



Bible studies for disciples who make disciples

Loudonville Community Church

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**A Reasonable Faith:
Affirming the Exclusivity of Jesus in a Diverse Culture**
John 3:31-36; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 1 Timothy 2:5

THIS WEEK'S CORE STATEMENT

The Deity and Sinlessness of Christ: We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, and in His sinless life.

Bruce Ware is an evangelical theologian, speaker, and author who is currently a professor at Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, KY. Ware has penned the following article entitled "*Only One Way? The Exclusivity of Jesus Christ and the Gospel.*"

Two Questions, Three Positions

Three positions abound today on the question of whether Christ is the only way to salvation. All three can be detected by how each answers these two fundamental questions: First, Is Jesus the only Savior? More fully: Is the sinless life of Christ and his atoning death and resurrection the only means by which the penalty of sin is paid and the power of sin defeated? Second, Is faith in Christ necessary to be saved? More fully: Is conscious knowledge of Christ's death and resurrection for sin and explicit faith in Christ necessary for anyone to become a recipient of the benefits of Christ's atoning work and so be saved?

Pluralism answers both questions, 'No.' The pluralist (e.g., John Hick) believes that there are many paths to God, Jesus being only one of them. Since salvation can come through other religions and religious leaders, it surely follows that people do not have to believe in Christ to be saved.

Inclusivism answers the first question, 'Yes,' and the second question, 'No.' To the inclusivist (e.g., Clark Pinnock), although Jesus has accomplished the work necessary to bring us back to God, nonetheless, people can be saved by responding positively to God's revelation in creation and perhaps in aspects of their own religions. So, even though Christ is the only Savior, people do not have to know about or believe in Christ to be saved.

Exclusivism answers both questions, 'Yes.' The exclusivist (e.g., Ron Nash, John Piper, Bruce Ware) believes that Scripture affirms both truths, first, that Jesus alone has accomplished the atoning work necessary to save sinners, and second, that knowledge of and faith in Christ is necessary for anyone to be saved. The remainder of this article offers a brief summary of some of the main support for these two claims.

Jesus is the Only Savior

Why think that Jesus is the only Savior? Of all the people who have lived and ever will live, Jesus alone qualifies, in his person and work, as the only one capable of accomplishing atonement for the sin of the world. Consider the following ways in which Jesus alone qualifies as the exclusive Savior.

1. *Christ alone was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin* (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:26), and as such, he alone qualifies to be Savior. Why does this matter? Only as the Holy Spirit takes the place of the human father in Jesus' conception can it be true that the one conceived is both fully God and fully man. Christ must be both God and man to atone for sin (see below), but for this to occur, he must be conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a human virgin. No one else in the history of the world is conceived by the Spirit and born of a virgin mother. Therefore, Jesus alone qualifies to be Savior.

2. *Christ alone is God incarnate* (John 1:1; Hebrews 1:1; Philippians 2:5; 1 Timothy 2:5), and as such, he alone qualifies to be Savior. As Anselm argued in the 11th century, our Savior must be fully man in order to take the place of men and

die in their stead, and he must be fully God in order for the value of his sacrificial payment to satisfy the demands of our infinitely holy God. Man he must be, but a mere man simply could not make this infinite payment for sin. But no one else in the history of the world is both fully God and fully man. Therefore, Jesus alone qualifies to be Savior.

3. *Christ alone lived a sinless life* (2 Corinthians 2:21; Hebrews 4:15; Hebrews 7:23; Hebrews 9:13; 1 Peter 2:21), and as such, he alone qualifies to be Savior. As Leviticus makes clear, animals offered as sacrifices for sin must be without blemish. This prefigured the sacrifice of Christ who, as sinless, was able to die for the sins of others and not for himself. But no one else in the history of the world has lived a totally sinless life. Therefore, Jesus alone qualifies to be Savior.

4. *Christ alone died a penal, substitutionary death* (Isaiah 53:4; Romans 3:21; 2 Corinthians 2:21; Galatians 3:10), and as such, he alone qualifies to be Savior. The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). And because Christ lived a sinless life, he did not deserve to die. Rather, the cause of his death was owing to the fact that the Father imputed to him our sin. The death that he died was in our place. No one else in the history of the world has died because he bore the sin of others and not as the judgment for his own sin. Therefore, Jesus alone qualifies to be Savior.

5. *Christ alone rose from the dead triumphant over sin* (Acts 2:22; Romans 4:25; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 1 Corinthians 15:16), and as such, he alone qualifies to be Savior. The Bible indicates that a few people, other than Christ, have been raised from the dead (1 Kings 17:17; John 11:38), but only Christ has been raised from the dead never to die again, having triumphed over sin. The wages of sin is death, and the greatest power of sin is death. So, Christ's resurrection from the dead demonstrates that his atoning death for sin accomplished both the full payment of sin's penalty and full victory over sin's greatest power. No one else in the history of the world has been raised from the dead triumphant over sin. Therefore, Jesus alone qualifies to be Savior.

Conclusion: Christ alone qualifies as Savior, and Christ alone is Savior. Jesus' own words could not be clearer: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). And the Apostle Peter confirms, "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). These claims are true of no one else in the history of the world. Indeed, Jesus alone is Savior.

Faith in Christ is Necessary to be Saved

Why think that faith in Christ is necessary to be saved? The teaching of the apostles is clear, that the content of the gospel now (since the coming of Christ) focuses directly upon the atoning death and resurrection of Christ, and that by faith in Christ one is forgiven of his sin and granted eternal life. Consider the following passages that support the conviction that people are saved only as they know and trust in Christ as their Savior.

1. *Jesus' own teaching shows that the nations need to hear and repent to be saved* (Luke 24:44). Jesus commands that "repentance and forgiveness of sin should be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). The people Jesus here describes are currently both unrepentant and unforgiven. To be forgiven they must repent. But to repent they must hear the proclamation of Christ's work in his name. And this is true for all the nations, including Jews who haven't trusted Christ. Jesus does not envision the "nations" as already having saving revelation available to them. Rather, believers must proclaim the message of Christ to all the nations for people in those nations to be saved.

2. *Paul teaches that even pious Jews, and everyone else, must hear and believe in Christ to be saved* (Romans 10:1). Paul's heart's desire and prayer is for the salvation of his fellow Jews. Even though they have a zeal for God, they do not know that God's righteousness comes only through faith in Christ. So these Jews, even though pious, are not saved. Whoever will call upon the name of Christ (see Romans 10:9 along with Romans 10:13) will be saved. But this requires that someone tell them. And this requires that those are sent. Missions, then, is necessary, since people must hear the gospel of Christ to be saved.

3. *Cornelius's story demonstrates that even pious Gentiles must hear and believe in Christ to be saved* (Acts 10:1, Acts 10:38; Acts 11:13; Acts 15:7). Far from being saved before Peter came to him, as some think, Cornelius was a pious (Acts 10:2) Gentile who needed to hear of Christ, and believe in Christ, to be saved. When Peter reports about the conversion of the Gentiles, he declares that only when he preached did Cornelius hear the message he needed to hear by which he would "be saved" (Acts 11:14; cf. Acts 15:8). Despite his piety, Cornelius needed to hear the proclamation of the gospel of Christ to be saved.

Conclusion: Jesus is the only Savior, and people must know and believe in Christ to be saved. May we honor Christ and the gospel, and manifest our faithfulness to God's Word, by upholding these twin truths and living in a manner that demonstrates our commitment to them.

This Week's Complementary Passage

Mark 8:27-29 (ESV)

²⁷ And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" ²⁸ And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets." ²⁹ And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ."

Marking Guide for Acts
(not all words occur in the passage)

- appointed
- baptized
- Caesar
- enemy/demons/Satan
- eternal life
- fathers & children [in one color different from Moses]
- Gentiles
- gospel
- grace
- Holy Spirit
- in the name of Jesus Christ
- Jesus
- Jews
- Law (of Moses)
- men of the council
- Moses [in different color from fathers & children]
- prayer
- repent (repentance)
- resurrection (raised up)
- salvation
- suffering
- the Way
- the promise of the Father
- witnesses
- word of God

STEP ONE . . .

READING what the passage says
(Read it at least three times)

John 3:31-36 (ESV)

³¹He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all. ³²He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony. ³³Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true. ³⁴For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. ³⁵The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. ³⁶Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

John 14:6 (ESV)

⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Acts 4:12 (ESV)

¹²And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

1 Corinthians 8:6 (ESV)

⁶yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

1 Timothy 2:5 (ESV)

⁵For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

STEP TWO . . .

OBSERVING how the passage moves

Return to the passage and **mark key words, phrases and movements:**

- Circle all of the words in these passages that speak of the Triune God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit, etc.).
- Underline the significant verbs/action words in these passages.
- In John 3:31, underline the phrases "He who comes from above is above all" and "He who comes from heaven is above all."
- In John 3:32, underline the phrase "He bears witness."
- In John 3:33, underline the phrases "Whoever receives his testimony" and "God is true."
- Highlight John 3:34-36.
- Highlight John 14:6.
- In Acts 4:12, underline the phrase "there is salvation in no one else."
- In I Corinthians 8:6, underline the phrases "there is one God, the Father" and "one Lord, Jesus Christ."
- Highlight 1 Timothy 2:5.

STEP FOUR . . .

UNDERSTANDING what the passage means

This commentary is intended to enhance your own study of the text.

Commentary on John 3:31-36 (ESV)

3:31 - "He who comes from above." It is significant that the two titles used for the Messiah emphasize His pre-existence, His full deity, His incarnation, and His God-given mission. This dualism of above and below, of God's realm and mankind's earthly realm, is characteristic of John. In John's gospel, creation itself and the human body are not in and of themselves evil or sinful.

"Above all." This phrase occurs twice in this verse. The first part of this verse alludes to Jesus' deity and pre-existence, coming from heaven. The second part of the verse affirms that He is over God's creation.

"He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way." This is not a negative statement by John. The Greek term for earth here (*gē*) is not the same as the Greek term for "world" (*kosmos*), which is often used negatively by John. This is simply an affirmation that Jesus spoke out of that which He knows, heaven, while all human beings speak out of that which they know, earth. Therefore, the testimony of Jesus is far greater than that of any earthly prophet or preacher.

3:32 - "He bears witness to what he has seen and heard." Jesus is God's ultimate revelation. He speaks out of His own personal experience with God the Father, and His own deity.

"Yet no one receives his testimony." This is an obvious overstatement because the preceding verses indicate that many were coming to Him. This phrase refers to Judaism as a whole, not just the immediate context.

3:33 - "Whoever" This word shows God's universal, unlimited love for all human beings. There are no barriers connected to God's gospel; one must repent and believe, but the offer is open to all.

"Receives his testimony." This shows that trusting in God for salvation is not only an initial decision but it is also a life of discipleship. This same affirmation of the need for acceptance has been previously stated in John's gospel. Notice the dichotomy between accepting the testimony and continuing to walk in it. The term "receiving," like the term "faith," has two connotations in the New Testament: personally receiving Christ and walking in Him and accepting the truths and doctrines involved in the Gospel.

"Sets his seal to this, that God is true." When believers put their personal trust in Christ, they affirm that God's message about Himself, the world, mankind and His Son, is true. This is a recurrent theme in John's gospel. Jesus is true because He ultimately reveals the one true God.

3:34 - "For he whom God has sent utters the words of God." There are two parallel statements in this verse which show that Jesus' authority comes from God: God has sent Him, and He has the fullness of the Spirit.

"He gives the Spirit without measure." There are two different ways of understanding this fullness of the Spirit: some believe that Jesus gives the fullness of the Spirit to believers or that the fullness of the Spirit refers to God's gift of the Messiah. The rabbis used the term "measure" to describe God's inspiring the prophets. The rabbis also added that no prophet had a full measure of the Spirit. Therefore, Jesus is superior to the prophets and is, thereby, God's full revelation.

3:35 - "The Father loves the Son." This affirmation is repeated in John 5 and 17. Believers' relationship to God is founded on His love for the Messiah. Note the number of reasons stated in this context why humans should trust Jesus as the Messiah: because He is from above and above all others; because He was sent from God on a mission of redemption; because God continues to give Him the fullness of the Spirit; because God loves Him; and because God has put everything in His hands.

3:36 - "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life." These verbs are all present active verbs which speak of ongoing action. Belief is more than a one-time decision no matter how sincere or emotional it may have been. This affirms that without knowing Jesus one cannot know the Father. Salvation only comes through a continuing relationship with Jesus, the Son. It is also interesting to note the contrast of "believe" and "obey" in this verse. The Gospel is not only a person whom we receive and a truth that we accept, but it is also a life that we live.

"The wrath of God remains on him." This is the only place in John's gospel where the Greek term for "wrath" appears. The concept is common and is usually related to the term "judgment." "Belief," "obedience" and "wrath" are ongoing present realities that will be consummated in the future. This is the same tension that exists between the "already" and "the not yet" of the Kingdom of God.

Commentary on John 14:6 (ESV)

14:6 - "I am the way." In the Old Testament, biblical faith was spoken of as a lifestyle path. The title of the early church in the book of Acts was "the Way." Jesus was emphasizing that He was and is the only way to God. This is the theological essence of John's Gospel! Lifestyle good works are an evidence of personal faith, not a means of righteousness.

"The truth." The term "truth" in Greek philosophy had the connotation of "truth" versus "falsehood" or "reality" versus "illusion." However, these are Aramaic-speaking disciples who would have understood Jesus to be speaking in the Old Testament sense of truth which was "faithfulness" or "loyalty." Both "truth" and "life" characterize "the way." The term "truth" is often also used to describe divine activity in John's gospel.

"The life." In the Old Testament, a believer's lifestyle faith is spoken of as a path unto the life. All three of these terms are

related to lifestyle faith which is found only in personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

“No one comes to the Father except through me.” What a shocking claim! It is very restrictive but also very obvious that Jesus believed that only through a personal relationship with Himself can one know God. This has often been called the exclusivist scandal of Christianity. There is no middle ground here. This statement is true or Christianity is false!

Commentary on Acts 4:12 (ESV)

4:12 - “There is salvation in no one else.” This is a very strong statement. There is no salvation in Abraham or Moses. Here again we have the exclusive nature of the Christian faith on full display!

“There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” God has ordained this plan of salvation. Jesus is His answer to mankind’s spiritual need. God has no Plan B.

“Among men.” Notice again the universal element.

“By which we must be saved.” The Greek word translated “save” has two usages in the New Testament: first, physical deliverance and second, spiritual salvation. Humans need to be saved and Jesus is the only way for this to be accomplished. In fact, salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ had always been God the Father’s plan.

Commentary on 1 Corinthians 8:6 (ESV)

8:6 - “Yet for us there is one God.” This statement is the theological affirmation of monotheism. In the history of religion there have been several categories of beliefs about deity: animism (spiritual beings are related to natural processes or objects), polytheism (the existence of many gods), henotheism (many gods, but only one god for a particular tribe, nation, or geographical area), and monotheism (the existence of only one God). This Scripture asserts the existence of many spiritual beings, but only one true God. For those in the Judeo-Christian tradition, there is only one God who exists eternally in three persons.

“The Father.” This is a wonderful intimate, personal, familial title for deity. It emphasizes God’s immanence. This aspect of God can only be known by His self-revelation, and not by human philosophy or discovery. Although this familial title appears sparsely in the Old Testament, it was Jesus, the Son, who fully revealed this astonishing and intimate picture of who God is.

“From whom are all things.” This phrase is affirmation of God as the Creator.

“For whom we exist.” God made the world as a stage for humankind to have fellowship with Himself. Once the results of human rebellion have been overcome in our salvation and restoration through Christ, we understand our intended purpose. Once the image of God in mankind is restored through Christ, the intimate, personal fellowship of Eden is restored.

“One Lord, Jesus Christ.” The title “Lord” reflects an Old Testament translation of YHWH, which is from the Hebrew

verb “to be.” Calling Jesus Lord (*kurios* is the Greek term) is a way of affirming His deity and oneness with YHWH. Although Paul does not use the Greek term for God (*theos*) for Jesus in this passage, he does use it of Jesus elsewhere in his writings. There can be no doubt that in Paul’s mind Jesus is divine. Paul was a strict monotheist. He never qualifies how one God can eternally exist in three personal manifestations, but that is the obvious conclusion.

“Through whom are all things and through whom we exist.” Jesus was the Father’s agent in creation. In this passage we see the tension between our affirmation of monotheism and the New Testament revelation of the Trinity.

Commentary on 1 Timothy 2:5 (ESV)

2:5 - “For there is one God.” This phrase emphasizes monotheism. However, Jesus the Son and God the Father seem to be separate here. It is important to remember the New Testament assertion that Jesus is divine, but also a separate personality from the Father. The doctrine of the Trinity recognizes the unity of one divine essence and yet, the distinctiveness of the three Persons. The concept of the deity of the Son and the personality of the Spirit is explicit in the New Testament, but not fully worked out in orthodox theology until the third and fourth centuries. The term “trinity” is not found in the Bible, but the concept surely is. The grammar of this verse gives the theological reasons related to God’s exclusive salvation: there is only one God, we know that all humans are made in His image, there is only one way to God through the Messiah, and there is only one means of salvation, the finished sacrificial offering of the sinless Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. The one God has provided one way to be in fellowship with Him. Whosoever will may come, but they must come His way, through His provision, by faith in His Son as their only hope for acceptance.

“There is one mediator between God and men.” This is an example of the New Testament’s affirmation that faith in Jesus’ person and work is the only way to be right with the Father. The exclusive nature of Christianity is evident once again. This truth seems so out of place in our day of tolerance (with no absolutes), but if the Bible is the self-revelation of God, then believers must affirm these exclusive claims. We are not saying one denomination is the only way, but we are saying that faith in Jesus is the only way to God. The use of the term mediator has priestly connotations. A priest stood between a needy people and a holy God. Jesus Christ is our High Priest.

“The man Christ Jesus.” The emphasis of this verse is that Jesus is fully human and is still the only mediator between God and mankind. False teachers would have denied Jesus’ humanity. Another possibility is Paul’s view that Jesus was the second Adam, and therefore He is the origin of a new people, not Jew, not Greek, not male, not female, not slave, not free, but Christian.

Resource for Commentary: Robert James Utley’s *Study Guide Commentary Series* from Logos software.

STEP FIVE . . .

SUMMARIZING the message

It is assumed by most people today that there are many roads that lead to God. One common metaphor suggests that searching for God is like climbing a mountain. Everyone knows that there is not just one way to climb a mountain. There can be any number of paths one can take. In the same way, people tend to view the religions of the world as just different ways up the same mountain. Therefore, we are free to choose whichever way we want to take. All the different paths lead to the same God.

One of the most frequently asked questions about Christianity that requires a reasonable defense is, “Is Jesus is the only way?” Depending on what the inquirer means, we need to begin by defining what is meant by the only way - the only way to what? If one is looking for the four-fold path to wisdom (Buddhism) or learning about submission (Islam) or simply a fast way to get rich, Jesus is not the way. However, if the person is asking about how to enter the kingdom of God, then yes, Jesus is the *only* way.

Skeptics criticize Christianity as the one religion that didn't get the memo. Apparently, Christianity isn't playing nice in this religious sandbox. This exclusive claim of Christianity has been called narrow-minded, bigoted, and intolerant. Of course, the exclusiveness of our faith is one of the most extraordinary things Jesus ever said. In John 14:6 He stated, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” There is no part of His statement that is unclear. First, Jesus makes it clear that there is a Father God. Secondly, He says that there's only one way to the Father. Thirdly, Jesus says that the way to the Father is through Him. Jesus didn't say that He was *a* way, or *a* truth, but *the* way, *the* truth, and *the* life. No one can enter into a full relationship with God the Father apart from Him. If believing in Jesus is in a class by itself, then He cannot be placed on the same shelf with any other religious leader. When comparing Christianity with other religions, there are two myths that need to be addressed.

Myth #1: All Religions Basically Teach the Same Thing

The first myth that needs to be addressed is that all religions are basically the same. Some people say that the differences between the various religions is merely superficial but if you strip them down to their essentials, all religions fundamentally teach the same things. Indeed, there is some common ground with some basic values and moral positions. At the same time, there are significant differences that cannot be ignored. For instance, while other religious leaders offer wise sayings and helpful advice, only Jesus, the perfect Son of God, claimed to offer Himself as payment for our sins. No other religious leader ever claimed to be able to do that. Another example is that while other religious leaders may have said, “Follow me and I'll show you the different doors that lead to fulfillment, Jesus said, “I am the door that leads to eternal life.”

Myth #2: Every Religion is as Valid as any Other Religion

This myth asserts that even if there are differences between religions, they all have equal claims on the truth. This is the idea most people have in mind when they say, “You have your truth and I have mine.” An essential component of religious liberty is that anybody can believe whatever he or she wants to believe. Certainly, under our constitution, all religious viewpoints are equally protected. However, it is erroneous to conclude that every religion is equally valid.

Now if Christians were just claiming, “Our religion is the best one,” such a statement would be incomplete and narrow-minded. What Christianity actually says is that every person's pile of sin, that keeps us separated from God, has to be paid for. The claim of Christianity is that by virtue of Jesus' sinless life and His claim to be God, He is wholly qualified to be our substitute and our Savior. Jesus offers the only way for every single person on the planet to be right before God. The message of Christianity is lovingly exclusive. It proclaims to people everywhere, “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

STEP SIX . . .

EXPLORING the passage through discussion

1. Why do you suppose that the claim of Christianity to be the only way is such a common criticism?
2. Why is it a myth that needs to be challenged that all religions basically teach the same thing?
3. What are some essential differences between Christianity and the other major world religions (i.e. Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism)?
4. Why is it a myth that needs to be challenged that all religions are equally valid?
5. Why is Jesus unique among all the religious leaders who have ever lived?
6. How do you answer the charge that Christians who insist on Jesus being the only way to God are arrogant and snobbish?
7. Christians are not always known for addressing this topic with gentleness and respect. In what ways can our approach be more civil? How can we continue to grow in this area?

STEP SEVEN . . .

APPLYING the passage to my life

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the Word but doers ~ James 1:22

You're encouraged to journal your answers to the following questions in order to apply what you've learned this week.

1. How is God making Himself known to you?
2. What is going on beneath the surface of your life that Jesus is trying to change?
3. How is God calling you to serve your family, community, and world?

This Week's Memory Verse

⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life.
No one comes to the Father except through me."
John 14:6 (ESV)

THE MISSION OF LOUDONVILLE COMMUNITY CHURCH

We are committed to reaching and teaching people to become devoted followers of Jesus Christ, connecting them to one another and sending them to serve their families, communities and world.

10 CORE BELIEFS OF A DISCIPLE

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.

The Godhead *2 Corinthians 13:14*

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Deity and Sinlessness of Christ *Colossians 2:9*

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life.

The Sufficient Atonement of Christ *2 Corinthians 5:19-21*

We believe in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood.

The Resurrection and Return of Christ *Acts 1:3, 9-11*

We believe in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.

Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9*

We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful man, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential and that a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit *John 14:16*

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

Unity in Christ *Ephesians 2:14-17*

We believe in the spiritual unity of all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Eternity *Revelation 21:22-27*

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

We believe that everything we have or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES OF A DISCIPLE

Undiluted Worship *Matthew 22:37-40*

Loving the Lord God with all of our physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual vigor and, my neighbor as myself.

Constant Abiding *John 15:1-11*

Abiding in Christ in order to be faithful and bear fruit.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

Reading the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for daily life.

Desperate Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

Praying to God to know Him, laying requests before Him and, finding direction for daily life.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

Fellowshipping with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, other people's lives and, in the world.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

Using my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Total Forgiveness *Ephesians 4:30*

Practicing forgiving others as God has forgiven me in Christ.

Tangible Compassion *Matthew 25:31-46*

Showing compassion to those in need and so minister to Jesus Himself.

Generous Giving *2 Corinthians 8:7*

Giving away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

God Space *Ephesians 6:19-20*

Increasing the quantity and quality of our gospel conversations.

10 CORE VIRTUES OF A DISCIPLE

Love - a sincere affection for others *1 John 4:10-12*

Love is acting in someone else's interest no matter who they may be, no matter how you feel, and no matter what it costs.

Joy - a delight unaffected by circumstances *John 15:11*

An inner delight in God that is sustained in spite of the changing seasons of life.

Peace - an abiding sense of harmony *Philippians 4:6-7*

Relationships are free from friction. Positively, it describes harmonious relations with others in the church.

Patience - a willingness to stick with things *Proverbs 3:3-4*

Being willing to live with a difficult situation for a long time—even if things are slow to change or never change.

Kindness - a sense of compassion in the heart *Job 6:14*

An inner disposition that puts others at ease and out of which kind actions flow.

Goodness - a goodness that flows outwardly *1 Thess. 5:15*

Choosing to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Faithfulness - an unwavering loyalty *Psalm 26:3*

Being the kind of people who keep our word to one another.

Gentleness/Humility - an attitude of humility without any entitlement; a lack of self-awareness *Philippians 4:5; 2:3-4*

Gentleness is power and strength under God's control.

Humility is considering others above myself, if I consider myself at all.

Self-Control - an ability to direct your energy wisely

Titus 2:11-13

The strength to restrain our desires, emotions, and actions has to come from within rather than from some outside source.

Hope - a certainty of what is to come *Hebrews 6:19-20*

Coping with the hardships of life and with death because of hope in Christ.

Each week this Bible Study will feature either a core belief, practice or virtue vital for growing disciples.

OT in 52
(52 weeks through the Old Testament)

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE READING IN A YEAR

Monday, May 23 thru Saturday, May 28
1 Kings 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-19, 20-21, 22-2 Kings 1

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