

## Why We Believe What We Believe

### **A Study in Basic Christian Doctrine**

**Loosely based on the book, “Muscle and a Shovel” by Michael Shank**

#### **Lesson 1 Introduction – An Open Mind is a Must**

**2 Timothy 2:15**

**Proverbs 3:1-6**

**It is easier to believe a lie one has heard a thousand times than to believe a fact one has never heard before. – author unknown**

**What Others Say about us...**

**We really are different...**

**But how?**

**Lesson 2 Sin is real ... People are lost ... God will condemn those who do not obey the Gospel of Christ (2 Thess 1:7-8).**

**Though many go to church, few are genuine Christians.**

**(Matt. 7:21-23; Luke 6:46; Matt. 25:41-45)**

**Mark 7:1-9**

**The challenge is to get people to look at what they believe and compare that to what God says.**

**1 Peter 3:21;**

**Ephesians 2:8-9;**

**While doing this we must display real love and honest humility.**

**Lesson 3 Brief thoughts on How to Study the Bible (2 Timothy 2:15)**

**We must handle correctly the Word of God.**

**Simple rules for interpreting scriptures**

**(NEED TEXTs for each lesson)**

**Lesson 4 Examining some of the basic Christian doctrines**

**How does the Old Testament relate to the New Testament?**

**Law of Moses (10 Commandments) vs the Perfect Law of Liberty**

**Lesson 5 Is the church of Christ a denomination?**

**How are we the same?**

**How are we different?**

**Lesson 6 What must I do to be saved?**

## **Lesson 7 How are we to worship?**

## **Lesson 8**

## **Lesson 9**

## **Lesson 10**

## **Lesson 11**

## **Lesson 12**

## **Why We Believe What We Believe**

### **A Study in Basic Christian Doctrine**

Loosely based on the book, “Muscle and a Shovel” by Michael Shank

### **Lesson 1 Introduction – An Open Mind is a Must**

**2 Timothy 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. NKJV**

In the world we have to deal with other people. Most people are not like you or me. Most do not believe the things we believe.

And as we interact with them, there are going to be discussions & disagreements about what is believed and why it is believed.

That is the main reason for this study.

So what is the primary purpose of the church being left in the world?

Why aren't we taken to Heaven as soon as we become Christians?

## ANSWERS

Since our work is to glorify God by trying to bring people to God, it seems reasonable that we should understand why we believe what we believe. Wouldn't you agree?

Whenever one examines what they believe, it is necessary to keep our minds open to gain a better understanding of God's doctrine.

1. What is doctrine? A belief or set of beliefs held and taught.

EX. "the doctrine of predestination"

synonyms:

creed, credo, dogma, belief, teaching, ideology,  
tenet, maxim, principle, precept...

Another way to say it is my doctrine is what guides my life.

2. Everyone has a doctrine. No exceptions...

The problem is that not every doctrine is correct.

Listen to the Lord on this matter...

1 Timothy 1:2 "the faith"; 1:3 teach no other doctrine; 2:4 "the truth"; 3:9 "the faith"; 4:6 "the words of faith" and of "good doctrine"; 4:13 give attendance to...doctrine; 4:16 Take heed...unto the doctrine; 6:1 ...name of God and His doctrine...;

6:3 "wholesome words", "words of our Lord Jesus Christ", "to the doctrine";

6:20 ...keep "that" which is committed to thy trust...

2 Timothy 1:13 "sound words"; 2:2 the things;

4:2 Preach the word—reprove, rebuke, exhort with all doctrine...

Convince Confront Encourage

2 Timothy 3:16-17 ...profitable for doctrine...

Ephesians 4:11-16 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

Offices having miraculous gifts in the 1st century.

To accomplish what? 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

This was to last how long?

13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head— Christ 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. NKJV

Now we began by recognizing the necessity of maintaining an open mind.

The mind is not open to opinions and ideas of man, but is open to the Word of God...

Open to seeking a better understanding of the things studied...

Yes, and even open to reexamining the things we think we understand.

Look at another statement of Jesus...

John 5:39-40 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. 40 But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life. NKJV

Spoken to unbelieving Jewish leaders (religious people)

Must look at our own hearts and make sure we are open to ANYTHING God has to say.

But this brings me to a major point.

As we try to reach out to others, we need to remember that they believe they understand the Scriptures just as much as the Jews did.

They believe they are following the Lord, and are being faithful...just like we do...

We have heard this statement made by our brethren... “We have the Truth.”

So do they. They read from the same Bible that we do.

Are we just smarter than anyone else?

Has God opened our eyes and not anyone else's?

Why do we have the truth but they don't?

Proverbs 3:1-6

My son, do not forget my law,  
But let your heart keep my  
commands;

2 For length of days and long life  
And peace they will add to you.

3 Let not mercy and truth forsake  
you;

Bind them around your neck,  
Write them on the tablet of your  
heart,

4 And so find favor and high  
esteem

In the sight of God and man.

5 Trust in the Lord with all your  
heart,

And lean not on your own  
understanding;

6 In all your ways acknowledge  
Him,

And He shall direct your paths.

NKJV

Sincerity will only take one so  
far...

At some point, one must simply  
obey God's  
commands.....PERIOD!!!

So how have so many gotten into the sad state of not obeying God's commands and remaining true to follow sound doctrine?

It is easier to believe a lie one has heard a thousand times than to believe a fact one has never heard before. – author unknown

Now for the remainder of our class time this morning, let's consider 2 questions...

What Others Say about us...

What makes us different from the denominations?

We really are different...

But how?

What Others Say about us...

What makes us different...

1 Tim. 3:15 ...I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

NKJV

Lesson 2 Sin is real ... People are lost ... God will condemn those who do not obey the Gospel of Christ.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 Says....Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,  
NKJV

Though many go to church, few are genuine Christians.  
(Matt. 7:21-23; Luke 6:46; Matt. 25:41-45)

Matthew 7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'  
NKJV

Luke 6:46 "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?

Let's look at a classic example of what we see from denominational people everyday.

Mark 7:1-9 Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. 2 Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. 3 For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. 4 When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches. 5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?" 6 He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

'This people honors Me with their lips,  
But their heart is far from Me.

7 And in vain they worship Me,  
Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'

8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men — the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do." 9 He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.  
NKJV

When people cannot tell the difference between what God has commanded and what they have always done (tradition), you have a big problem.

Unfortunately, it is not just the denominational people who have a problem with this.

Invitation song.

Collection follows Lord's Supper

Sunday & Wednesday night services.

Fellowship Hall

Gymnasium ??? What is the difference? One has a basketball goal in it...the other doesn't.

The challenge has always been to get people to look at what they believe and compare that to what God says.

What is the role of the church in all this?

1 Timothy 3:15 "...I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.  
NKJV

1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; NKJV

Meekness & Fear.

Meekness is strength under control / it is also teachable...approachable...reasonable  
Fear lest we have failed to understand something like we should.

Fear lest we are guilty of binding where God did not bind...



...Or loosing where God did not loose.

And the attitude we are to have while doing this is one that displays real love and honest humility.

If we display this teachable approachable attitude and if we are ready to answer (with book, chapter & verse), people are going to listen to what we have to say.

One more Point I need to make before we proceed.

When you attempt to study with someone, and they talk to their friends, things are going to be said. Bad things about us. The student is going to be warned about us.

“They are weird.” “A cult.” “They think they’re the only people going to Heaven.”

The student may try to get out of the study.

That is Satan trying to snatch the Word away from the person before they even have a chance to hear it. He does this by planting a seed of doubt about us and our honesty.

While we cannot force ourselves on someone, and we must not use pressure tactics, we must be ready to fight for that person’s soul. {Spiritual Warfare}

Satan uses doubt as one of his best weapons.

“Doubt causes indecision. Indecision causes inaction. Inaction causes us to put the important back there where the unimportant things reside. Inaction causes idleness and additional doubt. It builds a wall between what’s important and what’s unimportant. Once those walls grow, it’s difficult to know how to tear them down.”

(Muscle and a Shovel p. 27)

However, God’s Word is the seed, that when planted in the heart of an honest seeker of truth, will ALWAYS yield fruit unto righteousness.

That is why it is essential that we know our Bibles. People need scripture. Not just our answers in our own words. They need to hear the text.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 will play upon a person’s mind and it will cause them to have some much needed doubt in themselves and their condition.

Ready to give an answer

If you ask someone outside the church this question...

“Do you have to be baptized to be saved?” What would their answer be?

Then if you give them the following text to consider,

1 Peter 3:21 (vs. 20 ...In the ark, eight souls were saved through water).

21 There is also an antitype which now saves us — baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, NKJV

What would their reaction be?

Now that goes against what most people believe the Bible teaches.

Most “Christian” people know only what they have been taught.

And this flies in the face of what most of them believe.

But you do not respond to their objection.

You simply ask them to think about what that verse means within its context.

Then just walk away...

You are doing what grandma called, “Lettin’ em’ stew in their own juices.”

Most groups come back with the following passage...

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

NKJV

And they conclude that baptism is a work...therefore...has nothing to do with salvation.

Now that is interesting... Baptism has nothing to do with being saved, but one must be baptized to become a member of almost every denomination.

So we blow their minds by agreeing that we are not saved by works.  
We are saved by the grace of God.

The problem with their conclusion is that baptism is not a work.  
The context of Ephesians 2: is refuting the teaching that many Jewish Christians were trying to force on the Gentile converts. Namely that one had to 1st become a Jew to become a Christian. Specifically that one must be circumcised to become a Christian.

And the Jewish Christians were boasting about their heritage and that they were more righteous because they had obeyed the former law and now were following Christ.

The works that Paul is referring too are the works of the Law of Moses. Baptism is not included within the context of Ephesians 2: & neither is repentance.

This passage is used to teach the doctrine of “Faith Only”

Nothing else is required to be saved...

Is that what the “Faith Only” proponents teach?

Do they not also require Repentance and Praying the “Sinner’s Prayer”

In Ephesians 2:8-9, Paul is NOT saying that we do nothing to access the grace of God. What he is saying is that no matter what we do, we do not earn salvation.

Certainly Paul is NOT teaching that we can choose to obey or not to obey, because God’s grace will be what saves us. That is NOT in the context at all !!!

The fact is that the phrase “Faith Only” is found 1 time in Scripture.

(James 2:24). “...not by faith only”

Is James contradicting Paul?

Remember “Context is King”

James is defining what true faith is. It is living & active. It does what God says. Demons believe in God. They have “Faith Only” Are they saved? (James 2:19)  
If any man can be saved by “Faith Only”,  
Then so can a demon...

The fact is that though demons believe in God, they will not obey God.

Anyone claiming to have real faith in God, but who will not submit to God's will, does not have real faith. They are in fact no different than the demons...

...And their fate is ultimately the same

Here is something we are going to have to be prepared for...

As we are trying to reason with our religious neighbors, they are going to try and take us to this scripture or that scripture in an effort to support what they believe to be true.

When one is steeped in what they believe to be truth, it is difficult to get them to stay in one passage and deal with it in its context.

...To reason the passage and determine its actual meaning.

2 Peter 3:16 Peter says that Paul wrote some things that were "...hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. NKJV

When we show these passages to people, some are going to conclude that we are saying that they are lost...

This feeds the conception that many have about the Church of Christ.  
...They believe they are the only ones who are going to be in Heaven!"

Someone may bluntly ask if I believe that they are going to Hell....

Certainly we must try NOT to give a direct answer to that loaded question...  
If we say YES. The conversation is over....PERIOD !!!

So we should say, "God is the only one who can make that decision."  
"It is not what I think that is important...it is what God has said."

"The Bible clearly says that any who do not obey the Gospel of Christ, will be lost."

"Unless a person has been added to the church that Jesus purchased with His own blood, that person will not be saved. (Acts 2:47; 20:28; Romans 5:8-9)"

But if they push and push, then we have no choice but to answer their question.

Here is what Randall said when pushed to that point.

“...from my understanding of God’s Word, if you are a member of a denomination, whether it be Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Mormon; any church that Jesus Christ did not establish and buy with His blood, there’s no question that you’re headed for eternal destruction.” (Muscle and a Shovel, page 52)

Now this is one of the most critical points in the effort to bring someone to Christ.

They might get angry and walk away.

They might try to argue with you.

In either of these cases, we have to trust God to work on their heart.

We have said enough for the moment.

Let them process this information and deal with it.

If they are honestly seeking to know the TRUTH, they will come back to you for more information.

If they turn away and show no more interest in reasoning the Scriptures with you, that HAS to be their decision.

(John 6:60-66) Many went back and walked no more with Jesus.

Pray for them and look for a future opportunity to try again with that person, after they have had time to cool off a bit.

Sometimes it takes a kick in the pants like that to get some people to begin studying the Scriptures...if for no other reason than to disprove your “narrow-minded” point of view.

(Sarcasm noted)

### Lesson 3 Ready to give an answer

If you ask someone outside the church this question...

“Do you have to be baptized to be saved?” What would their answer be?

Then if you give them the following text to consider,

1 Peter 3:21 (vs. 20 ...In the ark, eight souls were saved through water).

21 There is also an antitype which now saves us — baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, NKJV

What would their reaction be?

Now that goes against what most people believe the Bible teaches.

Most “Christian” people know only what they have been taught.

And this flies in the face of what most of them believe.

But you do not respond to their objection.

You simply ask them to think about what that verse means within its context.

Then just walk away...

You are doing what grandma called, “Lettin’ em’ stew in their own juices.”

Most groups come back with the following passage...

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

NKJV

And they conclude that baptism is a work...therefore...has nothing to do with salvation.

Now that is interesting... Baptism has nothing to do with being saved, but one must be baptized to become a member of almost every denomination.

So we blow their minds by agreeing that we are not saved by works.

We are saved by the grace of God.

What is the problem with their conclusion? Simply this...baptism is not a work. The context of Ephesians 2: is refuting the teaching that many Jewish Christians were trying to force on the Gentile converts. Namely that one had to 1st become a Jew to become a Christian. Specifically that one must be circumcised to become a Christian.

And the Jewish Christians were boasting about their heritage and that they were more righteous because they had obeyed the former law and now were following Christ.

The works that Paul is referring too are the works of the Law of Moses. Baptism is not included within the context of Ephesians 2: & neither is repentance.

This passage is used to teach the doctrine of "Faith Only"

Nothing else is required to be saved...

But is that what the "Faith Only" proponents really teach?

Do they not also require Repentance and Praying the "Sinner's Prayer" ???

In Ephesians 2:8-9, Paul is NOT saying that we do nothing to access the grace of God. What he is saying is that no matter what we do, we do not earn salvation.

Certainly Paul is NOT teaching that we can choose to obey or not to obey, because God's grace will be what saves us. That is NOT in the context at all !!!

The fact is that the phrase "Faith Only" is found 1 time in Scripture.

(James 2:24). "...not by faith only"

Is James contradicting Paul?

Remember "Context is King"

James is defining what true faith is. It is living & active. It does what God says. Demons believe in God. They have "Faith Only" Are they saved? (James 2:19) If any man can be saved by "Faith Only", Then so can a demon...

The fact is ... though demons believe in God, they will not obey God. Anyone claiming to have faith in God, but who will not submit to God's will, does not have real faith.

They are in fact no different than the demons...  
...And their fate is ultimately the same

Now...as we try to show these things to people, there is something we are going to have to be prepared for...

As we are trying to reason with our religious neighbors, they are going to try and take us to this scripture or that scripture in an effort to support what they believe to be true.

When one is steeped in what they believe to be truth, it is difficult to get them to stay in one passage and deal with it in its context.

...To reason the passage and determine its actual meaning.

2 Peter 3:16 Peter says that Paul wrote some things that were "...hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. NKJV

When we show these passages to people, some are going to conclude that we are saying that they are lost...

This feeds the conception that many have about the Church of Christ.  
...They believe they are the only ones who are going to be in Heaven!"

Someone may bluntly ask if I believe that they are going to Hell....

Certainly, we must try NOT to give a direct answer to that loaded question...  
If we say YES. The conversation is over....PERIOD !!!

So we should say, "God is the only one who can make that decision."  
"It is not what I think that is important...it is what God has said."

"The Bible clearly says that any who do not obey the Gospel of Christ, will be lost."

"Unless a person has been added to the church that Jesus purchased with His own blood, that person will not be saved. (Acts 2:47; 20:28; Romans 5:8-9)"



But if they push and push, then we will have no choice but to answer their question.

Here is what Randall said when pushed to that point.

“...from my understanding of God’s Word, if you are a member of a denomination, whether it be Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Mormon; any church that Jesus Christ did not establish and buy with His blood, there’s no question that you’re headed for eternal destruction.” (Muscle and a Shovel, page 52)

Now this is one of the most critical points in the effort to bring someone to Christ.

They might get angry and walk away.

They might try to argue with you.

In either of these cases, we have to trust God to work on their heart.

We have said enough for the moment.

Let them process this information and deal with it.

If they are honestly seeking to know the TRUTH,  
they will come back to you for more information.

If they turn away and show no more interest in reasoning the Scriptures with you,  
that HAS to be their decision.

(John 6:60-66) Many went back and walked no more with Jesus.

Pray for them and look for a future opportunity to try again with that person, after they have had time to cool off a bit.

Sometimes it takes a kick in the pants like that to get some people to begin studying the Scriptures...if for no other reason than to disprove your “narrow-minded” point of view.

(Sarcasm noted)

Now we are going to have a brief intermission in our efforts to reach out to others to examine our own understanding.

Proper interpretation of the Scriptures is a must for our own sakes, as well as for the sake of those we are trying to bring to Jesus.

The key phrase from 2 Timothy 2:15 is ... “rightly handling the word of truth... (ESV)

When it comes to properly interpreting scripture there is no substitute for common sense.

It can also be called “good thinking”.

Basically, good thinking is the mental activity of observing facts to see how they are related, grasping the total picture in its true light and drawing sound conclusions.

We must approach the scriptures with open-minded seriousness, because the Bible warns repeatedly how easy it is for us to be deceived... (2 Peter 2:1-3)

Matthew 24:5 For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. NKJV

1 Corinthians 3:18 Let no one deceive himself. NKJV

Ephesians 5:6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, NKJV

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no one deceive you by any means; NKJV

To avoid this one must remain humble and teachable.

There are 4 weaknesses of the mind that we need to avoid.

Prejudice. A personal slant, view, or preference. Anything outside that is bad... Everyone, without exception is prejudiced...to a point.

“To be unprejudiced, one would have to have a pure desire to arrive at the full truth of Scripture without having any preference of opinion or without being disturbed by any feeling or affection or dislike.” (“How to Understand the Bible” by Palmer p. 25-26)

One lady said, “I should go to the doctor and have a physical check-up, but I’m afraid he will find something wrong with me.”

Preconceived Opinion. Supposing something to be true without sufficient study or proof. The mind is made up before the Bible facts are even seen.

This causes many to bring their ideas to the Bible for approval...instead of for testing. It emphasizes the passages that seem to defend the opinion and downplays any that contradict it.

During the Civil War both the North & the South quickly ran to the Holy Scriptures to defend their respective opinions on slavery.

We should go to the Bible to OBTAIN our doctrine...not to SUSTAIN it. And the stronger the assumption, the more one fights the truth.

Wishful Thinking. Some wish so strongly a thing to be true that they come to fully believe it to be true.

We all have our desires, wants, loves & feelings. People often hold on to a thought or belief that, when tested, is actually just a reflection of what they really want and love.

And no matter how much one might wish something to be true, or how many times it is repeated, that still does not make it true.

A loved one dies. They were very precious and had some very great qualities. Though they did a lot of good in their life, yet they never made any attempt to become a Christian.

The memories are precious and the love is strong.

Hope for a future reward and reunion is overpowering.

In this case, isn't one tempted to believe what he wants to believe?  
Isn't it easier to create a doctrine of salvation for this loved one,  
even though the Scriptures would give no such hope?

This is closely akin to "rationalization". ...Looking for apparently logical reasons for believing what one wants to believe and doing what one wants to do.

Generalization. Drawing broad conclusions from particular instances.  
"Every time I don't study, the next day the teacher gives a test."  
"Whenever I wash the car...it rains"  
"The church is full of hypocrites."

Here is a classic on social drinking.

1 Timothy 5:23 No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities

NKJV

1 Corinthians 9:25 ...And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things...

Disregarding the context and everything else written on the subject, he makes a sweeping conclusion and declares his view that God's approves of social drinking. Then adds, "And my uncle drank whisky every day of his life and he lived to be ninety-six."

So Here are TEN Basic Rules for Interpreting the Bible.

Every passage has but one meaning....God's intended meaning.

The most simple and obvious meaning of a passage is usually the correct one. Of course some exceptions to this rule would be prophesy and parables. There are other obviously symbolic statements made throughout the Bible. But generally this rule applies most of the time.

Allow an author's own explanation of a passage to stand.

Consider the word, "perfect". Normally that word means "sinless" or without "error".

But the word can also mean “grown up” or “mature in judgment”  
Look at Hebrews 6:1. Here it is obvious that the writer is using the phrase “go on to perfection” in the 2nd way. How do we know. Look at the last verses of chapter 5.

Always interpret a passage in harmony with its context.

Interpret a passage in a way that it conforms to an author’s time period.  
The customs of the day, opinions of the time, and current knowledge of life and the world around them. (What did the people of that day know about the laws of physics, geography, astronomy, medicine, etc.?)

(EXAMPLE: In the battle with the 5 kings of the Amorites, Joshua asked that the Sun & Moon would stand still until the battle was over...and they did...or did they)  
(Joshua 10:13-14)

So the sun stood still,  
And the moon stopped,  
Till the people had revenge  
Upon their enemies.

Is this not written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day. 14 And there has been no day like that, before it or after it...  
NKJV

But did the Sun stand still or did the Earth stop rotating for that time period?

Each passage must be interpreted in harmony with all other passages.  
One’s interpretation of any passage of scripture cannot be allowed to force a contradiction with any other scripture. (cf. Ephesians 2:8-9; James 2:24, 26)

One passage will often help explain the meaning of another related passage.

A passage must be interpreted in harmony with any “Idioms” it contains.  
What will people understand 1000 years from now when they find our books and read the word, “OK”? It will probably be totally meaningless.  
We need to consider the idioms used back when the text was written.

(EXAMPLE: “Jacob have I loved, and I hated Esau {Malachi 1:2-3} We would see that as a contrast of opposites, but it was a common idiom of that day, indicating a comparison of one being loved more than the other.)

For a FULL understanding of a Bible truth, ALL passages on a given topic must be studied.

Let plain passages help determine the meaning of difficult passages.

Lesson 5  
4/6/2014

Tanner 2nd Qtr. Sunday

So far in our study of “Why We Believe What We Believe”, we have considered the importance of approaching the Bible with an open mind.

We should go to the Scriptures to OBTAIN our doctrine, not to SUSTAIN it.

Everyone believes something.

And they do believe it to be correct, or they would not believe it.

“It is easier to believe a lie one has heard a thousand times, than to believe a fact one has never heard before.”

We examined traditions verses actual commandments from the Lord.

Many are confused about the difference.... (Mark 7:1-9)

Binding tradition as command

And ignoring commands, calling them merely traditions.

The responsibility of the church is to bring God’s truth to our fellow-man.

Remembering that we are all in the same boat. (1 Peter 3:15)

“...ready to give an answer ... with meekness & fear.”

We asked the question, “Does one have to be baptized to be saved?”

We are often accused of teaching water salvation...and they put us on the defensive...

What is the best defense? A good offense.

So we bring up the question first, and make them look for the answer.

That was the approach Jesus often used.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Several times Jesus made His point by saying...

“You have heard it said, ...

“But I say unto you, ... Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28, 31-32, 33-34, etc.)

In the last class, we considered proper interpretation of the Scriptures.

Then we did a practical application of those principles with the different view of the David & Goliath story....

Today, we are going further with our examination of why we believe the way we believe.

This is particularly related to salvation.

We will begin with a quote from Michael Shank

“Why did I believe what I believed? It’s how I was raised. I’d never known anything else, and I’d never really studied the Bible.” (“Muscle and a Shovel”, p. 73)

As he was coming face to face with conflicting beliefs, this is where his heart was struggling. He wanted to believe the Bible, but was thinking that the verses were being used incorrectly. So he was having to do a lot of re-examining of his beliefs.

We are doing that same thing here in this class.

The following are questions that we can ask a person to get them thinking and to use as an opening to study the Bible with them....

Is John 3:16 true? What does it mean?

Don’t try to make a major case from the word “should”

Most other translations use the word “may”

It is a permission word, implying that those who believe in Him NEED not perish. Otherwise, if they do not believe, they would definitely perish.

But it is a conditional word within the context. The context is being born again. How is one born again? Possible answers...

- 1) Of water & the Spirit (vs. 3, 5)
- 2) By believing that Jesus is the Son of God.

Which does the context reveal?

What are the vine and the branches in John 15:5?

Is it the case that Jesus is the vine and the denominations are the branches? Notice verse 6.

Where is the “Sinner’s Prayer” found in the Bible?

Some might suggest the prayer of the publican...  
(Luke 18:13) “...God be merciful to me a sinner.”

What are the words of the Sinner’s Prayer? In a quick search of the internet, I found the following 3 versions.

PeaceWithGod.net (<http://peacewithgod.jesus.net/>)

“Dear Lord Jesus,

I know I am a sinner, and I ask for your forgiveness. I believe you died for my sins and rose from the dead. I trust and follow you as my Lord and Savior. Guide my life and help me to do your will.

In your name, amen.”

Billy Graham Crusade version

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow You as my Lord and Savior. In Your Name. Amen



## Campus Crusade for Christ version

Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be. Amen

There are no words or phrases anything like these that are found anywhere in Scripture. No where, No how, No way.

Why then do people believe the Sinner's Prayer doctrine of salvation to be true? Because that is what they have been taught, by people that they love and trust. And they were taught by people that they loved and trusted, and so on and so on.

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man,  
But its end is the way of death. NKJV

People have been taught to let God's Word speak to them by following their heart. The truth is that we cannot depend on what we think seems to be right.

Trust your heart... Follow your heart... That is what the ignorant & unlearned believes. That is what Hollywood advocates. That is what Satan uses to trick, trap and destroy...

Can we be saved like the Thief on the Cross?  
This issue relates to a rejection of baptism as necessary for salvation.

Luke 23:39-43 Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."  
40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." 42 Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."  
43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." NKJV

Had this man been a follower of John or Jesus before becoming a thief? No answer!

Was the man baptized? No answer!

He did know something about Jesus.

... this Man has done nothing wrong... ...when You come into Your kingdom...

If he was not baptized, does this change anything?

Does it alter any of the Lord's commands?

Now, consider what really happened here..... We first go to Matthew 9.

Matthew 9:1-8 So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city.  
2 Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you."  
3 And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!"  
4 But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?  
5 For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'?  
6 But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" —  
then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."  
7 And he arose and departed to his house. 8 Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men. NKJV

Jesus, as a Jew, lived under the Law of Moses.

That law was to be taken away, ... But still in force while Jesus was alive.

He had the authority to forgive whosoever He want to.

And He chose to forgive many people of their sins, including those who put Him to death.

Lesson 6  
4/20/2014

Tanner 2nd Qtr. Sunday

If you were here Wednesday evening, we briefly looked at the idea of being saved like the thief on the cross. Let's do a quick review before we move on.

Can we be saved like the Thief on the Cross?

This issue relates to a rejection of baptism as necessary for salvation.

Luke 23:39-43 Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."  
40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." 42 Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."  
43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."  
NKJV

Had this man been a follower of John or Jesus before becoming a thief? No answer!  
Was the man baptized? No answer!

He did know something about Jesus.

... this Man has done nothing wrong... ...when You come into Your kingdom...

If he was not baptized, does this change anything?  
Does it alter any of the Lord's commands?

Now, consider what really happened here..... We first go to Matthew 9.

Matthew 9:1-8 So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city.  
2 Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you."  
3 And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!"  
4 But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?  
5 For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'?  
6 But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" —  
then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."  
7 And he arose and departed to his house. 8 Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.  
NKJV

Jesus, as a Jew, lived under the Law of Moses.

That law was to be taken away, ... But was still in force while Jesus was alive.  
He had the authority to forgive whomsoever He chose to forgive.

And He chose to forgive many people of their sins; including those who put Him to death.

The reality is that no one today can or will be saved like the thief on the cross...  
But they can and will be saved by the one who save the thief on the cross...

Jesus made it clear that there is something WE must do....

Matthew 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. NKJV  
So...What does the Lord require from someone who wants to be saved?

John 3:3, 5 ... Born again ... of water and the Spirit (that is the Holy Spirit)

John 3:16 ...whosoever believes in Him should not perish...everlasting life.

John 8:24 ...for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

NKJV

Luke 13:3, 5 ...unless you repent you also will perish...

Luke 24:46-47 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Jesus gives us a graphic example of repentance in

Mark 8:34 "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. NKJV

Matthew 10:32-33 "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. 33 But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

NKJV

Romans 10:8-10 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): 9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. NKJV

Mark 16:16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. NKJV

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, NKJV

Romans 6:3-4 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.  
NKJV

Galatians 3:26-27 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.  
27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. NKJV

Ephesians 1:3 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,"

Acts 2:36-38 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." 37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" 38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. NKJV

There are many who say that "for" means "because of" Read Acts 2:38 substituting the phrase "because of the remission of sins" in place of "for the remission of sins".

This change is inconsistent with other passages dealing with baptism.

Acts 22:16 And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.' NKJV

What can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus

Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins,  
according to the riches of His grace NKJV

Colossians 1:13-14 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us  
into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His  
blood, the forgiveness of sins. NKJV

1 Peter 3:20-21 ...in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a  
few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. 21 There is also an antitype which  
now saves us — baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a  
good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, NKJV

In summary, what does the Lord require of people...since His death on the cross?  
...after the time of the incident with the thief...  
...after Jesus died, was buried & rose again...  
...after his Will & Testament went into effect...  
...after the kingdom came with power on the Day of Pentecost...

...What must we do to be saved?

Believe in Jesus.

The Son of God

Died to save us from sin and death

Buried & rose again the 3rd day

Repent – turn from sin to serve God

Confess faith in Christ (ex. Acts 8:37)

Be baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27)

Why? For the remission of sins (Acts 2:38)

Why? To wash away sin (Acts 22:16)