

# 5 FAITH BELIEVES GOD'S WORD

---

---

**THIS LESSON WILL FOCUS ON THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES:**

Objective 1. Discuss the importance of the objectivity of the written Word.

Objective 2. State the relationship between the Spirit and the Word.

Objective 3. Identify the final authority for our beliefs and conduct.

---

*All truth is indeed God's truth. But the truth that exists in undiluted and untainted form is discoverable in only one Book!*

*– David J. Hesselgrave*

*Faith never means gullibility. The man who believes everything is as far from God as the man who refuses to believe anything (Tozer 2006).*

*"It seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught" (Luke 1:3–4).*

Faith has intelligible content. Paul says that salvation involves coming to the "knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). There must then be some means to determine the correctness of one's faith if we are not to fall back into the pluralistic, mystical, subjectivism which characterizes postmodern religion. Jesus said in John 17:17 that God's Word is truth and the truth given by the Spirit of truth believes the written Word of God, the Bible. We thus have an authoritative standard by which we can examine or test everything

carefully (Isaiah 8:16, 20; 1 Thessalonians 5:21), and judge or evaluate prophecies and other spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 14:29, 1 John 4:1). As the Bereans did when they first heard the Gospel preached (Acts 17:11) we test the spoken words against the written Word.

Were we left to mystical experiences alone to determine our beliefs we would inevitably fall prey to various kinds of false or imagined revelations. Satan disguises himself as an angel of light to deceive people with false revelations (2 Corinthians 11:14), and people often use their vivid imaginations as they falsely suppose they are having conversations with God. In Colossians 2:18 Paul warned against false teachers who would base their views on visions they had seen, inflated without cause by their fleshly minds. Without an objective written authority to guide us, the reliability of any claimed revelation is hard to evaluate. Thus, God has wisely given us His Word.

“So Moses wrote down this law . . .” (Deuteronomy 31:9).

“Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful” (Joshua 1:8).

“Look in the scroll of the LORD and read” (Isaiah 34:16).

“Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (Romans 15:4).

From infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:15–17)

We can carefully examine the Bible's contents to understand what it does or does not say. Disagreements regarding doctrine or conduct can be adjudicated by the written Word's authority. The ever changing philosophical fashions of the world can be tested against this unchanging text. Feelings of worry or discouragement are overridden by the

objective, written Truth. With our Spirit-given faith rooted in God's book, faith is like a tree which reaches its branches to the heavens as we experience God but which also has its roots solidly planted in the tangible and objective Word of God, the Bible. Jesus said, "A time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks" (John 4:23).

Through the mixture of narrative and propositional writing we see that the correspondence theory of truth and the referential theory of language are clearly presupposed in the Bible. When the Bible says Jesus was crucified on a Cross and rose from the dead for our salvation, it is giving us information we are to relate to the real world. Scripture cannot be confined to the philosophical boundaries of either naturalistic modernism (which would rule out the resurrection by its anti-supernaturalist presuppositions) or subjectivist postmodernism (which refuses to see any definitive "Thus says the Lord" in the Bible's pages).

Though God used the personalities and experiences of the authors, He inspired them to write the words they did. Understanding God's Word then is an exercise in understanding the intent of the inspired authors. Determining what the words meant in the author's time and community helps us to draw out the meaning of the text rather than read our thoughts into it. The Holy Spirit does make the meaning of the Word come alive in our hearts and impress upon us the implications for our own lives, but the Word gains entry to the heart through the gateway of the mind. We read this holy revelation with our minds fully involved as we try to connect with the originally intended meaning and then meditate upon this meaning with heart and mind as we seek its relevance for our lives. Just as the Holy Spirit did not bypass the mind of the authors of Scripture as He inspired them, He does not bypass the mind of readers as He illuminates the Word to them.

We consequently find that God's message to the postmodern world is the same message He has communicated to every era. He created the world and we are His creatures. Humans are not therefore the measure of all things; our Creator is. God is holy. In His perfection He is eternally intolerant of sin but has provided us a way of salvation in His Son.

We do not look inward for answers to life's ultimate questions; we look up to the one who formed us in our mother's womb. We are not left to our own devices. God has not asked us to figure things out on our

own or trust any other person's word for these answers. Through God's Word we can know the unalterable truth that brings life and sets us free. Changes in cultures do not change the content of God's revelation. Since God's revelation comes from heaven, it is not subject to change by anything earthly such as organizations or philosophical fads. Believing and obeying "the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 1:3) means essentially the same thing for people in the twenty-first century as it did for people in the first century. The incidental differences in technological and cultural surroundings between first century people and us do not affect the heart of what it means to believe, love, forgive, and repent. Modern readers seek to apply the ancient meanings to new surroundings. Scripture is thus the sole authority for the doctrines and practices of all those who acknowledge its divine origin. We do not judge the Bible by men's opinions; we judge men's opinions by God's Word.

*"The culture is to be constantly judged by the Bible, rather than the Bible being bent to conform to the surrounding culture"*

*(Schaeffer 1985, 105).*

*"We shall not adjust our Bible to the age; but before we have done with it, by God's grace, we shall adjust the age to the Bible"*

*(Spurgeon 2008, 254).*

It is not arrogant for us to claim to know absolute, ahistorical truth from above; it is in fact the very opposite. In recognizing the absolute authority of God and His Word over our lives we are humbling ourselves before a higher source of knowledge. Both the modern insistence that absolutely rules out God's involvement in creation and the postmodern assertion that truth ultimately comes as we create it represent proud rebellion against God. It is humbling, on the other hand, for humans to admit that the world is in darkness apart from God's revelation, but this lowly posture is one that finds the light God shines in the darkness.

*“There are perhaps no graces that have more counterfeits than love and humility” (Edwards 1746, 146).*

*“Opinions are relative to cultures, but truth isn’t” (Kreeft 1990, 34).*

*Sin is of a deceitful nature, because, so far as it prevails, so far it gains the inclination and will, and that sways and biases the judgment. . . . So far as any sin sways the inclination or will, so far that sin seems pleasing and good to the man; and that which is pleasing, the mind is prejudiced to think is right. (Edwards 1987)*

*True worshippers will also worship God ‘in truth.’ Many people today have the idea that it’s not necessary to worship in truth as long as we worship sincerely. Remember—it is possible to be sincere—and sincerely wrong. – Ed Young*

## **Some Things the Bible Says About Truth**

We can know the truth (John 8:32).

God wants all people to know the truth (1 Timothy 2:4).

We should believe the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:12–13).

We should speak the truth to one another (Zechariah 8:16).

Christ is the truth (John 14:6).

God’s Word is truth (John 17:17).

We should handle accurately the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15).

The Holy Spirit reveals truth to us (John 16:13).

The truth will remain forever (2 John 2).

God delights in truth (Proverbs 16:13).

God delights in those who speak the truth (Proverbs 12:22).

We should write truth on the tablets of our hearts (Proverbs 3:3).

We should cherish truth in our innermost beings (Psalm 51:6).

We should rejoice in the truth (1 Corinthians 13:6).

We should let our minds dwell on truth (Philippians 4:8).

We should worship God in truth (John 4:24).

We should walk before God in truth with all of our hearts and souls  
(1 Kings 2:4).

FAITH BELIEVES GOD'S WORD

We should serve God in truth (Psalm 145:18).

Correct belief is essential to salvation (John 3:18, John 20:23, Galatians 1:8, 2 Timothy 1:13–14, Titus 1:9, 2 John 9–10)

In the midst of the ever changing tides and currents of worldly trends the church, in its morals and doctrines, stands out as an unmovable expression of God's eternal kingdom. "Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son" (2 John 1:9).

*Scripture can rule us only so far as it is understood, and it is only understood so far as it is properly interpreted. A misinterpreted Bible is a misunderstood Bible, which will lead us out of God's way rather than in it. (Packer 1996, 104)*

*To turn the back on all doctrinal clarity is not only a sin; it is a sin against charity, for Christian charity itself demands the preservation for posterity of the faith, in all its illuminating richness which past generations have handed on to us. To evade doctrinal clarity in the name of charity is thus an intolerable self-contradiction.*

– Harry Blamires

Below is "a parable, in the form of a question in a music test, as it might be asked at different points in history. It was given to me by a music teacher a few years ago.

1930      Define rhythm

1960      The movement of music in time, including tempo and meter, is called \_\_\_\_\_.

1990      The movement of music in time, including tempo and meter, is called:

- a. melody
- b. harmony
- c. rhythm
- d. interval

2000      The movement of music in time, commonly called Rhythm, makes you feel:

*ABSOLUTES OR NOT*

- a. I don't understand the question
- b. I think this is an unfair question
- c. I don't know what the word Rhythm means
- d. It doesn't matter how I feel as long as it is my own authentic feeling

If you selected the year 2000 question and chose answer (d), you may be a postmodernist!" (Erickson 1998, 14)

## **TO HELP YOU LEARN**

Please answer the following questions in the space provided below or in your notebook.

1. Do you think you have humbled yourself before God?

---

---

2. Have you sincerely sought Him in prayer?

---

---

3. Have you looked in the Bible for answers to life's ultimate questions?

---

---

4. Does the Bible say we can really know the truth?

---

---

5. Is the truth the Bible speaks of absolute and unchanging?

---

---

6. What are the ways the Bible says we can know the truth?

---

---