And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him. [32] And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them. [33] And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? [34] And they said, The Lord hath need of him. [35] And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. [36] And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way. [37] And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; [38] Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.*

### JOHN 12:12-15

*On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, [13] Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. [14] And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, [15] Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.*

### ZECHARIAH 11:12-13

*And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. [13] And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord.*

### MATTHEW 27:3-10

*Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, [4] Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. [5] And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. [6] And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. [7] And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. [8] Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. [9] Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; [10] And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.*

### ISAIAH 44:28

*That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.*

### 2 CHRONICLES 36:22-23

*Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying. [23] Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The Lord his God be with him, and let him go up.*

---

**ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES****1 KINGS 13:2**

*And he cried against the altar in the word of the Lord, and said, O altar, altar; thus saith the Lord; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee.*

**2 KINGS 23:15-20**

*Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove. [16] And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the Lord which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words. [17] Then he said, What title is that that I see? And the men of the city told him, It is the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel. [18] And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria. [19] And all the houses also of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the Lord to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Bethel. [20] And he slew all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem.*

**2 KINGS 22:8**

*And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.*

**MATTHEW 6:33**

*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

**OUTLINE**

- I. I remember a young man who came to me for counsel one time about going to Charis Bible College.
  - A. He said that he knew God was telling him to go, but everyone in his life was telling him not to.
  - B. He asked me “So, what do you think?” and I said, “You lost me the moment you said that you know God is telling you to go.”
  - C. If God tells you to do something, then you just do what God tells you to do.
  - D. God is the Creator of the universe, He knows all things, and He knows what is best for you.
  - E. Why would you care what anybody else thinks or what people might say about you?
  - F. In comparison with God, no one else’s opinion should matter.
  - G. Your relationship with God should soak all the way down to the very core of your being.
  - H. When that happens, your actions will be determined by your philosophy instead of by your environment or emotions.
  - I. It really simplifies life to realize Jesus is Lord and you aren’t.
  - J. Then, when God tells you to do something, you just do it.
  - K. This attitude is one part of a Christian philosophy that will really simplify your life.
- II. I couldn’t tell you how many people have told me over the years that they felt God was calling them to come to Charis Bible College, but they didn’t think it was wise to go.
  - A. They would say, for instance, that it was only ten years until they retired.
  - B. They were focused on securing their financial futures, and they were leaning unto their own understanding.
  - C. My opinion is that when God wants you to do something ten years from now, He’ll tell you ten years from now.
  - D. If God is telling you now, He either wants you to do it now, or He wants you to start taking the necessary steps to get the ball rolling.
  - E. Some things take a while to come to pass, so God will give you instruction in advance, but when God tells you to do something, you just do it.
  - F. That’s all there is to it.
  - G. I stopped in Pritchett, Colorado, to preach at a church of 10 people.
  - H. We saw a man raised from the dead, and church attendance jumped up to around 100 people.
  - I. They wanted me to stay and continue teaching them the full Gospel.
  - J. No part of me wanted to live in Pritchett, but as we were driving out of town, I began to sense in my heart that God was telling me to stay there and teach those people the Word.
  - K. By the time I got back to my house in Childress, Texas, I knew I was supposed to move.
  - L. From a purely logical standpoint, there was no reason for me to go.

- M. The church only had ten members, they had no money, the church building was too small, and the town had nothing going for it.
- N. I could have given you a thousand reasons as to why it didn't seem like a good idea.
- O. How could I fulfill my big vision in such a small place?
- P. On the other hand, I was prospering in Childress, Texas.
- Q. But once I knew that God wanted me to move to Pritchett, Colorado, the debate was over.
- R. Jesus is Lord of my life, and my attitude was that if God wanted me to do something, then I was going to do it—and enjoy doing it.
- S. Once I was convinced of God's will for me to move to Pritchett, I began to praise Him for leading and guiding me.
- T. Within days, my entire attitude had changed, and I was excited about going.
- U. There were some hardships associated with living in such a remote area, but I loved living in Pritchett as much as any place I've ever lived. It was wonderful.
- III. I made Jesus Lord of my life on March 23, 1968, and I haven't tried to direct my own life since.
- A. God is Lord, I'm not, and He knows what's best for me.
- B. I have feelings and opinions like everybody else, but the discussion ends once I'm sure God is telling me to do something.
- C. I trust God's judgment more than I trust my own, and I just do what He leads me to do.
- D. I couldn't even tell you how many decisions I've made in my life based purely on the fact that I was sure God was leading me.
- E. It would really simplify your life to run up a white flag and surrender to Jesus as Lord.
- IV. One of my favorite passages of Scripture is from Jeremiah.
- A. He was wondering out loud how a people whom God rescued from Egypt and preserved through many miracles could forget the Lord who delivered them and turn to vain idols.
- B. In the middle of his grieving, Jeremiah answered his own question by saying,

*O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*

JEREMIAH 10:23

- C. The Jews had fallen from a position of favor because they started doing things their own way.
- D. Jeremiah recognized that God didn't create us to rule our own lives.
- E. He gave us the free will to make our own choices, but God never intended for us to direct our own steps.
- F. We have the freedom to decide for ourselves, because God doesn't force His will upon us, but the correct choice is to recognize our complete dependency on God.
- G. We aren't smart enough to run our own lives. God said,

*I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.*

DEUTERONOMY 30:19

- H. God gives us a choice, but He also tells us which option is best: He says, “Choose life!”
  - I. We need to trust in the Lord with all our hearts and not try to figure things out on our own.
  - J. We need to seek His will in everything we do, and He’ll show us the path to take—that’s the smart choice (Prov. 3:5-6).
  - K. That’s how we’re supposed to live.
  - L. We’re meant to make Jesus our Lord and follow His guidance.
- V. The world would be a different place if Adam and Eve had followed this philosophy.
- A. It was very clear that the serpent was enticing them to do something contrary to what God had told them, but they didn’t follow God’s guidance.
  - B. They knew God as their Creator and recognized His provision for them, but they didn’t submit to God as Lord of their lives.
  - C. They knew He was kind to them and that He met with them and talked with them, but they didn’t bow to Him and determine that they wouldn’t lean unto their own understanding.
  - D. They failed to surrender to God’s sovereignty, and Satan went right through that open door to lead them into sin.
  - E. A solid Christian philosophy requires believing in the Word of God as our supreme authority and making Jesus Lord of our lives—not merely in the sense of recognizing His authority and attributes, but by submitting to His leadership.
- VI. A rich man once kneeled down before Jesus and asked, “Good Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”
- A. “Why do you call Me good?” Jesus replied. “None is good except God alone.”
  - B. In other words, Jesus was saying, “Either call Me God and make Me Lord, or quit calling Me good!”
  - C. The rich man responded by calling Jesus “Master” again—he wasn’t willing to go all the way and make Jesus his Lord and Savior.
  - D. He wanted the salvation Jesus provides, but he didn’t want to completely commit himself to following Jesus as Lord.
  - E. Jesus knew the man wasn’t totally sincere, but He still loved him.
  - F. Jesus told him, “Go, sell everything you have, and give the proceeds to the poor. It will give you treasure in heaven. Then come, take up your cross, and follow Me.”
  - G. The rich man couldn’t do it, and he walked away grieved (Mark 10:17-22).
  - H. Jesus presented salvation as making Him Lord and Master over your life—not just acknowledging His greatness.
  - I. Scripture says that in order to be saved, you have to confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead (Rom. 10:9-10).
  - J. I believe that salvation should be presented as turning your life over to Jesus—lock, stock, and barrel—but that’s not how salvation is usually presented.
  - K. The message many people are hearing is that they should be saved just so they can go to heaven when they die.

- L. Obviously, that is an important part of salvation, but it isn't the whole message.
  - M. As a result, a lot of born-again believers will go to heaven when they die, but they haven't submitted to Jesus as Director and Leader of their everyday lives.
- VII. In my own case, I was born again when I was eight years old, but I didn't submit to Jesus as Lord until I was eighteen.
- A. During that ten-year interval, I loved God and I had a relationship with Him to the degree that I would have gone to heaven if I had died, but I wasn't allowing Jesus to direct my life.
  - B. Though I submitted to Jesus as Lord on March 23, 1968, I haven't lived perfectly, but whenever I know that God is telling me to do something, I do it.
  - C. I yield to Jesus as my Lord, and my submission has led to a blessed life.
  - D. Everything I set my hand unto prospers.
  - E. God is a good God, and He leads me along good paths.
  - F. I believe this philosophy is absolutely essential.
  - G. You need to adopt this way of thinking: You are going to do whatever God tells you to do, regardless of any other factors.
  - H. Whether it is through the Word of God or by special instruction from the Holy Spirit, decide ahead of time that you are going to follow God's leading—no discussion, no debate.
- VIII. Over the years, I have discovered that God will tell me to do things, but if I don't do them right away, He doesn't argue with me.
- A. He just tells me what He wants me to do, and then I have the choice of whether or not to follow Him.
  - B. To the best of my ability, I do what God tells me to do, but if I miss His leadership, He won't debate the issue with me.
  - C. So, if you're waiting for God to convince you to do the thing you already know He wants you to do, you'll be waiting a long time because it isn't going to happen.
  - D. God doesn't get into debates with you over His will for your life.
  - E. He will lead and He will direct, but He isn't going to argue with you about what you already know.
  - F. Doing whatever you want and asking God to bless it as an afterthought is not the same thing as following God.
  - G. God tells you to do things for your own good.
  - H. Really, being a Christian is simple: All you have to do is make Jesus Lord of your life, follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, and do what God's Word tells you to do.
  - I. You'll solve a lot of problems in your life by following those few simple steps.
- IX. In order to remain sensitive to God's leading, you have to guard your heart against the negative philosophies that are being promoted in the world.
- A. Every time you watch a television program, read a book, listen to the radio, browse the internet, or watch a movie, you encounter ideas that are contrary to God's philosophy.

- B. Satan uses words to attack you through the way you think, and the modern media is the ideal way to push the world's philosophy.
- C. Every time you encounter those lies, you need to reject them.
- D. Isaiah says,

*No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.*  
ISAIAH 54:17

- E. The promise here is that attacks against you won't succeed.
- F. Notice that Isaiah then mentioned the words spoken against you.
- G. The number one weapon Satan uses against you is deceitful words.
- H. He steals from people through vain philosophies and lies.
- I. This scripture says you are to "**condemn**" the lies that rise against you.
- J. The word *condemn* is defined by *The Houghton Mifflin American Heritage Electronic Dictionary (HMAHED)* as "1. To express disapproval of; denounce. 2. a. To convict. b. To sentence to a punishment. 3. To declare unfit for use."
- K. You have to take the authority God has given you and condemn those negative words, philosophies, and thoughts.
- L. Anything that is contrary to God's Word must be rejected.
- M. This is more important than most Christians realize.
- N. Most people go through the day hardly paying attention to all of the garbage, unbelief, doubt, and complaining that come at them through the media and that wander through their minds.
- O. All of those words and thoughts will corrupt you.
- P. Scripture says,

*Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.*  
1 CORINTHIANS 15:33

- Q. The truth of this scripture is demonstrated in the life of Lot and the infamous city of Sodom.
- R. Lot was a godly man and the evil of the society he lived in was a continual grief to him, but his association with the city of Sodom cost him dearly.
- S. He never participated in their sins, but he ended up losing his wife and daughters in the judgment that came against Sodom (2 Pet. 2:7-8).
- T. Lot is an example of the danger of trying to blend in and also of the mistake in thinking that the evil in society around you won't affect you.
- U. You have to condemn the negative things around you.
- X. Christians don't just wake up one morning and discover that they have a worldly philosophy; it happens slowly over time.
- A. You can see the process reflected in Satan's temptation of Eve.

- B. Satan didn't immediately call God a liar; he started out by questioning whether God had really told her not to eat of every tree in the Garden (Gen. 3:1).
  - C. From there, he led Eve down a path of deceit until she was looking at things from his perspective and finally disobeyed God's command.
  - D. It's like the story of putting a frog into a pot of boiling water: It will jump out of the hot water immediately, but if you put that same frog in lukewarm water and turn the heat up very slowly, you can boil it alive, and it will never try to escape—because it won't notice the gradual temperature change.
  - E. This is how the devil works.
  - F. He doesn't come at you all at once; instead, he drops little doubts here and there and attacks the integrity of God's Word piece by piece.
- XI. I heard a story one time about a father who was trying to protect his kids from the influence of the world by monitoring the movies and television they watched.
- A. One day, his daughter asked to go see an R-rated movie with her friends. "What's in the movie that makes it rated R?" he asked. She said, "I've heard there is a little nudity and some swearing, but not much. And it's supposed to be a great movie." "I'm sorry, honey, but I can't let you go see it," the father said. The daughter was angry, but her dad wouldn't budge, so she had her friends come over to the house that night instead. While she was hanging out with her friends and playing games, her father made everyone brownies. "Now, before you eat," he said, "I just want to let you know that I put a little bit of dog in the recipe this time. It's not much. You probably won't taste it, and it won't make you sick or anything—but it is in there. Don't worry about it, though—for the most part—these are really tasty brownies." I seriously doubt those kids ate any brownies.
  - B. Why should we be any more tolerant of ungodliness in our entertainment?
  - C. The world we live in is fallen and corrupt, but many of us have accepted the condition of the world and have grown tolerant of the ungodliness that surrounds us.
  - D. We watch the same movies and television programs, read the same books, and listen to the same music—even though we know they aren't exactly right.
  - E. We know they don't meet God's standard, but it's just a little bit of ungodliness—it's just a little nudity or profanity.
  - F. Repeated exposure to that stuff leads to an increased tolerance for worldly viewpoints until, eventually, we are indulging attitudes and beliefs that are totally contrary to a godly perspective.
  - G. Our great-grandparents would be shocked to see the things that are on television and in magazines today.
  - H. My wife and I have had a subscription to *Reader's Digest* magazine for years, and traditionally, it has been a very wholesome, family-oriented publication.
  - I. Recently they have begun including racy advertisements like those that feature the backs of nude women.
  - J. It isn't nudity exactly, but it shows how the magazine is taking a step in the direction of more relaxed moral standards.
  - K. Today many popular magazines feature ads that would have been considered pornography a few generations ago.
- XII. I don't watch a lot of television, but I have an hour drive from my house into the office, and I listen to the news on the radio.
- A. I don't listen to it for long, though, because most of it is false prophecy.



- B. They take a small event and blow it up by focusing on all of the negative things that *could* happen—usually with an emphasis on how it *will* happen, and maybe it will happen *to you*.
  - C. You can ask anybody who rides in the car with me: I condemn the negative words that I hear over the radio.
  - D. When the news broadcast comes on and says “It’s flu season out there...Have you had your flu shot?” I say, “Oh, no, it isn’t. In the name of Jesus, it’s not flu season for me.”
  - E. To the commercial that asks “Are you having such-and-such medical problem? We can help,” I say, “No. Thank You, Jesus, I’m not having that problem.”
  - F. I talk back to the radio and defend my belief system.
  - G. I believe that when you hear a philosophy that is contrary to God’s Word, you have to stand against it—that’s what Eve should have done.
  - H. When Satan asked “Did God really say...?” Eve should have said, “Yes, God did say, and He is not a liar—so go away.”
  - I. This might all sound a little weird, but it’s just a component of guarding your heart.
  - J. Scripture says you should guard your heart above everything else in life because it determines the course of your life (Prov. 4:23).
  - K. Satan tries to come against you through the way you think, so when I hear a lie, I condemn it.
  - L. *Condemn* means “to express disapproval of; denounce” (*HMAHED*).
  - M. And that’s what I do—I speak the truth from God’s Word to counter the lie.
  - N. It’s a part of guarding my heart.
  - O. When the media says sickness is rampant, I confess that by Jesus’ stripes, I’m healed (Is. 53:5 and 1 Pet. 2:24).
  - P. When the newspaper says the economy is in the toilet, I flush that thought and confess that God supplies all my needs according to His riches in glory (Phil. 4:19).
  - Q. When I fall short and thoughts of condemnation rise up, I confess that there is no longer condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus and walk after the spirit (Rom. 8:1).
  - R. Wherever and whenever the Enemy attacks God’s Word with a lie, I counter the lie by speaking the truth (John 17:17).
- XIII. This is just a practical application of two philosophies I have been discussing.
- A. First, we have to believe that the Word of God is inspired and without error.
  - B. Second, Jesus is Lord, and we shouldn’t question His instructions.
  - C. Those two philosophies will prevent Satan from having any access to us.
  - D. Whenever we hear something that is contrary to God’s Word, we should just reject it.
  - E. The philosophy of making Jesus Lord means that when God tells you to do something, you just do it.
  - F. Unfortunately, many Christians debate with God about whether or not they are going to do what He asks.
  - G. For instance, Scripture says we’re supposed to give, and the tithe (or 10 percent of your income) is just a starting place.

- H. Ten percent was the requirement under the Old Covenant.
- I. Nothing is required under the New Covenant of grace, but we should *desire* to give even more.
- J. God has promised that if we seek His kingdom first, He will freely give us the food, clothing, and shelter we need (Matt. 6:33).
- K. Most Christians give a little from the abundance of their wealth, but they don't give joyfully.
- L. Scripture says,

*Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.*

2 CORINTHIANS 9:7-8

- M. A lot of people don't trust God to supply their needs, so they cling to money and material possessions as their safety net.
  - N. They don't give joyfully, because they are afraid God won't come through on His promise to give back.
  - O. We have to trust God that His Word is a sure promise.
  - P. No marriage or friendship can thrive unless the partners trust one another, and relationship with God is no different in that respect.
  - Q. Following Jesus means trusting Him to do what He says He will do.
  - R. But many people who say Jesus is Lord prove by their actions that they don't really trust Him.
  - S. The Bible tells us to love our enemies, to bless those who curse us, to do good to those who hate us, and to pray for those who persecute us and spitefully use us (Matt. 5:44).
  - T. We know we're supposed to turn the other cheek and we teach that principle to our children, but how many of us instantly slide into gossip and anger when someone comes against us?
  - U. When we do that, we aren't submitting to Jesus as Lord of our lives.
  - V. Our actions prove who is really sitting on the throne.
- XIV. I'm not saying that we can be perfect after we submit to Jesus as Lord or that any failure in our lives means we haven't submitted to Jesus.
- A. It isn't possible for us to live perfectly—we're still going to make mistakes.
  - B. Even though our spirits are perfect, our bodies and souls won't be perfected until the Lord comes back and gives us glorified bodies and new souls.
  - C. But our desire should be to follow Jesus' commands perfectly.
  - D. Whenever we recognize that we are doing something contrary to the Word, we need to humble ourselves and turn back to God.
  - E. I certainly haven't lived perfectly—I've gossiped about people and said things in anger after someone has done something to hurt me.
  - F. I've sinned plenty, but the moment I realize I am behaving contrary to God's instructions, I humble myself and turn away from whatever it was I was doing.
  - G. My desire is that Jesus reigns as Lord of my life, and I follow His commands.

- XV. We are in a battle.
- A. We win eternal life when we are born again, but in this world, we still have to fight the lies that come against us (Eph. 6:12-13).
  - B. We win those battles by making the determination that Jesus will reign as Lord in our lives and by submitting to His leadership.
  - C. When God leads us to do something, then we need to do it.
  - D. The debate should end once God's will is clear in any area of our lives.
  - E. No matter what the circumstances look like, we should follow God.
  - F. The only way the Enemy can win is for us to consider and submit to his lies instead of following God's leading.
  - G. God didn't create us to run our own lives.
  - H. He gave us the freedom to make our own choices in life, but He also told us that the right option is to choose life.
  - I. The correct choice is to use our free will to make Jesus Lord and to follow His leading.
- XVI. The great heroes of the Bible were people who followed God's way of thinking even when it meant putting their lives on the line.
- A. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego come immediately to mind.
  - B. They were three young men who had been taken to Babylon during the captivity.
  - C. After Daniel correctly interpreted one of King Nebuchadnezzar's dreams, they were elevated to positions of leadership within the king's government.
  - D. After some time, the king made an idol of gold and instructed everyone to bow down and worship it.
  - E. When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused, they were brought before the king to be punished.
  - F. The king told them that if they bowed down and worshiped the image, he would let them live, but if they refused, he would throw them into a burning furnace.
  - G. Then he challenged them by saying, "Who is the God who will deliver you from my hands then?" They replied,
 

*O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.*

DANIEL 3:16-18
  - H. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew God was capable of saving them, but they didn't have a specific promise that He *would*.
  - I. Still, they were not afraid of the king's threats, so they told him that they were going to follow God, and they didn't care what he said or did about it.
  - J. It didn't matter to them that the king was planning to roast them alive.
  - K. They demonstrated that their commitment to God went beyond all other considerations, even the desire to live.

- XVII. Most Christians have not made such a strong commitment to God. Many will serve God and talk about the Gospel as long as they aren't persecuted, but as soon as someone starts making fun of them, they shrink back.
- A. When friends start deserting them and family members call them fanatics, they back off preaching the Gospel.
  - B. As long as your philosophy allows for you to back down from your commitment to God, then the devil is going to have an inroad into your life.
  - C. The Enemy will use your concern over other people's opinions to manipulate you into conforming to his worldview.
  - D. All he will have to do to stop you from following God's will for your life is bring people along to make fun of you.
  - E. That's why the Bible says,

*The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.*

PROVERBS 29:25

- XVIII. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego maintained a philosophy that God is absolute Lord.
- A. He was the only one they would serve, and they would bow to no one else.
  - B. Of course, their reply infuriated King Nebuchadnezzar.
  - C. He was so angry that he ordered the furnace to be heated seven times hotter than usual.
  - D. The king ordered the strongest men in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and throw them into the fire—and it was so hot that the king's men were killed by the flames as they tossed the three Hebrews into the furnace.
  - E. The king gazed into the flames, watching to see the three Israelites consumed by the fire, but he soon stood up in amazement and said, "Didn't we cast three men into the fire?" And his advisors said, "Certainly we did, sir." And the king said,

*Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.*

DANIEL 3:25

- F. In astonishment, the king went near to the fiery furnace, calling the names of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and ordering them to come out of the fire.
- G. They walked out from the middle of the flames, and Scripture says, "**The princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them**" (Dan. 3:27).
- H. The flames that consumed the king's strongest men had zero effect upon the three Hebrews who were totally committed to God.
- I. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to compromise and God preserved them.
- J. Daniel was preserved in the same way when he was thrown into a den of lions after refusing to follow a law that forbade praying to God (Dan. 6).
- K. These biblical stories illustrate that commitment to God can't be a negotiable issue.
- L. Whatever you have to compromise to keep or obtain, you will eventually lose.

- M. Compromise is the language of the devil.
  - N. You need to make the decision that Jesus is Lord and that you are going to remain absolutely committed to Him no matter what anyone else says or does—it's a necessary step in becoming grounded in a Christian worldview.
- XIX. God should be our number one priority every day, but with many of us, He gets pushed to the end of our agenda.
- A. We should be seeking God about how to plan our days instead of planning our days and then seeing if we can squeeze in time for relationship with God.
  - B. We should spend some time asking God, "What do *You* want me to do today?"
  - C. We should present our calendars to God and say, "Here's my schedule, God. What would *You* like me to do?"
  - D. This is how God intended for us to live when He created us.
  - E. We should be allowing the Lord to direct our steps, not trying to figure out life with our limited understanding.
- XX. A common misconception in the church today is that only really devout Christians need to make a total commitment to God.
- A. You might think that what I'm suggesting is just for the minority of "super saints" whom God has given a special grace to excel in the Lord's work, but that isn't true.
  - B. There are no super saints. All believers have received an abundance of grace to reign in this life as kings and queens (Rom. 5:17).
  - C. Making Jesus Lord of your life and believing that the Word of God is the absolute authority are simply basic steps in establishing a godly perspective.
  - D. These are simple ideas that are foundational components of a Christian philosophy, and adopting this philosophy will radically change your life.
- XXI. This may come as a surprise, but God's plans for your life are better than your plans for your life.
- A. You can trust Him. He desires good things for you (Jer. 29:11).
  - B. The commands the Bible gives you about how to approach life are for your own good.
  - C. It really simplifies life once you submit to Jesus as Lord and follow His commands regardless of what you think, feel, or see going on around you.
  - D. Just make the decision that you are going to do what the Word says and follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit no matter what, and you will experience a drastic improvement in your quality of life.

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. Discussion Question: What should you do if God tells you to do something that involves more people than just you?
2. Your actions will be determined by your philosophy instead of by your environment or emotions, when what?
3. If God is telling you to do something, what could be the reasons?
4. Since some things can take a while to come to pass, what will God do?
5. Discussion Question: What does it mean to surrender to Jesus as Lord?
6. True or false: Having free will means you have to direct your own steps.
7. Discussion Question: Read Deuteronomy 30:19. Why does God tell you which option is best?
8. You're \_\_\_\_\_ to make Jesus your Lord and follow His guidance.
9. What didn't Adam and Eve determine?

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**JEREMIAH 10:23**

*O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*

**DEUTERONOMY 30:19**

*I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.*

**PROVERBS 3:5-6**

*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. [6] In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

10. What does a solid Christian philosophy require?  
 A. It requires making Jesus Lord of your life  
 B. It requires knowing what the Bible says  
 C. It requires believing in the Word of God as your supreme authority  
 D. A and C  
 E. A and B
11. Discussion Question: Why should you accept Jesus as Lord and not just Savior?
12. You have to \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus to direct your life.
13. Discussion Question: Why do you think submission to the Lord leads to a blessed life?
14. When should you decide to follow God's leading?
15. Concerning His will for your life, what doesn't God get into with you?
16. God isn't going to argue with you about what you already what?  
 A. Think  
 B. Sample  
 C. Know  
 D. All of the above  
 E. None of the above

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**MARK 10:17-22**

*And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master; what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? [18] And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. [19] Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. [20] And he answered and said unto him, Master; all these have I observed from my youth. [21] Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. [22] And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.*

**ROMANS 10:9-10**

*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. [10] For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS

17. What is not the same thing as following God?
18. Being a Christian is simple because you'll solve a lot of problems in your life by following what simple steps?
19. What is the ideal way for Satan to attack you through pushing the world's philosophy?
20. Read Isaiah 54:17. How do you "**condemn**" the lies that rise against you?
21. Discussion Question: Read 1 Corinthians 15:33. Why shouldn't you think that the evil in society around you won't affect you?
22. Satan wants to get you to look at things from his perspective until you finally what?
- Prosper financially
  - Live righteously
  - Proselytize others
  - Disobey God
  - Show respect
23. Discussion Question: Why should you not be tolerant of ungodliness in your entertainment?
24. Increased exposure to ungodliness leads to an increased tolerance for worldly viewpoints until what?

**ISAIAH 54:17**

*No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.*

**1 CORINTHIANS 15:33**

*Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.*

**2 PETER 2:7-8**

*And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: [8] (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds).*

**GENESIS 3:1**

*Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*



## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

25. Andrew believes that when you hear a philosophy that is contrary to God's Word, you have to do what?
26. Read Proverbs 4:23. Why should you guard your heart above all else?
27. When you disapprove of or denounce a lie, what are you doing?
28. What two philosophies will prevent Satan from having any access to you?
29. True or false: Following Jesus means trusting Him to do what He says He will do.
30. Many people who say Jesus is Lord prove what by their actions?
31. Submitting to Jesus doesn't mean you are what?
32. What does Andrew do the moment he realizes he's behaving contrary to God's instructions?
33. Discussion Question: What are some examples of this?

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**PROVERBS 4:23**

*Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*

**ISAIAH 53:5**

*But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

**1 PETER 2:24**

*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*

**PHILIPPIANS 4:19**

*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

**ROMANS 8:1**

*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

**JOHN 17:17**

*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

**MATTHEW 6:33**

*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

**2 CORINTHIANS 9:7-8**

*Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. [8] And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

34. What should you do, no matter what the circumstances look like?
35. Discussion Question: Why?
36. Read Daniel 3:16-18. True or false: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego followed God because they knew He would save them.
37. Many will serve God and talk about the Gospel as long as they aren't \_\_\_\_\_.
38. As long as your philosophy allows for you to back down from your commitment to God, then the devil is going to have an \_\_\_\_\_ into your life.
39. When did God preserve Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?
40. You will eventually lose whatever you have to compromise to \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. Make/break
  - B. Keep/obtain
  - C. Sow/reap
  - D. Buy/sell
  - E. Promote/procure

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**MATTHEW 5:44**

*But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.*

**EPHESIANS 6:12-13**

*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

**[13]** *Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

**DANIEL 3:16-18**

*Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. [17] If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. [18] But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.*

**PROVERBS 29:25**

*The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.*

**DANIEL 3:25**

*He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.*

**DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS**

41. Discussion Question: Why should you be seeking God about how to plan your day instead of planning your day and then seeing if you can squeeze in time for relationship with God?
42. Thinking that only really devout Christians need to make a total commitment to God is a what?
43. Read Romans 5:17. What have all believers received?
44. The commands the Bible gives you about how to approach life are for what?
45. What do you need to do in order to experience a drastic improvement in your quality of life?

**SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS****DANIEL 3:27**

*And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.*

**ROMANS 5:17**

*For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.*

**JEREMIAH 29:11**

*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*

---

## OUTLINE

- I. When Satan tempted Adam and Eve, he didn't come right out and call God a liar; he started by questioning: "Did God really say...?"
  - A. It wasn't until after he planted doubt in their minds that he accused God of lying to them.
  - B. Satan told them that the real reason the Lord didn't want them to eat the fruit was because they would become like God (Gen. 3:5).
  - C. The devil acted like God was being selfish, as if God didn't really love them and didn't have their best interests in mind.
  - D. It was a total slander against the true nature and character of God.
  - E. I believe that Adam and Eve didn't recognize that Satan was lying to them because although they communed with God in ways that most of us would long for, they didn't truly know God.
  - F. I know that sounds like a radical statement—I struggled with it at first too. After all, Adam and Eve were perfect before sin entered the world.
  - G. They walked with God in the cool of the evening and talked with Him.
  - H. They weren't exposed to the ungodliness that has hardened our hearts toward God since sin entered the world.
  - I. Everything was perfect and nothing was blocking their relationship with God—but Adam and Eve didn't know the true nature and character of God as well as we can today.
  - J. They didn't know God loved them so much that He would become a man Himself, suffer humiliation, and lay down His life to save them.
  - K. They knew God as Lord, but they didn't know Him as Savior.
- II. The Word reveals to us the depths of God's love.
  - A. It shows how He has pursued mankind throughout history, how He has loved us and proven through His actions a love that Adam and Eve could not have imagined.
  - B. True Christianity is the only religion on the face of the earth with the concept of God becoming a man and taking the punishment we deserved in order to redeem us back to a right relationship with Him.
  - C. Other religions may acknowledge a godlike entity, but they put the burden of salvation on the individual, on living a holy life and meeting certain standards of righteousness.
  - D. The standards vary, but one consistent theme among all man-made religions is that there are specific instructions we must follow to appease an angry god.
  - E. True Christianity is all about *what God has already done* for us.
  - F. It's not about what we do, or how we live; it's all about what God has done to give us *His* righteousness.
  - G. The Gospel of John sums it up by saying,

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

JOHN 3:16

- H. God demonstrated His love for us when He sent Jesus to suffer and die for our sins, and then He resurrected Him to give us His righteousness.
  - I. It's a love that was impossible for Adam and Eve to understand.
  - J. The sheer humility of God's plan of redemption is beyond human comprehension.
  - K. No man could have conceived such a thing.
  - L. Adam and Eve didn't know God's love to the extent that we can know and experience His love today.
  - M. They had no idea that God would sacrifice His own Son so that they and their descendants could live forever.
  - N. If they had known God that intimately, Satan would not have been able to deceive them into believing that God was holding out on them or trying to keep them from reaching their full potential.
- III. A major part of having a Christian worldview is knowing God intimately, not from a distance.
- A. We can't just adopt other people's opinions about the nature and character of God; we need to have our own personal relationship with Him.
  - B. The more we know the goodness of God, the less susceptible we will be to the lies of the devil.
  - C. I fully believe that we succeed and experience victory in life to the degree that we have relationship with God.
  - D. The good news is that we can know God better than Adam and Eve knew Him, because we have a much greater revelation of the extent to which God will go for us.
  - E. Therefore, we don't have to fall prey to the lies of the devil.
  - F. Once we know God intimately, Satan won't be able to discredit Him or convince us that God can't move in our lives.
  - G. So, a close, intimate, personal relationship with God is an essential component of a Christian philosophy.
- IV. The heroes of Old Testament didn't understand God's love the way we can today.
- A. Prior to the Resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit, not even Jesus' disciples had the revelation of God that is given to us in Scripture.
  - B. At the crucifixion, the disciples were expecting Jesus to come down from the cross and establish His kingdom on earth.
  - C. They didn't understand what was happening.
  - D. When Jesus was arrested, the disciples ran away in fear and hid (Matt. 26:56 and Mark 14:50).
  - E. They knew Jesus was the Messiah, but they were expecting Him to establish a physical kingdom on earth—right then.
  - F. As they stood and looked at Jesus hanging on the cross, they saw defeat.
  - G. To them, it looked like all of the hope they had placed in Jesus to save mankind was wasted.
  - H. It shocked them when Jesus rose from the dead, because they didn't know or understand God's plan of salvation (Mark 16:11; Luke 24:11; John 20:9, and 25).

- I. In hindsight, through the record of Scripture, I now have a greater understanding of why Jesus sacrificed Himself on the cross than His disciples had prior to the coming of the Holy Spirit.
- J. Even after the establishment of the church, Peter—one of the Lord’s closest disciples—still didn’t fully understand grace or the dynamics of what had happened on the cross.
- K. He was trying to merge the Christian faith back into Jewish Law, and the Apostle Paul had to openly rebuke him for it (Gal. 2:11-14).
- L. Years later, Peter wrote in his second letter:

*Our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.*

2 PETER 3:15B-16

- M. Peter said right there that Paul’s revelation of Jesus was superior to his own.
- N. Peter lived with Jesus for three-and-a-half years and Paul spent no time with Jesus while He was walking on earth, yet Paul had a greater revelation of who Jesus was and what He came to accomplish.
- O. The point is that Paul didn’t get his revelation from other people; he received it through his spirit—the same way we receive revelation today.
- P. Paul has recorded for us the revelation God gave him in the letters he composed, which make up half of the New Testament.
- Q. Through the Holy Spirit and the study of Scripture, we can know God’s love for us to a degree that the disciples of Jesus did not understand while they were ministering with Him on earth.
- R. That’s an amazing statement!
- V. I have a greater revelation of the true nature of God than Abraham or Moses had—not because I’m better than they were, but because God’s plan of redemption is complete, and I have a fuller picture of God than they did.
  - A. If I could travel back in time and sit down with Moses to explain God’s plan of redemption, he wouldn’t understand it.
  - B. He wouldn’t understand that the system of animal sacrifice they practiced was only foreshadowing how God would send His Son to live in the flesh and become the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world.
  - C. Moses did not anticipate that God would do away with the sacrificial system and tear down the veil that separated us from the holy of holies.
  - D. He had no idea those things would happen.
  - E. Jesus said that John the Baptist was the greatest of those born of women, but **“he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he”** (Matt. 11:11b).
  - F. Our born-again spirits make us greater than any of the Old Testament prophets: men like Moses, who spent forty days and nights in the presence of God and whose face, when he returned to the Israelites, was radiating the glory of God; Abraham, who believed God and became the father of faith; Elijah, who called down fire from heaven and never died but was taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire; Joshua, who led God’s people into the Promised Land; and David, who was a man after God’s own heart.
  - G. We have access to a greater revelation of God’s true nature than any of those men had.
  - H. Scripture says the Old Covenant, written and engraved in stone, led to death—but it was also glorious.

- I. When Moses presented the Law to the people of Israel, they couldn't bear to look at him, because of the brightness of God's glory that was reflected in his face.
  - J. The old way was glorious, but what we have is much more glorious.
  - K. Under the New Covenant, the Holy Spirit gives us life forever, which is infinitely better than the death that came through the Law (2 Cor. 3:6-11).
- VI. The revelation we have of God's love should cause us to trust Him.
- A. We shouldn't be susceptible to the lies of the devil in the same way that Adam and Eve were.
  - B. Satan was able to slander God's character because Adam and Eve didn't really know God, but we *do* know Him.
  - C. God has proven His love for us.
  - D. The Apostle Paul wrote,
 

*He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*  
ROMANS 8:32
  - E. Once we truly understand the extent of God's love for us—demonstrated through the sacrifice of Jesus—we won't doubt His desire to freely give us all things.
  - F. Jesus has completely redeemed us, and a full revelation of that truth will naturally lead us to believe how much God desires to bless us financially, heal us physically, and give us all that we need.
  - G. The greater our revelation of God's love, the more successful we will be at resisting the attacks of the Enemy.
  - H. From what I can see, most Christians do not have an intimate relationship with the Lord.
  - I. They know God from a distance, through the things they have heard from their pastors or someone else, but they don't know God for themselves.
  - J. Before I understood that God loves me because His nature is love and not because I am lovely, I was always trying to do things to earn God's favor.
  - K. When I was doing good, I felt close to God, but when I was falling short—which was most of the time—I didn't feel close to Him.
  - L. All I could see was my own unworthiness.
  - M. But once I got a revelation of how much God loves me, independent of my actions, everything that was holding me back from relationship with Him disappeared.
- VII. One of the greatest truths of Christianity is that your relationship with God is the key to everything.
- A. It's the key to having joy, peace, and abundance.
  - B. It's the way to experiencing victory in life.
  - C. Yet most believers aren't taking advantage of this amazing gift of relationship that is available to them.
  - D. After my encounter with God on March 23, 1968, I intuitively knew that God loved me completely separate from what I deserved, and it lit a fire under me to pursue relationship with Him even further.
  - E. But even though I knew that God loved me, I didn't understand His love.

- F. I made a total commitment to God that day, but it took years for me to understand how a holy God could love me.
  - G. I had spent my entire life trying to make myself righteous and acceptable to God, and I just couldn't get my mind around the fact that God's love and acceptance had nothing to do with my own efforts.
  - H. I was raised in a legalistic, works-oriented, religious system.
  - I. My father died when I was twelve years old, and my church told me God killed him because it was His will for my father to die.
  - J. I was taught that God put sickness, disease, poverty, and depression on me as punishments to make me a better person.
  - K. I was told that the more I suffer, the holier I become.
  - L. All of those ideas are absolutely false, but I didn't know any better back then.
  - M. After my encounter with God's love, I was totally committed to God, but I had a wrong understanding of what God might do to make my relationship with Him deepen.
  - N. It can be dangerous to be a living sacrifice—being totally submitted to the will of God—when you don't know what God's will includes!
  - O. This is another reason it's important to renew your mind (Rom. 12:1-2).
- VIII. I won't go into all of the details, but a few years after I made myself a living sacrifice, a traveling preacher came to my church and prophesied over me that God was going to put me into a coma.
- A. He told me that I was going to get sick and enter a vegetative state for years.
  - B. He droned on and on about how God was going to use sickness to break me, but I would emerge as strong as the Apostle Paul after I came through it.
  - C. I was ready to submit to what he said was God's will for me.
  - D. Satan had me on the ropes—I was ready to accept whatever God wanted for me.
  - E. But then the devil went too far—the so-called prophet told me that after I emerged from the coma, God was going to make me abstain from reading the Word for eight years.
  - F. I didn't know much, but I had a relationship with God, and I knew He would never tell me not to read His Word.
  - G. As soon as the preacher said that, I knew it was all a lie.
  - H. I stood up, renounced everything he had spoken over me, and walked away.
  - I. I believe that if I had submitted to that false prophecy, I would have entered into a coma and died.
  - J. God doesn't use sickness to make people better; the devil uses sickness to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10).
  - K. Scripture tells us to submit to God and resist the devil, and the devil will flee (James 4:7).
  - L. But if we submit to the attacks of the Enemy and fail to resist evil, then the devil won't flee.
  - M. I was able to resist the lies that were being spoken over me because I knew God.



- N. I had experienced the Word of God coming alive, God had spoken to me through it, and I knew He wouldn't take that away from me.
- O. If Adam and Eve had known God better, they would have recognized that He would never withhold good from them.
- P. Knowing God helps keep us from being deceived and from having our faith in God undermined by misunderstandings or wrong teaching.
- IX. I've been married to my wife, Jamie, since 1972, and a lot of people may know Jamie, but I know her intimately.
- A. If someone were to tell me a story about Jamie that is totally inconsistent with her personality, I would know it wasn't true, because I know the kinds of things she would say and do.
- B. When you know someone well, it keeps you from being deceived by gossip or slander.
- C. But when you only know someone casually, you are more likely to believe the things you hear about them simply because you don't have any firsthand knowledge to judge by.
- D. The same is true of your relationship with God.
- E. This analogy breaks down a little because people aren't perfect and sometimes they do things that are inconsistent with their normal behavior, but with God, there are no exceptions.
- F. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8).
- G. God says, "**For I am the LORD, I change not**" (Mal. 3:6)—He is always the same.
- H. He doesn't make you righteous by grace one day and then judge you by your works the next.
- I. So, when religion tries to claim that God doesn't want to heal every person or that He puts sickness on people to teach them a lesson, you can know that those ideas are inconsistent with His nature.
- J. Jesus was the perfect representation of God (John 14:7, 9; and Heb. 1:3), and He went around doing good and healing *all* who were oppressed by the devil (Acts 10:38).
- K. You can know God's true nature because He reveals it to us in His Word.
- L. It's important for you to base your philosophy on the revelation of Jesus Christ and His grace, and not upon the traditions or ideas of man.
- X. Probably the most damaging tradition that is circulating in the body of Christ is the idea that nothing can happen unless God wills it to happen.
- A. It's a wrong philosophy, and it causes a lot of unnecessary pain.
- B. It isn't God's will for some babies to be born with deformities—He doesn't desire war, rape, or violence.
- C. God isn't behind any of the evil that we see in this world.
- D. Scripture says that God cannot be tempted with evil, and He doesn't tempt us with evil either (James 1:13).
- E. But if we think that God is sovereignly determining everything that happens in life, then we're going to be susceptible to bitterness and doubt toward Him.
- F. We'll either be mad at Him for making such a terrible mess of the world, or we'll lack confidence in Him for being unwilling to prevent it, but God doesn't control everything.
- G. He gave us control, but mankind is too busy cooperating with the devil to fix what's wrong.

- H. God is all-powerful, but He has chosen to work through us (Eph. 3:20).
  - I. God's will doesn't automatically come to pass—we have to cooperate with Him.
  - J. If it was purely up to God, then everything on earth would be done the way it is in heaven (Matt. 6:10)—there wouldn't be any sickness, crime, or sorrow.
  - K. If God was controlling everything, our world wouldn't be in the mess it's in.
- XI. Anyone who is upset with God has a wrong philosophy.
- A. They have been influenced by religion or other false doctrines that have misrepresented the Lord.
  - B. One of the largest television networks in the United States is run by a man whose sister died when they were both very young.
  - C. The church he attended told him it was God's will for her to die, and he decided that he didn't want anything to do with a God that would kill his sister.
  - D. A wrong philosophy turned him against God, and he used his media influence to attack the Judeo-Christian ethic in the United States.
  - E. I understand why he feels the way he does, but he has a wrong impression of God.
  - F. Jesus said,

*The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

JOHN 10:10

- G. God doesn't kill anybody—it's the devil who takes lives.
  - H. God comes to give us life in abundance.
  - I. The Greek word used for “**life**” here is *zoe*, which means life that is “active and vigorous, devoted to God, blessed.”<sup>1</sup>
- XII. God is a good God!

- A. The Word also says,

*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

JAMES 1:17

- B. The simplest Christian theology is that if something is good, then it comes from God—if it's bad, then it's from the devil.
- C. God doesn't take away our loved ones or cause disabilities, and He doesn't control and predetermine everything in life.<sup>2</sup>
- D. One reason is that God doesn't want to interfere with our free will, because doing so would cut off our only path to salvation.
- E. Another reason is that He has given us authority over the attacks of the Enemy, and He won't just step in and do things for us automatically.

<sup>1</sup> “Zoe,” Blue Letter Bible, accessed January 7, 2011, <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G2222&t=KJV>.

<sup>2</sup> I have three, longer teachings that will give you a much deeper understanding in this area: *Spirit, Soul & Body*, *The Believer's Authority*, and *The True Nature of God*. Visit our website ([www.awmi.net](http://www.awmi.net)) and click on “Extras” to download free audio teachings, or order books from our online store.

- F. God uses people, so we need to cooperate with Him to allow His goodness and power to flow through us.
  - G. Everything we need is already in our born-again spirits.
  - H. When we cooperate with Him, His power flows from our spirits into our bodies and lives, bringing healing and victory.
- XIII. God is your best friend—whether you recognize it or not.
- A. God is for you—He wants you to live a life full of joy and peace.
  - B. Some people are afraid to seek God wholeheartedly because they think He might ask them to do something that would make them miserable—like move to the remotest corner of the globe and live under primitive conditions.
  - C. They are afraid that God would suck all of the joy out of their lives, but He won't.
  - D. God would never do something to hurt you—just the opposite.
  - E. Once you start delighting in God, you will find that the desires of your heart are God's desires also (Ps. 37:4).
  - F. So, if God were to lead you to go minister in a remote area, it's because you would fall in love with the people and love your work.
  - G. God will always give you the grace to do what He calls you to do.
  - H. A life with God is an abundant, joyful life.
  - I. The reason so many people are struggling today is that they don't really know the goodness of God.
  - J. You can't base your relationship with God on what other people say or on their encounters with God.
  - K. You have to know Him for yourself.
  - L. God desires relationship with you, and relationship with God is the solution to any and every problem you might encounter.
  - M. The importance of seeking God is often emphasized, but the truth is that God is seeking you more than you have ever sought Him.
  - N. All you have to do is slow down a little and make a half turn toward God, and He will come into your life in a big way.
  - O. You can know God personally—by intimate relationship—beyond mere knowledge *about* Him.
  - P. Once you know God for yourself, you won't fall for the devil's schemes.
  - Q. The Enemy wants you to believe that life would be better if you had a bigger house, a nicer car, or a different spouse, but happiness is really found in relationship with the Lord.
- XIV. God made us to desire relationship with Him, and people who don't know God try to satisfy that desire with substitute pleasures; they lust after sexual relationships, take drugs, or drink alcohol.
- A. They look for happiness in collecting material possessions and in the praise of others.
  - B. They continually search for a sense of fulfillment in achieving the next big goal.
  - C. None of those things are ultimately satisfying. What every human being needs is relationship with God.
  - D. After God created Adam, He breathed His Spirit into him.

- E. We were designed to be filled with God's presence, but when Adam and Eve rebelled, they kicked God out of their lives.
  - F. God wasn't only talking about physical death when He commanded Adam not to eat of the forbidden fruit.
  - G. The Lord said **"for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"** (Gen. 2:17), but Adam and Eve lived on earth for many years after their rebellion. So, the death they experienced was spiritual, which eventually resulted in physical death.
  - H. Adam and Eve's rebellion caused a God-shaped vacuum to be formed inside of every person.
  - I. Sex, drugs, money, success, fame, and the other pursuits society is caught up in are just human attempts to fill the void caused by spiritual death.
  - J. We were made for relationship with God, and the only way to fill our spiritual void is to be born again and enter into relationship with Him.
  - K. The reason I don't do drugs is that I'm not miserable.
  - L. My born-again spirit allows me to enter into the presence of God and enjoy relationship with Him.
  - M. In the presence of God is fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore (Ps. 16:11).
  - N. We can get so full of God that we won't feel the need to be filled with anything else—the lust for other things will disappear.
  - O. Once we have a real relationship with God, every day with Jesus can be sweeter than the day before.
- XV. Surface-level knowledge of God's love is not the same thing as plunging into the reality of His love.
- A. Real relationship with God involves going beyond a mere intellectual awareness of His love.
  - B. Of all the things the Apostle Paul could have prayed for the Ephesians, he prayed for them to know the love of God.
  - C. He said,
 

*For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

EPHESIANS 3:14-19
  - D. This passage of Scripture shows that God's love has multiple dimensions—it isn't merely a fact that you memorize like trivia.
  - E. You can be overwhelmed by the height, depth, length, and breadth of God's love—so that it "passes knowledge" and becomes an experience of being filled with the grace and peace of God.
  - F. It's one thing to say, "Oh, yeah, I know God loves me"; it's something else altogether to be filled with the fullness of God.
  - G. God isn't depressed, discouraged, fearful, or anxious—He isn't poor or starving.
  - H. The fullness of God is healing, prosperity, joy, peace, anointing, purpose, and total satisfaction.
  - I. You get all of those things by *knowing* God experientially.

- J. In biblical language, “to know” is used to imply sexual intimacy, as in “**Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain**” (Gen. 4:1).
- K. The Greek word Paul used in his prayer to the Ephesians is the same word used to describe how Joseph abstained from intimate relations with Mary until after the birth of Jesus (Matt. 1:25).
- L. Paul prayed for an intimate, personal knowledge of the love of Christ, one that passes mere knowledge, because that is how you get filled with the fullness of God.
- M. Fear, loneliness, anger, frustration, poverty, sickness, and anxiety simply reflect a lack of the fullness of God.
- N. The remedy for those things is a revelation of how much God loves you.
- O. You just need a deeper relationship with God, one that allows you to experience the love of Christ beyond mere knowledge *about* Him.
- P. Of the thousands of people I counsel and pray for, nearly all of them are struggling because they lack a deep personal relationship with God.
- XVI. Religion teaches people an approach to God that emphasizes personal effort, but no one can be perfect, and the frustration of failure leaves people feeling unlovable and separated from God.
- A. The Good News of Jesus Christ is that we don’t have to *earn* relationship with God; Jesus earned it for us by dying on the cross and rising again.
- B. We were spiritually dead and couldn’t save ourselves, so Jesus came and died on our behalf to save us.
- C. He took our sin and gave us His righteousness.
- D. Salvation has nothing to do with what we deserve.
- E. God did this because He loves us and desires an intimate relationship with us.
- F. Not every Christian has a deep personal relationship with God, but that isn’t His fault—it’s because they’ve been lied to.
- G. We’ve been taught that we have to earn relationship with God by living a holy life, going to church every week, paying a tithe, and studying the Word.
- H. Most of us are stuck on a treadmill of trying to live up to the requirements of being good Christians, falling short, and then getting back up to try harder.
- I. Our own hearts are condemning us and keeping us from entering into an intimate relationship.
- J. It’s a wrong philosophy, because Jesus paid for all of our sins—past, present, and future—and our shortcomings don’t separate us from God.
- K. Scripture says,
- For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.*
- GALATIANS 5:5-6
- L. Trying to earn God’s love isn’t going to get us anywhere.
- M. We’re saved by faith, not by works.
- N. Once we rid ourselves of the burden of thinking we have to be good enough and simply accept how much God loves us, our faith will go through the roof.

- O. Faith works by love, and faith is what releases the ability and the power of God.
  - P. Knowing God's love will heal our bodies and bring peace to our minds.
  - Q. It will make our finances increase and our relationships flourish.
  - R. Letting the love of God flow in us will bless us even beyond what we can imagine.
- XVII. Maybe this sounds too good to be true—you might think there has to be more to it, some complicated step to perform, but it really is as simple as knowing God.
- A. Adam and Eve never experienced rejection or punishment from God prior to the Fall, but they never experienced the breadth, length, depth, and height of His love either.
  - B. If they had known the fullness of God's love, then Satan would never have been able to tempt them.
  - C. Before you can be tempted to sin, Satan first has to make you dissatisfied with what you already have.
  - D. Adam and Eve were living in a sinless and perfect world, yet a talking snake convinced them God was holding out on them.
  - E. Think about that: The temperature was perfect, the food was perfect, they didn't have any financial problems, and Adam and Eve were both perfect.
    - i. They weren't constantly being bombarded by media reports of killing and strife all over the world.
    - ii. They couldn't even complain about each other.
  - F. Yet Satan was able to make Adam and Eve feel discontent in the middle of paradise.
  - G. Imagine, then, how easy it is for him to make people in a fallen world feel unhappy.
  - H. You live in a world where there is plenty to be displeased about, but the truth is that through Jesus, you can experience the love of God to a greater degree than Adam and Eve ever did.
  - I. You can be filled with all the fullness of God and feel completely satisfied.
  - J. What a powerful truth!
  - K. All of the things you desire from God come freely through a heart that knows how wide, how long, how high, and how deep God's love is.
  - L. Relationship with God is the pathway to everything He desires to give you.
- XVIII. Today the shortages in our relationships with God are not because He hasn't communicated the depths of His love or His great desire to know us intimately.
- A. Our problem is that most of us aren't entering into the intimacy God is calling us to.
  - B. Often it's because we have a wrong philosophy and believe that we have to earn holiness in order to enter God's presence.
  - C. The traditions and doctrines of man have made God's Word of no effect (Mark 7:13).
  - D. Other times, we are simply too caught up in the things of this world to notice God calling us.
  - E. As a society, we are busy with many pursuits.

- F. So much stuff is being thrown at us every day that we don't have time to be still and know God (Ps. 46:10) and to know the greatness of His love for us.
- G. But it's within our power to change that: We can renew our minds and toss out the old religious philosophies that have damaged our relationship with God, and we can set aside time to spend with God and get to know His love.
- XIX. The promise of God's Word is that if you draw close to God, He will draw close to you (James 4:8).
- A. Jesus said,
- Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*
- MATTHEW 7:7-8
- B. God wants a relationship with you more than you desire a relationship with Him, so it's not a matter of you trying hard enough and forcing God to acknowledge you.
- C. It's simply a matter of allowing God to love you.
- D. God desires intimacy with you, but you have to let it happen, and you do that by seeking Him and yielding to His love.
- E. This understanding is essential to any Christian philosophy, and it will make a huge difference in the quality of life you experience.

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. It's possible to commune with God and not really \_\_\_\_\_ Him.
2. Discussion Question: Why is it important to know God as Savior and not just Lord?
3. Other religions may acknowledge a godlike entity, but they put the \_\_\_\_\_ of salvation on the individual, on living a holy life and meeting certain standards of righteousness.
4. Read John 3:16. What is true Christianity about?
5. Why did God resurrect Jesus?
6. What do you need if you're not going to be deceived into believing that God is holding out on you or trying to keep you from reaching your full potential?
  - A. To read the Bible
  - B. To serve at church
  - C. To know God intimately
  - D. All of the above
  - E. None of the above
7. Knowing God intimately is a \_\_\_\_\_ part of having a Christian worldview.

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**GENESIS 3:5**

*For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

**JOHN 3:16**

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

**MATTHEW 26:56**

*But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.*

**MARK 14:50**

*And they all forsook him, and fled.*

**MARK 16:11**

*And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.*

**LUKE 24:11**

*And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.*

**JOHN 20:9**

*For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.*

**JOHN 20:25**

*The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.*



## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

8. Discussion Question: What hinders you from knowing God intimately?
9. Not even who had the revelation of God that is given to you in Scripture?  
 A. Paul  
 B. Apollos  
 C. Agabus  
 D. Jesus' disciples  
 E. The church
10. Why was Paul's revelation of Jesus superior to Peter's?
11. What makes you greater than the Old Testament prophets?

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**GALATIANS 2:11-14**

*But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. [12] For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. [13] And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. [14] But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?*

**2 PETER 3:15-16**

*And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; [16] As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.*

**MATTHEW 11:11**

*Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

12. Read 2 Corinthians 3:6-11. True or false: Life came through the Law.
13. Read Romans 8:32. What do you need so you won't doubt God's desire to freely give you all things?
14. How can you become more successful at resisting the attacks of the Enemy?
- By listening to more sermons
  - By getting a greater revelation of God's love
  - By putting more effort into it
  - By binding and loosing
  - By strengthening your will power
15. True or false: It's important to know God through the things you have heard from your pastor or someone else.
16. Discussion Question: Why should you know God for yourself?
17. Before Andrew understood that God loves him because His nature is love and not because he is lovely, he was always trying to do things to \_\_\_\_\_ God's favor.
18. True or false: Sometimes it's good to try to earn God's favor.
19. What is one of the greatest truths to Christianity?

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**2 CORINTHIANS 3:6-11**

*Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. [7] But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: [8] How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? [9] For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. [10] For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. [11] For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.*

**ROMANS 8:32**

*He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

20. Read Romans 12:1-2. What's one reason it's important to renew your mind?
21. True or false: God would never tell you to stop reading His Word.
22. Knowing God keeps you from what?
23. Read Hebrews 13:8 and Malachi 3:6. God doesn't make you righteous by \_\_\_\_\_ one day and then judge you by your \_\_\_\_\_ the next.
24. Read John 14:7, 9; and Hebrews 1:3. Jesus was the \_\_\_\_\_ representation of God.
25. Discussion Question: What does this mean to you?
26. It's important for you to base your philosophy on what?
27. What is probably the most damaging tradition that is circulating in the body of Christ?

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**ROMANS 12:1-2**

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. [2] And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

**HEBREWS 13:8**

*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*

**MALACHI 3:6**

*For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*

**JOHN 14:7**

*If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.*

**JOHN 14:9**

*Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?*

**HEBREWS 1:3**

*Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*

**ACTS 10:38**

*How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

28. According to James 1:13, what can't God be tempted with?
- Evil
  - Food
  - Money
  - All of the above
  - None of the above
29. If you think that God is sovereignly determining everything that happens in life, what will you be?
30. Read Ephesians 3:20. Even though God is all-powerful, He has chosen to work through whom?
- Only leaders
  - You
  - The devil
  - Those worthy enough
  - Angels
31. Discussion Question: How do you know that God's will doesn't automatically come to pass?
32. \_\_\_\_\_ who is upset with God has a wrong philosophy.
33. Read John 10:10. The Greek word used for "life" here is *zoe*, which means what?
34. Read James 1:17. What is the simplest theology?

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**JAMES 1:13**

*Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.*

**EPHESIANS 3:20**

*Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.*

**JOHN 10:10**

*The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

**MATTHEW 6:10**

*Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

**JAMES 1:17**

*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

**DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS****SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**

35. Discussion Question: Give an example of how God steps in and does things for you automatically.
36. Read Psalm 37:4. What happens when you delight in God?
37. So many people are struggling today because they don't know the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
38. Discussion Question: How do you know that relationship with God is the solution to any and every problem you might encounter?
39. Happiness is found in relationship with the Lord, not in what?
40. What were you designed for?
41. What did spiritual death cause in people?
- A. A stirring
  - B. An unction
  - C. A void
  - D. All of the above
  - E. None of the above
42. What is the only way to fill your spiritual void?

**PSALM 37:4**

*Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*

**GENESIS 2:17**

*But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*

**PSALM 16:11**

*Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

43. The lust for other things will disappear when what?  
 A. When you get more things  
 B. When you make more money  
 C. When you have more control of circumstances  
 D. When you become a stronger Christian  
 E. When you get full of God
44. Discussion Question: Read Ephesians 3:14-19. Why do you think Paul prayed what he did for the Ephesians?
45. When you're filled with God, you aren't what?  
 A. Depressed  
 B. Discouraged  
 C. Fearful  
 D. All of the above  
 E. None of the above
46. Paul prayed for an intimate, personal knowledge of the love of Christ, one that passes mere knowledge, because that is how you get what?
47. Discussion Question: Why is the Good News of Jesus Christ good news for you?
48. True or false: Salvation has something to do with what you deserve.
49. A wrong philosophy keeps you from having what?  
 A. A deep personal relationship with God  
 B. Consistent failure in life  
 C. Being better at sports  
 D. All of the above  
 E. None of the above

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**EPHESIANS 3:14-19**

*For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, [15] Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, [16] That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; [17] That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, [18] May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; [19] And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

**GENESIS 4:1**

*And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.*

**MATTHEW 1:25**

*And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS

50. Read Galatians 5:5-6. How do you get your faith to go through the roof?
51. What will knowing God's love and letting it flow through you do for you?
52. What has to happen before you are tempted with sin?
53. Discussion Question: What are some ways you can better understand God's love?
54. Since God has communicated His love, why is there still a deficiency in people's relationship with God?
55. What are two reasons for this?
56. How can you change that in your life?
57. Read James 4:7. How do you draw close to God?

**GALATIANS 5:5-6**

*For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.*

**[6]** *For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.*

**MARK 7:13**

*Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.*

**PSALM 46:10**

*Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*

**MATTHEW 7:7-8**

*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: [8] For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*

**JAMES 4:7-8**

*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. [8] Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.*

## OUTLINE

- I. I think that God is being represented in so many contrasting ways by so many different groups in society, that many people are frustrated and confused.
  - A. They read Old Testament scriptures that talk about God smiting people with leprosy, then they hear someone like me say God is love and He would never use evil against us, and they wonder, *Which one is the real God?*
  - B. But God has always been the same loving God we see manifested in the life and ministry of Jesus.
  - C. God is on our side, yet a lot of people think of Him as a harsh and angry God who is eager to judge us for the wrong we've done.
  - D. Religion is even teaching that suffering and disease are a blessing in disguise—they say that God uses evil to teach us a lesson (Is. 5:20).
  - E. None of that is true, but many people are confused about what the truth really is.
  - F. We have to understand the difference between the way God dealt with people under the Old Covenant and the way He deals with us as born-again believers under the New Covenant.
  - G. He has changed the way He relates to mankind because of the transformation in *us*.
  
- II. The Gospel of John tells the story of a woman who was caught in adultery by the Pharisees and brought to Jesus for judgment.
  - A. John 8:1-5 says,
 

*Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?*
  - B. It's interesting that the woman was caught in the act of adultery, yet the Pharisees didn't apprehend the man she was with.
  - C. I can think of two possible reasons for this:
    - i. First, the man might have been someone the Pharisees enlisted to help capture the woman in the middle of the act, so they let the man escape because he was part of the deal.
    - ii. Second, if it really was a randomly discovered act of adultery, maybe they only brought the woman because we tend to be easier on women when it comes to sentencing people to death. The Old Testament Law said that a person caught in adultery should be stoned to death (Lev. 20:10 and Deut. 22:22), and they might have thought bringing just the woman suited their purpose of entrapment better—figuring it would be harder for Jesus to condemn a woman than a man.
  - D. By bringing this woman to Jesus for judgment, they were trying to make Him choose between obeying the Law and demonstrating the mercy He had been preaching.
  - E. Either way, they thought Jesus was trapped: If He demonstrated mercy and let the woman go, then He Himself would be subject to stoning for failing to enforce the Law of Moses. Yet if Jesus followed the Law and condemned the woman to death, then He would be going against the message of mercy He had been teaching, and the people would think He was a hypocrite.



- F. Jesus immediately recognized what they were up to, so He simply bent down and wrote in the dirt with His finger.
  - G. When the Pharisees continued to press Him for an answer, He stood up and said “**He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her**” (John 8:7) and bent over again and continued writing on the ground.
  - H. We don’t know what He was writing, but whatever it was, it appears to have convicted the accusers of their own sins.
  - I. One by one, they walked away until only the woman was left standing before Jesus.
  - J. When Jesus looked up and saw only the woman, He didn’t tell her that it was okay to commit adultery—He didn’t lower the standard of righteousness—He said, “**Go, and sin no more**” (John 8:11).
  - K. Jesus admitted that she had sinned, but He didn’t condemn her—He showed mercy.
- III. The very first person who was punished for breaking the Old Testament Law was a man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath (Num. 15:32-36).
- A. The Lord told Moses that the man should be taken outside the camp and stoned to death for gathering sticks to make a fire!
  - B. Some people hear these stories and wonder, *Why the change?*
  - C. In a nutshell, God held people accountable for sin under the Old Covenant, so He punished them for it, but under the New Covenant, our sins have all been paid for by Jesus, and God isn’t holding sin against us anymore.
  - D. After putting our faith in Jesus, we become new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17), and God can deal with us differently than He could deal with people under the Old Covenant (Heb. 8:12-13).
  - E. Jesus changed everything, and nothing has been the same since.
  - F. A helpful illustration is to consider how we change the way we relate to our own children as they mature:
    - i. Young children often have to be physically restrained from doing wrong.
    - ii. I know that many people today reject spanking children as being harmful, but the Scripture says, “*The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame*” (Prov. 29:15).
    - iii. So, it’s a godly thing to use corporal punishment to train young children.
    - iv. If we try to tell two year olds it’s the devil who leads them to take their siblings’ toys, they will just look at us with blank stares.
    - v. But when the devil gives them those selfish thoughts of taking their siblings’ toys, we can tell them, “If you do that again, I’m going to give you a spanking.”
    - vi. They may not know about resisting the devil (James 4:7), but I guarantee, when that thought comes again, they will resist it because they don’t want the punishment.
    - vii. Even so, spanking is not a long-term solution—you only use physical restraint for a short period of time, until your children grow up and you can teach them by instruction.
    - viii. Likewise, the Old Testament revealed God’s wrath against sin, and He put punishments in place to deter the Israelites from sinning, until His plan of redemption could unfold.
- IV. Until Jesus made a new way for everyone, the Israelites were kept under the Law, waiting for saving faith in Christ to appear (Gal. 3:23).

A. The Apostle Paul said it this way:

*Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*

GALATIANS 3:24-25

B. The Law was just a training tool God used to guide His children until they could be saved by faith.

C. You could say that the human race was in its infancy until Jesus came and revealed the true nature of God.

D. Before Jesus came, God dealt with sin harshly in order to keep the Israelites out of trouble, but now, He no longer deals with His children in the same way.

E. You have a different covenant, a New Covenant of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus (Eph. 2:8).

V. Scripture says that Jesus is the exact representation of God the Father (Heb. 1:3).

A. The Old Testament prophets revealed some truths about God, but Jesus gave us a complete view of the Father.

B. The writer of Hebrews said, **“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him”** (Heb. 2:3).

C. Jesus revealed God in a way that superseded all previous revelation.

D. In Jesus, we see a kind and compassionate God who gave Himself over to a cruel death in order to give us the hope of new life.

VI. Jesus’ disciples tried to reenact a story from the Old Testament once, and His response to them dramatically illustrates the difference between the Old and the New Covenants.

A. The story revolves around the ungodly King Ahaziah, who fell seriously ill but instead of seeking the Lord for healing, he sent messengers to inquire of the false god Baalzebub.

B. God told the prophet Elijah what King Ahaziah was doing, and he intercepted the messengers and said to them, **“Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron? Now therefore thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die”** (2 Kin. 1:3b-4).

C. Although Elijah didn’t identify himself to the messengers, he had a long history with Ahaziah’s family, so when the messengers returned to Ahaziah and reported what Elijah had said, the king knew right away who it was that had spoken to the messengers.

D. After hearing Elijah’s warning, the king sent out a captain with fifty soldiers to capture him, and when they found Elijah, the captain commanded him to come down.

E. Elijah replied **“If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty”** (2 Kin. 1:10), and fire came down from heaven and consumed the captain and his fifty soldiers.

F. Undeterred, the king sent out another captain with fifty soldiers, Elijah called down fire from heaven again, and the second captain and his men were also killed.

G. So, the king sent out a third captain with fifty soldiers, but this time, the captain fell down on his knees before Elijah and begged for his life, and the angel of the Lord spoke to Elijah, told him not to be afraid, and to go with the soldiers to see King Ahaziah.

H. This story comes up again in the New Testament while Jesus and His disciples were passing through Samaria.

- I. The mutual hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans was both religious and racial, and we need to keep the extreme prejudice between them in mind as we read the New Testament story:

*And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.*

LUKE 9:51-53

- J. We know that Jesus had already taught in Samaria, because the Gospel of John tells the story of Jesus ministering to the woman at the well (John 4).
- K. These were people who already acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah!
- L. They were willing to accept Jesus as God's anointed Savior, but they were unable to overcome their religious prejudice against the Jewish worship, so when Jesus identified Himself with the Jews in Jerusalem, they rejected Him.
- M. In the Old Testament story, the army captains were just obeying orders by trying to bring Elijah to King Ahaziah, but the Samaritans were rejecting the Messiah.
- N. When the disciples saw how the Samaritans were acting, they asked Jesus, "**Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as [Elijah] did?**" (Luke 9:54, brackets mine).
- O. The disciples wanted to imitate Elijah by calling down fire to kill the Samaritans, and it could be argued that what the Samaritans had done was more deserving of judgment than anything the soldiers did.
- P. Yet Jesus reproached the disciples:

*But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.*

LUKE 9:55-56

- Q. Someone who looks at this casually might think that God was being inconsistent, but the difference here is actually the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

- VII. Prior to the Law being given through Moses, which was approximately 2,000 years *after* the fall of Adam and Eve, God was dealing with people in mercy and grace (Rom. 5:13), but people began to take God's lack of punishment as an indication that He didn't care whether they lived holy lives or not.
- A. They didn't understand that even though God wasn't punishing sin, Satan was taking advantage of sinful actions and corrupting the whole human race.
- B. So, God had to restrain sin—He had to get people to turn away from sin and the damage it was causing.
- C. Before the Law, God actually protected the first murderer (Gen. 4).
- D. After Cain killed Abel, God set a mark on Cain to protect him from any vigilante-style attempts to exact justice by taking Cain's life.
- E. God didn't approve of the murder Cain committed—it was wrong and it had consequences—but God didn't punish Cain for his sinful action.
- F. God's grace toward Cain stands in sharp contrast to the punishment exacted upon the first person to violate the Law.
- G. The way God turned people away from sin under the Old Covenant Law was by bringing judgment on sin and using punishment.
- H. When the Law was given, it held people accountable for sin.

- I. The Law made people realize that God wasn't indifferent to the way they were acting.
- J. It revealed God's standard of righteousness, and it made the Israelites fearful of God's wrath against sin.
- K. As a result, they turned away from sin, but the Law also had the effect of making people feel guilty and unworthy.
- L. The Law was part of God's plan for redemption, but it was only a temporary measure put in place until Jesus should come:

*But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*

GALATIANS 3:23-25

- M. Just as the giving of the Law brought judgment for sin, the sacrifice of Jesus brought a return to grace.
  - N. I believe that if Jesus had been on earth in His physical body when Elijah was calling fire down out of heaven, Jesus would have rebuked Elijah.
  - O. Elijah got away with calling down fire because he was under the ministry of the Law, which was holding people's sins against them, but it was never the true nature of God to deal with people that way.
  - P. Now that grace has come through Jesus, we're no longer under the Law.
- VIII. Under the Old Covenant, there were very harsh punishments for sin.
- A. The Lord often commanded to kill all the men, women, children, and even the animals when the Israelites conquered other nations (Josh. 6:17-21, 10:40, and 11:11-14).
  - B. There was even a commandment for people to kill their own children if they were persistently stubborn and rebellious (Deut. 21:18-21).
    - i. This was because they couldn't be cured or healed, so they were taken out of society—in much the same way that doctors cut out a cancerous tumor to save the rest of the body.
  - C. It wasn't possible for anyone to be born again, and God didn't want foreign peoples infecting the children of Israel with demonic beliefs or behavior.
  - D. But under our New and better Covenant (Heb. 8:6 and 13), we don't kill our rebellious children or people who are committing ungodly acts, because they can be born again and changed.
  - E. Praise God for the vast change that Jesus made.
  - F. Under the Old Covenant, God's judgment against evil was mercy to the rest of God's people, but under the New Covenant, we can be delivered from evil.
  - G. Today we minister the love of God to anyone who is caught up in sin and share the Good News about Jesus Christ.
  - H. This difference should help us understand the harshness of the Old Testament and why we now have a better covenant through Jesus.
  - I. Some make the mistake of thinking that the transformation in how God has related to mankind over time reflects some sort of conversion in God, which isn't true.
  - J. God declares, **"I am the LORD, I change not"** (Mal. 3:6a), and **"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever"** (Heb. 13:8, *New King James Version*).

- K. God hasn't changed; we have—and the way He relates to us under the New Covenant has changed as a result.
- IX. At first, the disciples related to Christ through His physical presence and attributes, but now that He has risen from the dead and ascended into heaven, you relate to Him through the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 5:16).
- A. In the same way, you shouldn't look at yourself only from a physical perspective—you have a spiritual identity that completely changed when you were born again, and you need to know who you are in the spirit—the part of you that is created new in the image of Christ.
- B. When you are in Christ, old things have passed away and *all* things have become new (2 Cor. 5:17), not some things.
- C. A lot of people struggle with this scripture because they don't feel completely new and don't see anything new in themselves.
- i. They say, "I still get angry. I still have some of the same bad habits. I feel like I'm getting better, but I'm not there yet."
- D. They struggle with accepting the idea that they are already new, because they don't understand that this scripture isn't talking about their physical bodies or their personalities.
- E. Being born again doesn't cause obesity to disappear, and it doesn't automatically change your personality—the Holy Spirit can help you improve and you can change, but it isn't automatic.
- F. Your thoughts and memories don't immediately change, but in the spirit, you become a totally brand-new person—instantly.
- G. The reason you don't see a totally new person when you look in the mirror is that you are looking at your physical appearance or searching your mental and emotional makeup, but the changes in your spirit cannot be perceived by your natural senses.
- H. Your spirit is the part of you that becomes completely new. Look at how the *Amplified Bible* translates 2 Corinthians 5:17 –
- Therefore if any person is [ingrafted] in Christ (the Messiah) he is a new creation (a new creature altogether); the old [previous moral and spiritual condition] has passed away. Behold, the fresh and new has come!*
- I. In the spirit, your salvation is perfect.
- J. You have been united with Christ, and your spirit is as perfect, pure, and holy as it ever will be.
- K. The moment you are born again, your spirit is transformed into the new creation you will be for all of eternity.
- L. You will get a new heavenly body, and your soul will be renewed so that you know all things even as you are known (1 Cor. 13:12), but your spirit is changed forever the moment you are born again.
- X. God has already—past tense—reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ:

*And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

2 CORINTHIANS 5:18-19

- A. More specifically, God was in Christ reconciling the sins of the entire human race.
- B. "Reconcile" is a term people don't use every day, but it just means to reestablish a close relationship between, or to settle or resolve.

- C. God took away all of the discord that sin caused, and He harmonized your relationship with Him again.
  - D. Second Corinthians 5:19 also says God is not “**imputing**” your sins anymore, which means to attribute responsibility for.
  - E. It is a term used in bookkeeping to describe charging or accrediting fees to an account.
  - F. For instance, when you use a credit card to purchase something, you are really asking the seller to give you the item and charge the fee to your account.
  - G. The item isn’t actually paid for until you pay off your credit card.
  - H. You didn’t pay for it when you gave the seller your credit card; you just had the cost imputed to your account.
  - I. If you don’t believe that, just refuse to pay the credit card bill when it comes, and see if they think you’ve already paid.
  - J. When Scripture says that God reconciled the world unto Himself, not imputing your trespasses unto you, it means that God didn’t charge sin to your account.
  - K. He went ahead and paid the debt for you—a balance that was impossible for you to settle—so that He could reestablish a close relationship with you.
  - L. God took the sins of all humanity and charged it to the account of Jesus, and He was also in Jesus on Calvary.
- XI. God didn’t just turn His head and pretend sin never happened—His pure, holy, and righteous nature wouldn’t allow Him to look the other way.
- A. Yet He loves us and desires a relationship with us, so He decided to pay for sin Himself.
  - B. Sin was still imputed, but instead of charging us, God charged it to His Son.
  - C. Going back to the credit-card illustration, it’s as if you were to roll a cartload of computer gear to the checkout in an electronics store, and just as you are about to be charged, a man steps up and says “Let me get that for you” and puts it all on his credit card.
    - i. That’s very different from the store clerk saying to you, “Don’t worry about it—everything is free today.”
    - ii. The items aren’t free—someone had to pay for them.
  - D. God put all of our sin upon His Son, the Lord Jesus.
  - E. He made Jesus, who never sinned, become sin for us, and He took the sin of the entire human race (2 Cor. 5:21).
- XII. Jesus didn’t just die for a select number of people who would later accept Him—He paid for the sins of the whole world, even the people who reject Him (1 John 2:2).
- A. Adolf Hitler’s sins, for example, were paid for—Jesus took the murder of six million Jews and the responsibility for a World War upon Himself.
  - B. Jesus suffered shame, hurt, and degradation on Hitler’s behalf—all of that evil was charged to Jesus.
  - C. That doesn’t mean Hitler was saved, because, as far as we know, Hitler didn’t accept the salvation that Jesus provided.
  - D. We have to humble ourselves and make Jesus our Lord (Rom. 10:9) so that what He did for us is credited to our account.

- E. Once we truly understand the significance of Jesus' sacrifice, then we can understand why God dealt with people differently under the New Covenant than He did under the Old Covenant.
- XIII. You can find a limited amount of mercy under the Old Covenant, but only to the degree that people understood God's grace nature and operated in it.
- A. King David is a good example.
- i. When he committed adultery with Bathsheba, according to the Old Testament Law, he should have been stoned to death.
  - ii. Yet God showed him mercy because David understood the true nature of God.
  - iii. In a sense, he was able to reach into the future by faith and appropriate some of the grace that we live under in the New Covenant.
  - iv. We can see this reflected in the psalm David wrote when he said, "Against you, and you only, Lord, have I sinned and done this evil in your sight" (Ps. 51:4, paraphrase mine).
  - v. David showed his understanding of God's true nature when he went on to say that he would offer a sacrifice, but he knew that sacrifice is not what God really wants (Ps. 51:16).
  - vi. Under the Old Covenant, David was supposed to offer a blood sacrifice, but by his own admission, he knew it wasn't what God really wanted.
  - vii. David broke free from the Old Testament system and offered the sacrifice of a contrite heart.
  - viii. Instead of David being killed in the way the Law prescribed, God showed him mercy.
  - ix. But we also see the Old Covenant punishment for sin in how the child that was born to Bathsheba was killed in judgment.
  - x. We don't see that kind of judgment under the New Covenant.
- B. God has always desired to relate to us by grace, but He couldn't under the Old Covenant, because of humanity's hardness of heart.
- C. Fortunately, the debt of sin has been paid now, and God is free to be just and merciful.
- XIV. Jesus coming to this earth made a pivotal difference in the way God deals with mankind.
- A. Without the sacrifice of Jesus, humanity would still be living under God's wrath against sin.
  - B. Instead, God poured out all of His wrath against sin on Jesus (John 12:32).
  - C. God isn't judging our sin now, because the judgment for all sin, for all time, was put on Jesus.

*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*

1 PETER 2:24

- D. Of course that doesn't mean we are free to go live however we want.
- E. Sin has negative consequences that are purely natural, and it gives Satan an inroad into our individual lives—and into our society (Rom. 6:16).
- F. When our societies promote ungodly principles and make morality a completely private issue, then it gives Satan an opportunity to destroy nations (Prov. 14:34).
- G. Society cannot continue to seek the immorality it promotes and succeed in the long run, but the consequences of sin are not a punishment from God.

**DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS**

1. Why are many people frustrated and confused about God?
2. Discussion Question: How do you know that God is not the harsh and angry God who is eager to judge you for the wrong you've done?
3. True or false: God has changed the way He relates to mankind because of the transformation in society.
4. Read John 8:1-5. Why did the Jews think they had Jesus trapped?

**SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS****ISAIAH 5:20**

*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*

**JOHN 8:1-5**

*Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. [2] And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. [3] And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, [4] They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. [5] Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?*

**LEVITICUS 20:10**

*And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.*

**DEUTERONOMY 22:22**

*If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel.*

**MATTHEW 9:11**

*And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?*

**MARK 2:16**

*And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?*



## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

5. According to John 8:7, what did Jesus say?
6. After everyone left but Jesus and the woman, what did Jesus do?
- He picked up a stone to exact justice on the woman
  - He endorsed the woman's sin
  - He told the woman to go get her husband and come back
  - He denied that the woman had even sinned
  - He admitted that the woman had sinned, but He showed mercy
7. Who held people accountable for sin in the Old Testament?
- Moses
  - The priests
  - God
  - A. and C.
  - All of the above

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**LUKE 15:2**

*And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.*

**MATTHEW 10:3**

*Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus.*

**LUKE 8:2**

*And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils.*

**JOHN 8:7**

*So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.*

**JOHN 8:10-11**

*When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? [11] She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.*

**NUMBERS 15:32-36**

*And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day. [33] And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. [34] And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. [35] And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. [36] And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses.*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

8. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Hebrews 8:12-13. Why can God deal with us differently than He could deal with people under the Old Covenant?
9. What is a helpful illustration to consider?
10. Why?

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-19**

*Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. [17] Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. [18] And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; [19] To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself; not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

**2 CORINTHIANS 5:17  
(AMPLIFIED BIBLE)**

*Therefore if any person is [ingrafted] in Christ (the Messiah) he is a new creation (a new creature altogether); the old [previous moral and spiritual condition] has passed away. Behold, the fresh and new has come!*

**HEBREWS 8:12-13**

*For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. [13] In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.*

**PROVERBS 29:15**

*The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.*

**JAMES 4:7**

*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

11. Read Galatians 3:23-25. What did God use the Law for?
12. Salvation is by grace through faith in \_\_\_\_\_.
13. Read Hebrews 1:3. Jesus is the exact representation of whom?
- A. God
  - B. The Law
  - C. The prophets
  - D. All of the above
  - E. None of the above
14. According to Hebrews 2:3, the Lord was first to speak of what?

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**GALATIANS 3:23-25**

*But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.*

*[24] Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. [25] But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster:*

**ROMANS 6:14**

*For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

**EPHESIANS 2:8**

*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.*

**HEBREWS 1:3**

*Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*

**HEBREWS 2:3**

*How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

15. Discussion Question: How do 2 Kings 1 and Luke 9 speak of the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant?
16. True or false: The Law was given through Moses approximately 2,000 years after the fall of Adam and Eve.
17. True or false: God's lack of punishment is an indication that He doesn't care whether you live a holy life or not.
18. Why did God extend grace toward the first murderer, Cain, but pronounce judgment on the first person to violate the Law?
- Because God has favorites and liked Cain better
  - Because God changes what He's like sometimes
  - Because Cain's act of murder was before the Law
  - Because the Law held people accountable for sin
  - C. and D.
19. What effect(s) did the Law have on people?
- It made people turn away from sin
  - It made people feel guilty
  - It made people feel unworthy
  - All of the above
  - None of the above
20. The sacrifice of Jesus brought a return to what?
21. Why does Andrew believe that if Jesus had been on earth in His physical body when Elijah was calling fire down out of heaven, He would have rebuked Elijah?

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**2 KINGS 1:3-4**

*But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron? [4] Now therefore thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed.*

**2 KINGS 1:10**

*And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.*

**LUKE 9:51-56**

*And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, [52] And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. [53] And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. [54] And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? [55] But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. [56] For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.*

**ROMANS 5:13**

*For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

22. In the Old Covenant, what was God's judgment against evil?
- A blessing in disguise
  - God's way of humbling those who sinned
  - What the people wanted
  - Mercy to the rest of God's people
  - God's ultimate plan for mankind
23. Today what do you do to people who are caught up in sin?
24. What should this difference help you understand?
25. Why doesn't this reflect some kind of conversion in God?
26. Who and what have changed?

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**JOSHUA 6:17-21**

*And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. [18] And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. [19] But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD. [20] So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. [21] And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.*

**JOSHUA 10:40**

*So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel commanded.*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

27. Read 2 Corinthians 5:16. How do you relate to Christ?
28. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. When you are in Christ,  
 \_\_\_\_\_ things have passed away and  
 \_\_\_\_\_ things have become new.
29. True or false: When you're born again, what changes?  
 A. Your IQ  
 B. Your body  
 C. Your personality  
 D. Your spirit  
 E. Nothing
30. DISCIPLESHIP QUESTION: Why is it important to know what changed?
31. Your spirit is where what is perfect?
32. DISCIPLESHIP QUESTION: Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-19. What does the phrase **"reconciling the world unto himself"** mean to you?
33. DISCIPLESHIP QUESTION: What does **"not imputing their trespasses unto them"** mean to you?

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-19**

*Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. [17] Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. [18] And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; [19] To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself; not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

**JOSHUA 11:11-14**

*And they smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them: there was not any left to breathe: and he burnt Hazor with fire. [12] And all the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them, did Joshua take, and smote them with the edge of the sword, and he utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the LORD commanded. [13] But as for the cities that stood still in their strength, Israel burned none of them, save Hazor only; that did Joshua burn. [14] And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe.*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

34. God went ahead and paid the \_\_\_\_\_ for you—a balance that was \_\_\_\_\_ for you to settle—so that He could \_\_\_\_\_ a close relationship with you.
35. True or false: God didn't pretend that sin never happened.
36. Why?
37. Because God loves you and desires relationship with you, what did He decide to do?
- Make the angels pay
  - Restart creation
  - Pay for sin Himself
  - All of the above
  - None of the above

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**DEUTERONOMY 21:18-21**

*If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: [19] Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; [20] And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. [21] And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall bear, and fear.*

**HEBREWS 8:6**

*But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.*

**HEBREWS 8:13**

*In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.*

**MALACHI 3:6**

*For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*

**HEBREWS 13:8 (NEW KING JAMES VERSION)**

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*

**1 CORINTHIANS 13:12**

*For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

38. Read 2 Corinthians 5:21. He made Jesus, who never sinned, \_\_\_\_\_ sin for you, and He took the sin of the entire human race.
39. Read 1 John 2:2. True or false: Jesus died for a select number of people who would later accept Him.
40. Since Jesus paid for the sins of the whole world, why isn't everyone saved?
41. What happens once you truly understand the significance of Jesus' sacrifice?
42. True or false: Under the Old Covenant, only those who understood God's grace nature and operated in it had mercy.
43. Read Psalm 51:16. What did David understand that God really wanted?
44. God has always desired to relate to us by what?
45. Without the sacrifice of Jesus, what would man still be living under?

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**2 CORINTHIANS 5:21**

*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

**ROMANS 6:23**

*For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

**1 JOHN 2:2**

*And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

**ROMANS 10:9**

*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

**PSALM 51:4**

*Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.*

**PSALM 51:16**

*For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.*

**JOHN 12:32**

*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*

**1 PETER 2:24**

*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*



**DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS**

46. What was put on Jesus?
47. Why doesn't that mean you are free to live however you want?
48. Discussion Question: Read Proverbs 14:34. Why can't society continue to seek the immorality it promotes and succeed in the long run?

**SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS****ROMANS 6:16**

*Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*

**PROVERBS 14:34**

*Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.*

## OUTLINE

- I. Certain Bible verses dealing with suffering have frequently been misinterpreted and are sometimes used to suggest that God uses suffering to teach us a lesson or to help us grow spiritually.
- A. I believe that those interpretations are harmful and that they cause people to have a wrong understanding of God's true nature.
  - B. One of the frequently misinterpreted passages of Scripture says,
 

*My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.* JAMES 1:2-4
  - C. These verses have been used by many to imply that praying for patience means that God will put trials and temptations in our way in order to teach us patience.
  - D. We've all heard someone say, "Be careful what you pray for," as if problems are actually the work of God intended to bring us to maturity.
  - E. The church I grew up in talked about problems as "heavenly sandpaper" that rubbed off all of our rough edges and made us better people.
  - F. Let me make an obvious statement: If suffering and problems are what make us better people, then the people who have suffered the most should be the holiest, godliest people on earth—but that isn't the case.
  - G. In fact, the opposite is usually true—the people who have suffered the most are often bitter, angry people whose lives are a mess.
  - H. It simply is not an observable truth to say that suffering produces holiness.
  - I. On the other hand, it is true to say that when we respond to hardship by trusting in God, then it brings to the surface things that God has placed on the inside of us.
  - J. As we depend on God's strength, then we become stronger in our faith—but the hardships aren't what make us better.
  - K. What makes us stronger is exercising our faith in God and trusting in Him.
  - L. It's the improvement of our relationship with God that comes from seeking Him, so hardship might cause us to seek God, but suffering doesn't make us better people.
- II. The Vietnam War was a trying situation for my faith, and I came out of it much stronger than when I went in—but God didn't organize the war to make me holy.
- A. Becoming a good soldier involves putting into practice all of the things you learn through training, so you do become a better soldier after you have engaged in combat.
  - B. You learn things through experience that you can't learn from a book, but it would be insane to embrace the enemy when they attack you, as if their purpose is to make you a better soldier.
  - C. The enemy isn't there to make you better—they're there to kill you.
  - D. Only by resisting the enemy and overcoming them will you live through the attack and become a better soldier.
  - E. Likewise, God doesn't send problems into your life to make you a better person—the Enemy tries to create problems in order to cause suffering.

- F. Afflictions and persecutions come to steal the Word of God out of your heart (Mark 4:17).
    - i. They come to discourage you and to undermine your faith.
    - ii. Sickness comes to defeat you.
    - iii. Financial problems come to cause anxiety and to limit what you can do for the kingdom of God.
  - G. To embrace those problems as if they are sent by God to make you a better person is crazy.
  - H. But if, through faith, you continue to trust in God's promises and resist the Enemy, then you will overcome the challenges and prosper in spite of them.
  - I. Going through hardship and using your faith in God are going to make you a stronger Christian on the other side, but I am not encouraging anybody to accept hardship as a blessing from God.
  - J. Hardship is not a blessing—it's a curse from the Enemy.
  - K. You are only made stronger through hardship by resisting it and standing in faith.
- III. Scripture couldn't be any clearer in saying that suffering and temptation are not from God (James 1:13-14), yet many religious traditions continue to blame God.
- A. The foundation of this teaching on Christian philosophy is the Apostle Paul's warning you not to be spoiled through philosophy (Col. 2:8).
  - B. This teaching that God sends hardships to make you better is a religious tradition that has spoiled untold numbers of Christians.
  - C. They believe that God is orchestrating the problems in their lives and using suffering for some redemptive purpose.
  - D. That attitude will make you passive because it takes away your desire to resist problems.
  - E. If God wants you to be sick, why would you fight against Him by trying to get better?
  - F. The more sincere your desire to please God, the more likely you are to give up in the face of hardship, if you believe that God is behind your problems.
  - G. Believing that God will send problems into your life is a false teaching that will keep you from having a positive relationship with Him.
  - H. It's impossible to really trust someone and have a healthy relationship with them if you are constantly wondering whether they might hurt you—even if they are supposedly doing it for your own good.
    - i. What would you think of me if I was personally responsible for every baby born with a deformity or disability?
    - ii. How much would you like me if you knew that I was responsible for every death, disease, hardship, and tragedy in the world?
    - iii. Would you want to be my friend or spend any time with me?
    - iv. Who in their right mind would want to get close to me if having a relationship with me might mean that I would "bless" you with some incurable disease or kill the people you love most?
    - v. I can guarantee you that if I was guilty of all the things people are blaming God for, society would lock me up and throw away the key.

- IV. Just as Satan convinced Adam and Eve that the Lord wasn't all good but that He had withheld His best from them, so religion (which is the devil's creation) has put forth the lie that the Lord is responsible for all the bad things in your life, but that just isn't so.
- A. Many people have misunderstood the true nature of God, and they are proclaiming that nothing happens without God's permission.
  - B. Therefore, they say, He must be responsible for all of the suffering in the world.
  - C. Then they try to defend their position by saying that God is sending the evil for your own good.
  - D. It's a total misrepresentation of who God is and how He relates to you.
  - E. I know a number of people who are running from God because they think He is responsible for the evil in the world.
  - F. One of their main arguments is, "How could a good God allow all of this to happen?"
  - G. But God is not the source of the suffering in the world.
  - H. God does not tempt you with hardship, there is no shadow of evil in Him, and He only blesses you with good things.

*Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

JAMES 1:16-17

- I. **"Do not err"** is another way of saying, "Unless you believe what I'm saying, you're wrong."
- J. The simplest Christian philosophy you can have is that if something is good, then it's from God, and if it's bad, then it's from the devil.
- K. Only good and perfect gifts come down from the heavenly Father—sickness, hardship, and suffering are not good and perfect gifts.
- L. The goodness of God has to be the trump card against all arguments and circumstances in your life.
- M. No matter what is going on, you have to know absolutely that God is a good God.
- N. The moment someone starts trying to tell you that God gave you a sickness or put hardship in your life, the absolute certainty of God's goodness should rise up within you and immediately reject what they are saying.
- O. Unfortunately, a lot of religious teaching portrays God in a very bad light.
- P. They are trying to say that God is dangling people over hell by a thin thread—that He is angry with you and out to get you.
- Q. I've even heard people say that if you don't tithe, God is going to punish you by taking the money from you in doctors' bills.
- R. Other preachers say that if you leave their church, you are departing from God's will, and the wrath of God will descend on you by destroying your family, by you contracting some disease, or by you having some other tragedy.
- S. A lot of those teachers are trying to drive people to God through fear of punishment, but Scripture says it is the goodness of God that leads people to repentance (Rom. 2:4).

- T. They should be telling people about the extravagant goodness of God, not threatening them. God doesn't send problems into your life, but if you believe He does, then it is going to be hard for you to believe that He is truly good.
- V. It is easy to say God is a good God in theory, but if you don't really believe it, then your relationship is going to be hindered.
- A. Every time someone you love becomes ill or tragedy strikes, it is going to chip away at your resolve that God only wants good things for you.
- B. Look at this passage of Scripture:
- But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.*
- TITUS 3:4-6
- C. God's kindness and love toward you have nothing to do with any righteousness on your part.
- D. Too many people are preaching that you have to earn God's favor and that He is only good toward you when you deserve it, but that isn't true.
- E. If you think you have to earn God's love, then you will never believe that God is good, because your conscience will always condemn you.
- F. It doesn't matter how holy you live, you are always going to fall short of God's standard of holiness, which will leave you feeling separated from God.
- G. Your righteousness comes from God, so if you are depending on your own righteousness to make you feel worthy of God's love, then you are never going to feel worthy.
- VI. When I look at all of the things God has done for me, I am overwhelmed by His goodness.
- A. God has sought after me more than I have searched for Him.
- B. My life could have turned out a lot differently than it has if it wasn't for the goodness of God.
- C. For instance, one of my sons was dead for five hours.
- D. My wife, Jamie, and I prayed that God would raise him from the dead, and out of His mercy and love, God did raise him back to life.
- E. I have a granddaughter that I wouldn't have had if it wasn't for the goodness of God.
- F. My father died when I was twelve years old, and when our pastor came to our house to talk to my brother and me about our father's death, a supernatural peace of God came over me, and the Lord brought to my remembrance a scripture from Psalm 27: "**When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up**" (verse 10).
- G. From that moment on, God took me up. He became my Father and my best friend.
- H. Even though it wasn't God's will for my father to die, I can look back and see the goodness of God blessing me through that experience.
- I. So many aspects of my life have been affected by the goodness of God.
- J. I believe that we can all look back on our lives and see how God worked to bless us, despite the tragedy we may have endured.

- K. I remember the Holy Spirit giving me supernatural knowledge about a woman at one of my meetings who had suffered a history of abuse.
  - L. Terrible things had been done to her, but God had saved her life. He delivered her from the hands of the abusers whose plan was to kill her.
  - M. Through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, I began to help her see that God had blessed her.
  - N. She had a husband and a wonderful family, and God had been good to her.
  - O. She went from being focused on the horrors of the abuse to seeing how God had intervened in her life with mercy and love.
  - P. In the same way, each one of us can see the goodness of God in our lives, even if we have suffered tragedy.
- VII. Most people have heard Romans 8:28 used as a blanket statement to convey that whatever happens must be God's will—that God works all things together for good, so there must be some purpose behind the tragedies in our lives.
- A. But just because God can bring good out of tragedy doesn't mean He caused the tragedy or wants us to endure suffering.
  - B. It's true that exercising our faith through trials causes us to emerge stronger on the other side, but this verse does not say that God causes everything that happens in our lives.
  - C. God works all things together for good, but He doesn't cause all things—and things don't work together for good for every person.
    - i. Some people have tragic lives that end in bitterness, anger, and destitution.
    - ii. A life of destructive choices often adds up to a disastrous ending, so there are some qualifications on exactly how **“all things work together for good.”**
  - D. This scripture says that things work together for good for **“them that love God.”**
  - E. That single qualification dramatically limits the number of people this scripture applies to, because the majority of people do not love God.
  - F. I can remember being at a Full Gospel Business Men's meeting a long time ago when the speaker used this scripture to talk about God working everything together for good.
    - i. He had just come from conducting the funeral of a teenage boy and girl who died in a vehicle accident.
    - ii. Neither of them were known to be Christian, so as far as we know, they didn't go straight to the arms of Jesus—they went to eternal punishment.
    - iii. Clearly, there was nothing good about the accident, and if they did end up in hell, then zero redemptive value came out of it.
    - iv. Yet this minister used Romans 8:28 to say that God had a purpose in this tragedy, and it was working together for good.
  - G. That's not right—God didn't do this.
  - H. But God doesn't control us like pawns—we have free will, and He won't force us to make the right choices.
  - I. It should be clear that good doesn't come out of every situation for every person.
  - J. If we don't love God, then things aren't necessarily going to work together for good.

- K. The reason I'm stressing this point is because if we believe that God controls every single thing that happens, then we are going to get the impression that God isn't a good God.
  - L. Some people can see that God doesn't cause suffering, but they think that He "allows" it to happen, but Scripture says that God reveals Himself "**against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men**" (Rom. 1:18).
  - M. In the case of the two teenagers who died in the car accident, I believe that God gave them an intuitive knowledge of right and wrong and convicted them that what they were doing was wrong.
  - N. I believe that God spoke to them hundreds of times before they crashed the car and died—not just on the night of the accident, but in all the years leading up to it.
  - O. God didn't "allow" the accident to happen in the sense that He didn't intervene in any way to stop it.
  - P. It's more like there was a mountain of obstacles that God put in their way, but they persisted and climbed over all of the things God was doing to save them.
  - Q. Anyone who goes to hell has to ignore the thousands and thousands of times God has tried to convict them and draw them into His love.
  - R. Going to hell isn't a one-time decision; it is the result of rejecting God countless times.
  - S. Our God is a good God, and He desires good things for us—even more than we desire good for our children.
  - T. Not only does the scripture in the book of Romans say that things work together for good for those who love God; it also says for "**them who are the called according to his purpose**" (Rom. 8:28).
  - U. The Bible says that Jesus came to earth to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8), so to be called according to His purpose means that we are resisting the works of the devil (James 4:7).
    - i. If we are rebelling against God and chasing sin, then the tragedy that occurs in our lives is not necessarily going to work together for good.
  - V. Another qualification on this scripture appears in the verses before Romans 8:28, which talk about the Holy Spirit making intercession through us (Rom. 8:26-27).
  - W. The Holy Spirit doesn't pray without us, but when we start to pray, the Holy Spirit comes alongside us and pleads our cause.
  - X. When we have that kind of Spirit-led intercession working in our lives, then things are going to work together for good.
  - Y. Those are three major qualifications on things working together for good: We have to love God, we have to be resisting the works of the devil, and we have to pray—allowing the Holy Spirit to help us make intercession.
  - Z. If we aren't trying to meet those three qualifications, then everything isn't necessarily going to work together for good.
- VIII. God is not the cause of all the evil in our world.
- A. He isn't killing people because He loves them so much—He is a good God.
  - B. His plans for our lives are peace and victory (Jer. 29:11), but God's will doesn't come to pass automatically; we have to cooperate with Him.
  - C. Once we believe that God is only good, our faith will abound, and we will see better results in our lives.

- D. We can cooperate with God, and all things *will* work together for good.
  - E. A lot of negative things happen in life: People we love die, children get sick, jobs are lost, and tragedy strikes when we least expect it.
  - F. It's easy to look at the circumstances in life and wonder why the all-powerful God doesn't prevent suffering, which can lead us to think that God is responsible for it, but Scripture reveals that God has nothing to do with evil.
  - G. When God created the heavens and the earth, everything was perfect.
  - H. God told Adam not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, because in the day that he did, he would die.
  - I. Adam rejected God's instructions, and the result was that sin entered creation.
  - J. Every one of us has leaned unto our own understanding rather than depending on God, and our rebellion is what has released evil on earth.
  - K. Satan is the cause of suffering: he roams around seeking whom he may devour—he steals, kills, and destroys (1 Pet. 5:8 and John 10:10).
  - L. God is not the source of the tragedy in our lives!
- IX. The Bible is full of proof that God is a good God.
- A. The ultimate testimony is that Jesus came to this earth and suffered, not only on the cross, but even just by humbling Himself and taking on human form for thirty-three years.
  - B. Jesus suffered by being confined to a physical human body when He was God.
  - C. Solomon said, "**The heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have [built]?**" (1 Kin. 8:27, brackets mine).
  - D. God is infinite—even the universe can't contain Him—yet He limited Himself to a physical body.
  - E. He was despised and rejected by men, and He ultimately took the punishment for your sins.
  - F. If God loved you enough to suffer and die for you, He loves you enough to do anything for you.
- Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the Lord be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.*
- PSALM 35:27
- G. God is pleased when you prosper—He wants to see you succeed.
  - H. Nobody is pulling for you more than God is—which might not be what you are used to hearing, but it's the message the Bible teaches.
  - I. God is love (1 John 4:7-8). God doesn't just love some people or have a little love for all. He *is* love.
- X. God showed you His love by sending Jesus (1 John 4:9-10).
- A. I am convinced that if you focus on God sending Jesus to earth, instead of just hearing the words, you will experience the fruit of God's peace and joy.
  - B. If God's love isn't impacting you or how you feel about life, then take time to be still and meditate on this truth that God showed His love by sending His Son.



- C. God's love will be revealed to you by focusing on Jesus coming to earth and becoming the payment for your sin.
- D. Salvation isn't about you loving God first and then, because you initiate relationship with Him, God extends love to you in return.
- E. God's loving nature is revealed in that He reached out to you while you were rejecting Him.
- F. Christ died for you while you were still living in sin:

*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

ROMANS 5:8

- G. God has already given you His Son—why wouldn't He give you joy, peace, health, and prosperity (Rom. 8:32)?
- H. It would be totally inconsistent for me to be willing to die for you but be unwilling to give you some money.
- I. God not only has the ability to heal and prosper you; *He desires to do it.*
- J. Faith works by love, and if you trust and believe in God's love—by focusing on what He has already done for you—your faith will rise.
- K. Jesus didn't have to suffer death on a cross; He chose to.
- L. He could have called down an army of angels (Matt. 26:53), but He humbly submitted to a humiliating death instead.
- M. Jesus allowed the scribes and Pharisees to mock Him.
- N. They spit in His face, slapped Him, insulted Him, beat Him, and finally killed Him.
- O. Jesus took all of that because He loved you and wanted to save you.
- P. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus were a physical manifestation of God's love pursuing you, and when Jesus ascended into heaven, He gave you the Holy Spirit to continue His ministry on earth until He returns.
- Q. The Holy Spirit is your Teacher and Helper.
- R. He leads you into all truth, and He is the eyes of the Lord that search the whole earth seeking to show Himself strong on behalf of those who love God (2 Chr. 16:9).
- S. The Lord is looking for you—He isn't hiding from you.
- T. You don't have to pursue Him; you just need to slow down and unplug from the distractions of the world for a little bit.
- U. You can't make a connection with God in the three minutes between your two favorite television shows.
- V. You need to find time to be still and know God (Ps. 46:10)—not just physical stillness, but stillness in your mind, which just means not being completely occupied with other thoughts.
- W. God wants to reveal His love for you more than you desire to know it, but He isn't going to force His way into your life.
- X. You have to take time and give God the opportunity to show you His love.

- XI. Revelation 3:20 has been used to talk about being born again—which isn't wrong—but this letter was written to Christians.
- A. Jesus was saying this to people who were already born again.
  - B. He is asking if you will let Him into your life.
    - i. Will you give Him your attention?
    - ii. Will you unplug from the distractions of life that keep you from hearing the voice of God, and simply focus on His voice?
  - C. The results of knowing God's love are tremendous.
  - D. Knowing His love is worth sacrificing a little entertainment in front of the television to sit quietly in the presence of the Lord.
  - E. I can't tell you how many people come to me in fear of the circumstances in their lives.
  - F. They are fearful over the future, the economy, kids, relationships, health, and all kinds of other things.
  - G. A lot of people today are living in fear, but God's love will push the fear out of your life.
  - H. Scripture says there is no fear in love (1 John 4:18).
  - I. When you spend time in the presence of God, the experience of His love kills your fears.
  - J. It is impossible for fear to thrive where God's love dwells.
  - K. During the Vietnam War, I visited a forward fire-support base that was overrun by the enemy just hours after I left.
    - i. Before I was evacuated by helicopter, I remember seeing the muzzle flashes from the rifle fire of the enemy as they charged up the hill toward our position, but I wasn't afraid.
    - ii. I was worshiping God, thinking, *Lord, today could be the day I come to meet You!*
    - iii. I had supernatural compassion for the people who were rushing to kill me.
    - iv. All I experienced was love and excitement about the possibility of going to be with the Lord.
  - L. Once you know God and understand how good He is, you can become like the Apostle Paul, who said, **"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"** (Phil. 1:21).
  - M. This is normal Christianity—it sounds a little extreme by the world's standards, but this is the attitude you should have.
  - N. The suffering of this life is not worthy of being compared with the glory that will be revealed in you (Rom. 8:18).
  - O. You have something so awesome prepared for you in the presence of God that you won't give a second thought to the heartache and rejection you experienced in this life.
  - P. Nobody in heaven is grieving over the things that happened to them during their lives on earth.
  - Q. If you were to really think about this, you wouldn't have any fear of poverty, sickness, or failure.
  - R. Whatever this world has to throw at you, God has something greater in store.

- XII. God has been misrepresented as causing the tragedy in our world, and I believe that is the number one reason people are not seeking relationship with Him.
- A. If you think God is causing the problems in your life, then you'll want to keep Him at arm's length—even if you are a Christian.
  - B. It's a natural response to try to avoid people and situations that might hurt you.
  - C. But God isn't causing the suffering in the world—in fact, He has nothing to do with it.
  - D. God loves you and He desires good things for you, but experiencing the love of God passes mere knowledge about His love (Eph. 3:19).
  - E. Once you understand how good God is and begin having a real relationship with Him, you open yourself to receiving His love and being filled with all the fullness of God.
  - F. The blessings of God will come upon you and overtake you, and it will cause everything to work out for good in your life.

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. What is sometimes used to suggest that God uses suffering to teach you a lesson or to help you grow spiritually?
2. Read James 1:2-4. True or false: Problems are actually the work of God intended to bring you to maturity.
3. Discussion Question: How is it true that when you respond to hardship by trusting in God, then it brings to the surface things that God has placed on the inside of you?
4. What makes you stronger?
  - A. Getting plenty of sunlight
  - B. Staying away from garlic
  - C. Horseradish
  - D. Hearing more sermons
  - E. Exercising your faith in God and trusting in Him
5. The improvement of your relationship with God comes from what?
6. You learn things through \_\_\_\_\_ that you can't learn from a \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Read Mark 4:17. Why do afflictions and persecutions come?
8. Read James 1:13-14. What is Scripture clear in saying?

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**JAMES 1:2-4**

*My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; [3] Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. [4] But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

**MARK 4:17**

*And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.*

**JAMES 1:13-14**

*Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: [14] But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

9. If you believe that God is orchestrating the problems in your life and using suffering for some redemptive purpose, what will that make you?
- Thankful and more trusting of God
  - Passive because it takes away your desire to resist problems
  - The holiest person in your church
  - All of the above
  - None of the above
10. Discussion Question: Even if they are supposedly doing it for your own good, why is it impossible to really trust someone and have a healthy relationship with them if you are constantly wondering whether they might hurt you?
11. True or false: Nothing happens without God's permission.
12. Read James 1:16-17. What is the simplest Christian philosophy you can have?
13. No matter what is going on, what do you have to know absolutely?
14. True or false: The moment someone starts trying to tell you that God gave you a sickness or put hardship in your life, the absolute certainty of God's goodness should rise up within you and consider what they are saying.
15. You should be telling people about the \_\_\_\_\_ goodness of God, not \_\_\_\_\_ them.

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**COLOSSIANS 2:8**

*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

**JAMES 1:16-17**

*Do not err, my beloved brethren.  
[17] Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

**ROMANS 2:4**

*Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

16. It is easy to say God is a good God in theory, but if you don't really believe it, why will your relationship be hindered?
17. Read Titus 3:4-6. True or false: God is good to you even though you don't deserve it.
18. Discussion Question: When you've thought that you have to earn God's love, how has your conscience condemned you?
19. If you are depending on your own righteousness to make you feel worthy of God's love, then you are never going to what?
- Feel worthy
  - Sing loudly
  - Attend church
  - Trust others
  - Pray constantly
20. Discussion Question: How have you seen the goodness of God in your life, even through tragedy?
21. Read Romans 8:28. What has this verse been used as?
22. Just because God can bring good out of tragedy doesn't mean He \_\_\_\_\_ the tragedy or wants us to endure suffering.

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**TITUS 3:4-6**

*But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, [5] Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; [6] Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.*

**PSALM 27:10**

*When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.*

**ROMANS 8:26-28**

*Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. [27] And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. [28] And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

23. True or false: Romans 8:28 says that all things work together for good for every person.
24. Read Romans 1:18. How do you know that God doesn't allow suffering?
25. Read 1 John 3:8, James 4:7, and Romans 8:26-27. What are the three qualifications on exactly how **"all things work together for good"**?
26. Since God loves people, that means He won't what?  
 A. Help them  
 B. Convict them  
 C. Kill them  
 D. All of the above  
 E. None of the above
27. Discussion Question: Can you give some examples of how God's will doesn't come to pass automatically?
28. What is easy to do when you look at the circumstances in life?
29. If you lean unto your own understanding rather than depend on God, your \_\_\_\_\_ will release evil on earth.
30. How do you know that Satan is the cause of suffering, roaming around seeking whom he may devour and stealing, killing, and destroying?

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**ROMANS 1:18**

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.*

**MATTHEW 7:9-11**

*Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? [10] Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? [11] If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*

**1 JOHN 3:8**

*He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*

**JAMES 4:7**

*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

**ROMANS 8:26-28**

*Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. [27] And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. [28] And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

**JEREMIAH 29:11**

*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*

## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

31. What is full of proof that God is a good God?  
 A. Your bank account  
 B. A new teaching  
 C. The Bible  
 D. A storybook  
 E. The news
32. If God loved you enough to suffer and die for you, He loves you enough to do what for you?  
 A. Nothing else  
 B. Anything  
 C. One other thing  
 D. All of the above  
 E. None of the above
33. According to Psalm 35:27, God is \_\_\_\_\_ when you prosper.
34. Who pulls for you more than God?
35. Andrew is convinced that if you focus on God sending Jesus to earth, instead of just hearing the words, you will experience what?
36. What should you do if God's love isn't impacting you or how you feel about life?
37. Read Romans 5:8. How is God's loving nature revealed?  
 A. By God fixing all your circumstances  
 B. By God taking you to the store and buying you something  
 C. By God giving you a great big hug  
 D. By God just telling you He loves you  
 E. By Christ dying for you while you were still living in sin

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**1 PETER 5:8**

*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*

**JOHN 10:10**

*The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

**1 KINGS 8:27**

*But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?*

**PSALM 35:27**

*Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.*

**1 JOHN 4:7-10**

*Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. [8] He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. [9] In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. [10] Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

**ROMANS 5:8**

*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*



## DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

38. If you trust and believe in God's love—by focusing on what He has already done for you—what will rise?
39. Discussion Question: What do you think about the fact that Jesus chose to suffer death on a cross because He loved you and wanted to save you?
40. True or false: God is pursuing you.
41. What more did Jesus do for you after He ascended into heaven?
42. Read Psalm 46:10. What kind of stillness do you need?
43. God wants to reveal His love for you \_\_\_\_\_ than you desire to know it, but He isn't going to \_\_\_\_\_ His way into your life.
44. Read Revelation 3:20. What is Jesus asking here?
45. Read 1 John 4:18. What will push the fear out of your life?

SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS**ROMANS 8:32**

*He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

**MATTHEW 26:53**

*Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?*

**2 CHRONICLES 16:9**

*For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.*

**PSALM 46:10**

*Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*

**REVELATION 3:20**

*Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

**1 JOHN 4:18**

*There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.*

**DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS**

46. You can become like the Apostle Paul, who said, “**For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain**” (Phil. 1:21) when you what?
- A. Starting giving more to your church
  - B. Just fast and pray a little more than you do
  - C. Know God and understand how good He is
  - D. All of the above
  - E. None of the above
47. Read Romans 8:18. Whatever this world has to throw at you, God has something \_\_\_\_\_ in store.
48. Read Ephesians 3:19. God loves you and He desires good things for you, but experiencing the love of God passes what about His love?
- A. Past experience
  - B. Your opinion
  - C. Mere knowledge
  - D. Worship songs
  - E. All of the above
49. Discussion Question: Once you'd opened yourself to receiving His love and being filled with all of His fullness, what are some examples in your life of how the blessings of God have come upon you and overtaken you, and how it caused everything to work out for good in your life?

**SCRIPTURES  
TO USE WITH  
QUESTIONS****PHILIPPIANS 1:21**

*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

**ROMANS 8:18**

*For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

**EPHESIANS 3:19**

*And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

**SCRIPTURES****MARK 3:25**

*And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.*

**LEVITICUS 19:17-18**

*Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. [18] Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.*

**MATTHEW 22:37-40**

*Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. [38] This is the first and great commandment. [39] And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. [40] On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

---

**SCRIPTURES****JOHN 1:1-5**

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] The same was in the beginning with God. [3] All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. [4] In him was life; and the life was the light of men. [5] And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.*

**REVELATION 14:6-7**

*And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, [7] Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*

**PSALM 19:1-4**

*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. [2] Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. [3] There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. [4] Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun.*

**GENESIS 1:1-3**

*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. [2] And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. [3] And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.*

**GENESIS 1:28**

*And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*

**GENESIS 1:14-16**

*And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: [15] And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. [16] And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.*

**ROMANS 4:17**

*(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.*

**GENESIS 1:11**

*And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.*

**GENESIS 1:21**

*And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.*

**GENESIS 1:24-25**

*And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. [25] And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.*

**GENESIS 5:24**

*And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.*

## SCRIPTURES

### GENESIS 4:9-16

*And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? [10] And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. [11] And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; [12] When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. [13] And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear. [14] Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me. [15] And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him. [16] And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.*

### ROMANS 1:18-20

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; [19] Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. [20] For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.*

### PSALM 14:1-3

*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. [2] The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. [3] They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

### EXODUS 20:8-11

*Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. [9] Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: [10] But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: [11] For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

### MARK 10:6

*But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.*

### GENESIS 7:11

*In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.*

### PSALM 46:10

*Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*

### HEBREWS 3:8

*Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness.*

### 1 TIMOTHY 4:2

*Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.*

### PSALM 139:13-16

*For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. [14] I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. [15] My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. [16] Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.*

### JEREMIAH 1:5

*Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.*

**SCRIPTURES****JAMES 2:10**

*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*

**LUKE 18:10-14**

*Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. [11] The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. [12] I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. [13] And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. [14] I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

**2 CORINTHIANS 10:12**

*For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.*

**1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-10**

*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, [10] Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*

**LEVITICUS 19:17-18**

*Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. [18] Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.*

**HEBREWS 13:2**

*Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*

**GENESIS 19:4-5**

*But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: [5] And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.*

**GENESIS 19:5 (NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION)**

*They called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them."*

**GENESIS 19:11**

*And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.*

**GENESIS 19:24**

*Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven.*

**JOHN 16:9**

*Of sin, because they believe not on me.*

**LEVITICUS 20:13**

*If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.*

## SCRIPTURES

### ACTS 13:38-39

*Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: [39] And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.*

### DEUTERONOMY 23:17-18

*There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel. [18] Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the LORD thy God.*

### ROMANS 1:18-21

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; [19] Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. [20] For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: [21] Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

### ROMANS 3:4

*God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.*

### 1 TIMOTHY 4:2

*Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.*

### ROMANS 1:24-32

*Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: [25] Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. [26] For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: [27] And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. [28] And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; [29] Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, [30] Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, [31] Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: [32] Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*

### COLOSSIANS 3:5

*Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*

### JOHN 6:44

*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

### 1 TIMOTHY 1:9-10

*Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, [10] For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.*

**SCRIPTURES****JUDE 7**

*Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*

**2 PETER 2:6**

*And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly.*



**SCRIPTURES****ISAIAH 5:20**

*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*

**JOHN 8:32**

*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

## SCRIPTURES

### PSALM 139:13-16

*For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. [14] I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. [15] My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. [16] Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.*

### PSALM 139:13-16 (NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION)

*For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. [14] I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. [15] My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth [16] your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.*

### PSALM 139:13-16 (AMPLIFIED BIBLE)

*For You did form my inward parts; You did knit me together in my mother's womb. [14] I will confess and praise You for You are fearful and wonderful and for the awful wonder of my birth! Wonderful are Your works, and that my inner self knows right well. [15] My frame was not hidden from You when I was being formed in secret [and] intricately and curiously wrought [as if embroidered with various colors] in the depths of the earth [a region of darkness and mystery]. [16] Your eyes saw my unformed substance, and in Your book all the days [of my life] were written before ever they took shape, when as yet there was none of them.*

### LUKE 1:41-44

*And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: [42] And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. [43] And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? [44] For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.*

### LUKE 1:15

*For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.*

### ACTS 10:34

*Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.*

### JEREMIAH 1:4-5

*Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, [5] Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.*

### GALATIANS 1:15

*But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace.*

### ROMANS 3:4

*God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.*

### LEVITICUS 17:11

*For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an attonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.*

---

**SCRIPTURES****JOHN 15:19**

*If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

**2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-17**

*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? [15] And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? [16] And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. [17] Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.*

**2 TIMOTHY 3:12**

*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*

**PROVERBS 23:7**

*For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.*

**ROMANS 8:6**

*For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

**ROMANS 12:2**

*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

**1 JOHN 2:15-17**

*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. [16] For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. [17] And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

**PHILIPPIANS 3:8**

*Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.*

**LUKE 6:38**

*Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.*

**JAMES 3:17**

*But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*

**EPHESIANS 4:14**

*That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.*