

Series – Questions (2026)

Questions 2026 – Week 1

Q: If we don't have a copy of the original writings, how did the Bible become written Scripture we have today?

2Tim 3:16, Matt 22:29, Matt 23:33-35, 2Peter 1:20, et.al.

Matt 22:29 - Jesus replied: You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.

2 Timothy 3:16 - All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness

2 Peter 1:20 - Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation.

- Bible is a collection of stories: History, Law, Wisdom, Prophecy, Gospel, Church, Apocalyptic
- Captured: Oral repetition, Written (parchments), translated, collected (Vulgate), printed...
- WHY Trustworthy: Tedious replication, honor/duplication, verification, validation over time...
- Reg: Scriptures – Jesus & Paul validated them AFTER the oral tradition (Matt 23:33, Matt 22:29) ... that's why we accept the Scriptures that are written for us today.
- Reg: Translations – by Jesus' time, Scriptures were recorded in Hebrew, Aramaic, and writings began to be recorded in Greek, along with Pentecost! -- so it was already being "translated" into languages for others to understand.
- BLESSING & PROBLEM – Bless: oldest, most authenticated, proven True, validated by Jesus, requires response (Prob: requires our desire, humility and transformation/change)

What's the Biblical stance on cremation?

1Sam 31:12, Amos 2:1, 6:10, 1Cor 13:3, 2Cor 5:1-4

1Cor 13:3 - If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

2 Cor 5:1 - Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

- General references to burning bodies/cremation – Old Testament was a dishonor to burn bones
- History of both OT & NT had bodies cremated, including martyrs, God resurrects souls, not bodies
- 2Cor 5:1 - Body is a tent – not permanent (including bones). Resurrected in new bodies.
- Bible doesn't have a clear stance on it (silent) Not a customary practice of Christianity, but not a sin.

Q: 2Cor 5:10 says we have judgement for what we've done whether good or bad ... but also Bible says we are forgiven and sins washed away? Seems inconsistent ...

2Cor 5:10, 1John 1:7, Romans 4:7

2Cor 5:10 - For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

1 John 1:7 - But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

Romans 4:7 - Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;

1 John 2:2 - He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

- God is 100% Just ... every sin must be accounted for and paid for
- Sin's 3 outcomes: Guilt w/ God, Shame w/ ourselves, and Consequences with ourselves & others
- God will call ALL PEOPLE to account for ALL Sin/Sins ... and Jesus will stand next to those who surrendered to His Blood and claim payment (propitiation) for us
- So BOTH Justice & Mercy/Grace are 100% achieved by the Blood of Christ & our surrender

Q: Is it a sin to Divorce? According to the Bible Is God against Divorce? When is it acceptable?

Mal 2:16, Matt 5:32, Matt 19:1-12, 1Cor 7:1-40, Heb 13:4, Eph 5:22-33, Hosea 1-3

Matt 19:8-9 - Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."

- Divorce is the breaking of a covenant between you and God (not just your spouse)
- Adultery is the act of **BREAKING** that covenant! (Lust is emotional adultery)
- God **hates** (vs. condemns) divorce because of what it does to people, to children/families, to communities/nations, and more importantly, what it does between you and Him.
- Only **grounds** for divorce is actual adultery - .
- Separation is not directly addressed but seen in the Scriptures to avoid physical harm and work to resolve marital brokenness. (David & Michal, Hosea & Gomer)
- If an unbeliever leaves, you can release the person. Permit God to work in their lives. (1Cor 7)
- CAUTION: God also knows your heart – He sees your true motives and behaviors.)

Q: If Jesus is God in the flesh and the Holy Spirit is God in spirit form, what is God the Father in the form of? i.e. (teen: where did God come from?)

Gen 1:1, Rev 1:8, 22:13, John 3:31, Eph 1:21

John 3:31 - The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all.

- Great Question ... I have a human answer (out of a human perspective ... opinion)
- Challenge of “understanding” (Concrete v. Abstract v. Spiritual)
- Gen 1:1 – God is outside creation, not in a created order, beyond ‘existence’
- Rev 1:8 – God IS the Alpha & Omega .. everything begins & ends in God – like a ring/circle
- God doesn’t have a Father because He existed outside of creation (beyond our mind’s ability)
- John 3:31 – God is above all, through all, in all –
- Answer: Jesus is Flesh, Holy Ghost is Spirit ... and Father is Mind
- Consider: His MIND created all of the universe, He is BEYOND embodiment (can’t see his size/greatness) ...

1Cor 2:10-16 - For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may **know** the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. **For who has known the mind** of the Lord, that he will instruct Him? But we have the **mind** of Christ.

Questions 2026 – Week 2

Q: When is the church going to grow bigger?

1Cor 3:6, Acts 2:47

1Cor 3:6 - I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow.

Acts 2:47 – And the LORD added to their number daily those who were being saved.

- As much as we try (and work/stress/care) ... we can only create environments for God to work in our lives and in our church. God grows it.
- Seasons of life: Growth, Recovery, Pruning, death (just like Jesus' life)
- Acts 2:42-47 – we DEVOTE ourselves to God, care for each other, praise/worship Him, give our best (excellence) using our gifts, keep producing fruit of the Spirit – God will grow it!
- PRAISE THE LORD – He has NEVER stopped growing Journey (even when He prunes, He keeps bringing more people to hear about Jesus and grow in their faith!)

Q: When someone, regardless of the relationship to you, hurts you over and over and over again and lives a dangerous and sinful life, do I continue to forgive them and have a relationship with them or not?

Job 11:6, Ps 119:12, Rom 12:19, Matt 5:38-39, Matt 6:9-15, Matt 18:35

Matthew 18:35 - This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.

Matthew 5:38-39 - You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

Romans 12:19 - Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

- Recovering from hurt has several steps: Confrontation, Confession, Forgiveness, Reconciliation, Restoration (Trust) ...
- Jesus – Forgive, as the Lord forgave you... Forgive 70 x 7 ...
- Forgiving means: Turn it over to God. Every time tempted to remember, turn it over.
- Forgiveness makes it God's duty to discipline ... and allows us to have a relationship (even if it's distant or limited). Forgiveness does NOT mean trust – it means releasing the power.
- **Matt 18:35** – Forgiving from your head helps process the event, but forgiving from your heart releases the hurt. Work on releasing the hurt by praying for their blessing (from the heart).
- We are blessed with MEMORY – to stop repetition, to realize our forgiveness, to teach others about the consequences of sin ... but it's NOT a blessing when we use it to control others!
- Secret about forgiveness: when you remember, pray true blessing on the person! (Satan hates that! Defeats the point of his temptation – he wants division)

Q: How will I know if God is calling me to do something— go somewhere? In the scripture, we read disciples/apostles “sent by the Holy Spirit”(such as in Acts 13). How can I know if God is sending me to work somewhere, do something? What if I did research and made inquiries and their goals doesn't fully align with my personal goals? (2) Eventually our will starts to align with God's, however, we are still human and susceptible to worldly desires— how can I know it's what God wants and not me trying to say it's God?

Micah 6:8, Matt 7:24ff, Matt 28:18-20, John 13:34-35, Ps 119:105, Phil 4:7, 1John 2:16

Micah 6:8 - He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

- Big Question – **General Will & Specific Will** – Bible tells General will, Spirit gives us specific
- **Hint: TRUST GOD** to lead you ... and **AVOID Sin/disobedience/lust/selfishness** detours
- **Hint: Daily actions/decisions lead to God's direction. What do you know to do today?**

Psalms 119:105 - Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

- Observation: The less you are in His Word/Prayer, the more difficult it is to discern His Will.
 - o You say: I don't have time, too hard, etc. --- how much time will WRONG decisions cost?
- Opt Teach: How to “Ask God” in prayer.

Q: How is the money getting used that we donate to Elevate?

Gen 4, Gen 14:20, Lev 27:30, Mal 3:8-10, Matt 23:23+, Mark 12:44, 2Cor 9:7

- Recent ELEVATE campaign – two key purposes/implementations:
 - o GROW the Generosity of the church (all people improve generosity to Kingdom)
 - o Move back to “ONE FUND” (Journey) for running Ministries/Missions/Facilities
 - o WHY? Every \$\$ supports all three (instead of a dozen funds that restrict church)
 - o WHY? Invest in Facilities to create a long-term home for Journey & grow future
- Two-thirds of the 3.4MM goal goes toward our Ministry & Missions (including payroll, mortgage, missions support, outreach, childrens, students, worship, adults, etc.)
- One-third went toward downpayments for 4 suites last year, and modifications this year
- We increased that commitment by 200+K in April, and hope to use that for facilities growth
- B/C of ELEVATE – more capacity, stabilizing costs, increase in mission activities, etc.
- The Elders supervise & review the budget monthly, and track our cash flow weekly – supervising me & staff activities.

2Cor 9:7 - Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Q: What are the duties of elders, staff & members at Journey?

1Tim 3:1, Titus 1:5-9, Acts 6:2-4, 1Tim 6:20, 1Cor 12, Eph 4:11-13

Acts 6:2-4 – (Select 7 men to serve the people) ... so that we may devote ourselves to Word & Prayer.

1Tim 6:20 – Guard what has been entrusted to your care.

- We are a NT “independent” Christian Church – Elder protected / Staff led
- Elder duties: Vision for the church (budget), Over-Shepherds of the church body (guidelines/expectations), Supervision of the Senior Pastor, Model/example for church
- Staff duties: Strategy for ministries, Lead teams, Train servants
- Congregation duties: grow devotion, use gifts, serve body, protect unity of church
- KEY: Different ages, backgrounds and church sizes model eldership differently to follow God’s direction and care for their church families. We

Questions 2026 – Week 3

Question 1: The one question I always had is how did God become God? I believe he is but have always wondered about it?

- The biblical answer is: God did not become God. God has always been God.
Psalm 90:2 says, “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.”
That means God has no beginning and no end. He was not created. He was not formed. He did not grow into being God. He has always existed as God.
- In **Exodus 3:14**, when Moses asked God for His name, God said, “I AM WHO I AM.” That is powerful because God does not say, “I was made,” or “I became.” He says, “I AM.” God is the eternal One. He simply is.
- **Genesis 1:1** says, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” Notice the Bible does not begin by explaining where God came from. It begins with God already existing. Before there was time, space, earth, stars, people, or history — God already was.
- **John 1:3** says, “All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” So if something was made, God made it. But God Himself was not made.
- This is hard for us to understand because everything we know has a beginning. We were born. Houses are built. Trees grow. Even stars have a beginning. But God is not like creation. God is the Creator.
- **Isaiah 55:8–9** reminds us, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.” There are things about God that are bigger than our minds, but that does not mean they are untrue. It means God is greater than us.
- **Revelation 1:8** says, “‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.’”

So the answer is: God did not become God. God has always been God.

He is eternal.

He is uncreated.

He is self-existing.

He is the Creator of all things.

And because He has always been God, we can trust Him with everything that begins, changes, and ends in our lives.

Question 2: What are some modern day physical evidence of Christ active work in the modern day world we live in today?

- Biblically, Jesus is not absent. He is risen, reigning, and still working through His Spirit and His people.
- **John 14:12 ESV** says, “Whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do...”
- **1 Corinthians 12:27 ESV** says, “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”
- So one of the clearest physical evidences of Christ’s work today is **changed lives**.
When a broken person finds healing, when an addict becomes free, when a bitter heart learns to forgive, when a marriage is restored, when someone turns from sin and follows Jesus — that is evidence that Christ is still working.
- **2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV** says, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.”
Another evidence is **the love of the church**. Jesus said:
John 13:35 ESV
“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”
So when believers serve the poor, forgive enemies, care for the hurting, give generously, pray for the sick, disciple the next generation, and carry one another’s burdens — the world is seeing the hands and feet of Jesus.
- Another evidence is **endurance in suffering**. When Christians go through pain but still worship, still trust, still forgive, and still follow Jesus, that points to a strength beyond human strength.
2 Corinthians 4:7 ESV says, “We have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.”

Question 3: Why do we not sing hymns? Do we line up what we are singing with what we are teaching for the week?

First, I want to say this clearly: we do sing hymns, but we may not sing them as regularly or in the full traditional way some of us grew up with.

- The Bible says in Colossians 3:16 that we are to sing “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” So we believe there is beauty and value in the songs that have carried the faith for generations. Hymns remind us that we are not the first people to worship Jesus. We are joining the worship of believers who came before us. At the same time, we also believe God is still giving the church new songs. Psalm 96:1 says, “Oh sing to the LORD a new song.” So we want to honor the old, but also make room for the new. That’s why sometimes we use hymns as tagged songs — maybe a chorus or a familiar part — to help connect generations and transition people into worship. It is not because we are against hymns. It is because we are trying to lead the whole church, across different ages and backgrounds, to worship Jesus together.
- Now, do we line up every song with the teaching every week? When we can, yes, that is helpful. But it is not always possible or even the main goal. The main purpose of singing is not just to match the sermon theme. The main purpose of singing is to worship God. Jesus said in John 4:24, “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” So every song we choose should be biblical, Christ-centered, and helpful for the church to worship in spirit and truth. Some weeks the songs may connect directly to the message. Other weeks, the songs may simply help us lift our eyes to God, remember the gospel, surrender our hearts, and prepare us to hear His Word.

So the goal is not old songs versus new songs. The goal is faithful worship.

We want songs with truth.

We want songs that point to Jesus.

We want songs the church can sing together.

And we want every generation to know: worship is not about our preference first — it is about God’s glory.

We honor the hymns, we welcome new songs, but our highest goal is not preference — it is worshiping God in spirit and truth.

Question 4: Can I be a member of the church band?

Our worship team is not just for people who love music. It is a ministry team that uses musical gifts to serve God and lead the church in worship.

- **Psalm 33:3** says, “Play skillfully...” so skill matters. But heart matters too. Worship is not about performance or attention; it is about humility, surrender, and service. **Romans 12:1** says to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. Worship ministry is not about performance, attention, or platform. It is about surrender, humility, and service.
- That is why we have auditions. They help us discern readiness, skill, teachability, and where someone may best serve. Our worship team culture is important. We come prepared. We are not late. We rehearse with excellence. We serve with humility. **Colossians 3:23** says, “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.”
- And if someone is not ready yet, that does not mean they are not valuable. It may simply be a season of growth and preparation.
- We are not just building a band. We are building worshipers who lead others to Jesus.

Question 5: Realizing that God told the Jews in the OT not to have tattoos, is it okay now to get a tattoo?

Leviticus 19:28 says, “You shall not make any cuts on your body for the dead or tattoo yourselves: I am the LORD.”

- So yes, God gave Israel a command not to tattoo themselves. But we also have to read it in context. In the Old Testament, God was separating Israel from pagan nations and their practices, especially practices connected to idolatry, mourning rituals, and false worship.
- As Christians today, we are not under the Old Testament law in the same covenant way Israel was. We are under Christ. But that does not mean we ignore the Old Testament. We learn God’s heart from it.
- So is getting a tattoo automatically a sin today? I would not say the Bible clearly teaches that every tattoo is sinful. But I would say every Christian should approach it with wisdom, prayer, and surrender.
- **1 Corinthians 6:19–20** says our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, and we are to glorify God with our bodies. So the question is not just, “Can I get one?” The better question is, “Will this honor God?”
- **1 Corinthians 10:31** says, “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

- So practically, ask yourself:
Why do I want it?
What does it represent?
Will it honor Christ?
Will I still be glad I have this years from now?
Could it hurt my witness? Could it hurt my testimony?
Is it connected to rebellion, vanity, worldliness, or something ungodly?
Am I at peace before God, or am I trying to justify something?
- **Romans 14:23** says, “For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.” So if your conscience is not clear, wait. At the same time, we should be careful not to judge someone’s heart just because they have tattoos. A tattoo does not automatically mean someone is far from God, and no tattoo does not automatically mean someone is close to God. God looks at the heart.
- So my answer would be: a tattoo is not automatically sinful for a Christian today, but it is also not something to treat lightly. It should be prayerful, wise, honoring to God, and not connected to sin, rebellion, or idolatry.
- Christian freedom does not mean, “I can do whatever I want.”
- Christian freedom means, “Even my choices belong to Jesus.”
- The better question is not, “Can I get a tattoo?” but “Can I honor God with this decision?”

Question 6: How to define the move of the Holy Spirit?

- The Holy Spirit is not just a feeling in the room. He is the presence and power of God working in us, through us, and among us.
- In **John 16:8**, Jesus said the Spirit would convict the world “concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.” So one evidence of the Spirit’s move is conviction — people becoming aware of sin and turning back to God.
- In **John 16:14**, Jesus said of the Spirit, “He will glorify me.” So a true move of the Holy Spirit will always make much of Jesus. It will not glorify a preacher, a worship team, a personality, or an emotional moment. It will point people to Christ.
- In **Acts 2**, when the Holy Spirit moved, people were filled, the gospel was preached, sinners repented, people were baptized, and the church was formed. So the Spirit’s move is not just goosebumps; it produces repentance, salvation, worship, unity, generosity, mission, and boldness.
- **Galatians 5:22–23** says the fruit of the Spirit is “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” So we should not only ask, “Did people feel something?” We should ask, “Is the fruit of the Spirit growing in us?”
- Now, we should not put the Holy Spirit in a box. **John 3:8** says, “The wind blows where it wishes.” The Spirit can move in powerful, surprising, and supernatural ways.
- But we also need wisdom. **1 John 4:1** says, “Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits.” Not everything spiritual is from the Holy Spirit. Not every emotional experience is God’s presence. Not every loud moment is revival.
- A true move of the Holy Spirit will agree with Scripture, glorify Jesus, produce repentance, build up the church, and bear godly fruit.
- **1 Corinthians 14:33** says, “God is not a God of confusion but of peace.” And **verse 40** says, “All things should be done decently and in order.” So the Spirit can move powerfully, but He does not need disorder to prove He is present.
- Practically, when we ask God to move, we are asking Him to awaken hearts, convict sin, heal wounds, save the lost, empower believers, restore worship, give spiritual gifts, and make us more like Jesus.

So I would define the move of the Holy Spirit this way:

The move of the Holy Spirit is when God’s presence and power actively work in people, leading them to Jesus, convicting them of sin, transforming their character, strengthening the church, and sending them on mission.

We welcome the Spirit’s power. We test everything by Scripture. We look for the fruit of Jesus.

And we stay humble, because the Holy Spirit does not move to entertain us — He moves to transform us.

Question 7: What is the church's position on UFO & UAP findings now that credible sources like the US Gov.org have released multiple accounts?

- First, we should begin with this biblical truth: God is the Creator of everything.
- **Genesis 1:1** says, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." **Psalms 19:1** says, "The heavens declare the glory of God." **Colossians 1:16** says that all things were created through Christ and for Christ, "in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible."
- So as Christians, we do not have to be afraid of the size of the universe. If there is something out there that we do not understand, it is still not bigger than God. God is not threatened by discovery.
- At the same time, we should be wise. Just because something is unidentified does not mean it is automatically extraterrestrial. Unidentified simply means we do not yet know what it is. As believers, we should not be gullible, fearful, or obsessed. **1 Thessalonians 5:21** says, "Test everything; hold fast what is good."
- So our posture should be humble curiosity, not fear and not speculation.
- Now, could God create other life? Yes, God can create anything He wants. We do not want to put God in a box. But we also should not speak where Scripture is silent. **Deuteronomy 29:29** says, "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us."

Practically, Christians should not build their faith around UAPs, conspiracy theories, or government reports. Our faith is built on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So if more information comes out, we should respond with calm faith. We investigate carefully. We avoid fear. We reject deception. We do not worship creation. We worship the Creator.

Now some people ask, "If there are aliens or other intelligent beings, would they need a Savior too?"

That is a fair question. My answer would be: if God created them, then God knows their condition. If they have sinned, then yes, they would need redemption. But we have to be careful, because the Bible does not clearly tell us whether there are other created beings like that, whether they have fallen, or how God would deal with them.

What Scripture does tell us is that Jesus is not just Lord over earth — He is Lord over all creation.

Colossians 1:16 says that all things were created through Him and for Him, "in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible." **Philippians 2:10–11** says that at the name of Jesus "every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth," and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

So I would not say there is "another version of Jesus" on another planet. There is only one Jesus — the eternal Son of God, Lord over all.

John 1:14 says, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." **Hebrews 10:10** says that Jesus offered Himself "once for all." So we should not create doctrines where Scripture is silent.

But here is a thought: maybe if there are other beings out there, they already know who the Creator is. Maybe they are not coming here to attack us. Maybe, just maybe, when Christ is fully revealed as King, they too will recognize His glory.

Revelation 5:13 says, "And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, 'To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might

So whether UAPs are natural phenomena, human technology, misidentified objects, or something we still do not understand, our confidence remains the same:

God created all things.

Christ rules over all things.

Scripture gives us what we need for salvation.

And mystery should lead us not to fear, but to worship.

Additional Questions

Q: How can you tell the difference between your flesh speaking and God speaking?

Gal 5:19-23, Rom 8:5-6, Phil 4:4-9

Galatians 5:19-23 – The works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, and envy.

Phil 4:7 – And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- God designed us with the capacity to think with our minds, hearts and souls. Often, we tend to lean on either our mind or heart to make decisions.
- Morality is about listening to our soul as the dominant source for decisions.
- God speaks in UNISON through His Word (mind), through Prayer (soul), through circumstances (heart) and through the counsel of believers (church).
- My practice: 3 days sitting on a decision and discerning if my SOUL has peace afterwards

Q: Is cursing a sin? Is drinking a sin?

Is it a sin to drink alcohol every once in a while but not get drunk, because in the Bible it says drink and be merry?

Ecc1 9:7 & John 2 // Eph 5:18, Prov 23:21, Lk 21:34, Rom 13:13, 1Pet 4:3

Romans 13:13-14 - Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.

¹⁴ Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature

- Alcohol/Drugs/etc. – Maintain sober-mindedness
- If thinking/behavior is diminished by anything, don't do it! (Doesn't take much... some have built tolerance)
- If behavior and attitude changes – means the mind is not same
- Examples: Noah (drunk), King Xerxes (drunk), Jesus on cross (avoided it)

Regarding Cussing/Words:

Ex 20:7, Ecc1 5:2-3, Matt 5:35-37, 5:24 "Raca/you fool", Matt 12:34, James 3, Eph 4:29

Ephesians 4:29 - Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

- Words – language is not “moral”, attitudes/intent is! Words have great power, use With caution. Words reveal the heart. If you're looking to exert power, Attract attention, prove worth, express anger, damage person – words are WRONG.
- Words reveal heart... better clean that HEART up/then mouth!
- Note: Substitute words are just hiding behind a loophole for the real thing
- Note: Concerned about language, but also the sarcasm, political backbiting, trash talk
 - o (parenting – not just punish behavior, but **add** char dvp)...
 - o IL: bad word... write 100x “I will not...”
- BOTH: Behavior issues that demonstrate what we truly love! (Selfishness or God?)

Q: Why do people say Jesus forgave you and our sins are forgiven but still not everyone makes it to heaven?

Technically doesn't that mean not everyone is forgiven?

1John 1:8-10, John 14:6, Acts 16:31, John 3:16, et.al.

1John 1:8-10 – If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

- Jesus **CHOSE** to forgive us and made propitiation (payment) for all sin on the cross
- BUT, it's still our choice whether to accept His payment and Believe **ON** Him as Lord
- So, everyone is offered forgiveness, but if we don't accept it and surrender to His mercy we have not gained His Spirit to be saved.

Q: What would happen if someone committed murder or did terrible acts in their life but then changed it around and believed in God or even not believed in God but became a better person? are they forgiven or not? What happens if someone passes away without getting to know God? Maybe their family was not religious, they were too young, they believed in something else due to culture, did not have resources, etc.?

What's the TRUTH about Salvation?

John 3:16, Acts 2:38, Mk 16:15, Matt 7:21-23, Mark 8:34-35, Heb 6:1-12, 1J 1:9, 1J 4:7-10, John 14:6

John 17:3 Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

- Salvation == knowing The Father & Jesus His Son (Tree of Knowledge v. Tree of Life)
- **GT: Salvation is not a religious action, it is a relational surrender (opp of actions)**
- If you don't know Jesus, you will not be saved (Rom 1, John 3:16, John 14:6, Mt 7:21-23)
- Surrender is about Belief – putting your trust In Him (John 3:16, Mark 8:34-35, et.al.)
- The act of Surrender is Repentance & Baptism (Acts 2:38) – surrenders heart/body/life

So what about everyone who doesn't hear? Judged by what you KNOW! (Good news for babies/young children, developmentally challenged, people who never hear, ... maybe.)

- Rom 2:12+ - those who sin apart from the law ... consciences will bear witness
- Rev 20:12 – the dead will be judged by what they have done... ALL books opened
- Rom 10:14-15 – how can they hear unless someone preaches?

What about all these "Christians" who do so many bad things?

- Matt 7 – not everyone who wears the Christian jersey are really believers!
- 1Cor 3:14-15 – every man's works will be judged... and burned up. He will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

Q: Is it a sin or biblically not allowed for women to be pastors or head of the church?

Women's leadership in the church -- Why do some churches interpret the Bible so differently? Some women have to dress modestly, including no adornments of jewelry. Some men have to be clean shaven. Some people don't eat shellfish...**RULES!**

1Cor 14, 1Tim 2, 1Cor 11:5 & 1Cor 12, Acts 18:26, 1Tim 3, Titus 2, Eph 5:21

- One of the most challenging discussions in Scripture – because it is also tied with culture.
- Verses create unrest, and **REQUIRES** Interpretation to implement! (Which creates **RULES**)
- **SCOTT:** We want to get this right from God (not from culture)

(Blunt: Verse that gives heartache) 1 Timothy 2:12-13 - I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

Eph 5:21 – Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

- Women led in both OT & NT in various ways: Deborah, Ruth, Esther, Bathsheba
- Women served in various roles, using gifts including prophecy/teaching, – 1Cor 11:5, ch12
- Women taught others (including women AND men) – Acts 18:26, et.al.
- **MOST IMPORTANT** – Jesus sent women to speak (preach) --- John 4, John 20

(Being Bold & Transparent) Journey's Interpretation of this Passage:

One role that is reserved for men: Eldership (authority over church) – 1Tim 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9

Claims of Paul: Women not to teach or have authority over a man. (1Cor 14, 1Tim 2)

1. Your role in the church should not trump your role in the home. (That's your first calling)
2. Your role in the church should not trump others in their role. (men called to Lead = Go First!)
3. **KEY:** Your role in the church should not trump God in His role. (we are servants!)

What about churches and Christians that Differ in these roles?

- John 17:20-23 - Act in a way to bring to complete unity (not to dictate your authority)
- Phil 3:15 - When difference in opinions, let God lead us to clarity
- 1Tim 2:1, 2:8 - Do the **FIRST** thing **FIRST**: pray for the leaders.

Q: Most people find God when struggling with something? Is this God truly helping them or is this people just coping? Why does God allow people to suffer if he has the power to stop it or to not let it happen in general? This goes for mental health struggles, war, murder and much more?

Why are babies born with terminal diseases? Why did God create Autism, ADHD, Downs Syndrome, and other physical & biological challenges (some call them disorders)? Why does cancer exist?

Why does it seem that as Christians some have more of a struggle in life than others seem to not?

How can the Lord allow so much evil & violence against the innocent? (babies, children, elderly)

BIG QUESTION OF LIFE! Why does God allow suffering?

Gen 35-50, 1Sam 22+, Daniel 1, Prov 28:14, Job, Lamentations

Before giving Scriptures & Explanation:

- You can't "explain away" a 'heart' issue with a 'mind' answer – Suffering has a story, and it involves pain of the heart. The mind may understand logically, but doesn't change the pain.
- Best answer to grief is not usually logic (see Job). It is to Hurt with them and BE with them.

Let's be Clear about Blessing & Suffering:

Blessing is NOT the absence of suffering – Blessing = hand of God to grow us into His Character & Likeness - He uses BOTH victories & sufferings

- Gen 35+ - Joseph, 12 years as captive/prison to learn to lead nations thru a famine
- 1Sam22+ - David, on run for years from Saul, yet spared Saul's life, learn to lead a nation
- Dan 1+ - Daniel, served pagan rulers, faced death, saved Israel & prepared us for End Times
- Revelations – Greatest Tribulation of all, yet opens door to Eternal Life with God.

Prov 28:14 - Blessed is the man who always fears the LORD, but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble.

What to do with Suffering?

- Learn from it (Psalm 119) – It was good to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees.
- Do something about it (Ex 3:7-10) – I have heard their misery, now GO!
- Pray over it (Ps 122:6, Jer 29:7) – Pray for the peace of Jerusalem ... Pray for your city

Q: Why do I believe during church but once I leave nothing makes sense and I am filled with more questions that make me not want to believe?

Why the Bible is so hard to understand, to explain to others?

James 1:22-25, 2Cor 3:13-16, Ps 119, Acts 2:38

James 1:22-25 – xxx

2 Cor 3:13-16 - We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

- Must receive Holy Spirit in you to understand the mind/heart of God
- Scripture is "veiled" UNTIL we surrender our lives to Jesus (receive Christ to remove)
- Can't have what we don't study – "Word is a lamp/light..."

Q: What's the point of babies being baptized? They don't know what it even is.

Is it bad to have doubts about someone who is baptized?

Mark 1:9-11, Acts 2:38, 1Sam 1:21-28, Luke 2:22-40, Matt 7:1-6

- Regarding baptism, all baptisms in the Scriptures were done at the person's choice (i.e. repentance from sin and choice to surrender to God)
- Dedications were done since Hannah (including Jesus) from the Mosaic Law to dedicate their children to God. The parents choose this for the child and raise them up in the Lord's teaching.
- Journey: We practice child dedication and then adult baptism by immersion in the tradition of the New Testament. (as chosen by the individual)

On doubting the salvation of a person baptized:

- Jesus warned us about judging others (for any reason): "Do not judge..." (Matt 7:1-5)
- Baptism doesn't change our behaviors, but it is a visible identity with Jesus and permits the Holy Spirit to take up residence in our lives (Acts 2:38). From that point on, the person can be developed by God to live a more righteous life.
- Jesus did add Matt 7:6 – "Don't give dogs what is sacred..." – don't treat as holy a person who is not accepting holiness yet, so let God grow them before following them.

Q: Why would he create Satan if he knew he would be evil? Doesn't that basically mean God created evil?

Where do evil things come from?

Gen 1-3, Gen 6-8, Jer 7:31, 19:5, 32:35

Jeremiah 7:31 - They have built the high places of Topheth in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to burn their sons and daughters in the fire--something I did not command, nor did it enter my mind.

- God is Creator of all GOOD things (Gen 1), but Not always the creator of everything!
 - Humans create – Gen 3, et.al. – our sin created a broken world (even 'advances')
 - Satan creates – Mt 16:23 – creates evil, temptations, failure/sin
- Things we introduce as "improvements" have negative side effects... (ex. Cancer, health issues related to our use or creation of improvements – gas/smog, etc.)

- By creating GOOD, God in essence provided the possibility of evil. But it was Satan who CHOSE to pursue evil, and it is humans who also choose this.

Q: Were Adam and Eve first life on earth and if so, why are we taught evolution and why does it contradict the Bible? How old is our earth, really?

What does the Bible say about dinosaurs? About evolution of man? Is Evolution or the Bible right?

Dinosaurs: Job 3:8, 40:15, 41:1, Psa 74:14, 104:26

- Dinosaurs existed, appeared to be mostly wiped out in the Flood

Age of Earth / Evolution v. Creation: Gen 1-3, Gen 6-8, Matt 19:4, Matt 23:35

- Creation story from God – is not a scientific explanation, but a structural & spiritual explanation
- How Old is the earth?

- Biblical terms: 6000-8000 years old (assuming the literal story were accurate)
- Natural terms: Billions of years old (assuming the Timestamping model were accurate)
- MAJOR Discrepancy? Maybe not:

Why might you trust Science: Science may fit into God's description

- TRUTH: God does not lie - Evening/Morning & Day were his words
- NOTE: God does not explain the duration between days (ages?), nor how long a day was BEFORE the sun & moon created (4th day), nor how long Adam & Eve lived before the sin
- NOTE: God can start a creation at any point in time – ie. Appearance of millions of years. Would even make sense that He started it at a certain point to establish the life cycle.
- NOTE: Flood was unique in style to any flood we have ever seen – would have affected globe differently than typical floods.
- Scientific efforts – the more we study, the evidence points toward a “intelligent designer”
- Science has always competed with faith, until the complete data shows truth & compliments it

Why you might trust the Bible: God/Jesus is the Truth (He cannot lie)

- Gen 1 – If God told this to Moses (evening/morning), He neither lied or deceived (sins!)
- Matt 19 – Jesus validates that there WAS a beginning & a Creator of men
- Matt 23:35 – blood of Abel to Zechariah – Jesus validates the history/story of Bible

Q: Why did God create us even though He knew what would happen? or did he not know?

Why does God continue to permit it?

Psa 119:67,71,75, Gen 11, Heb 12:5-11

Psalm 119:67,71 - Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word.... It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees.

- God foreknew the choices we would make and yet loved us enough to create us anyways.
- While many will not CHOOSE God, His love gave us opportunity to exist and live.
- God permits our choices and pleasures/sufferings....
- For our dependence – Gen 11, struggles teach us our need for God
- For our development – Psa 119, serving needs grows a heart for God
- For our deliverance – Heb 12, et.al., overcoming brings us into fellowship with God

Q: What happens to someone who commits suicide? Do they go to hell even though they already suffered?

What does the bible say about killing oneself versus having to suffer torture/martyrdom, etc.?

Dan 3:16-18, 1Sam 31:4, Rev 9:6

Daniel 3:16-18 - Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

- Many examples of people of faith dying by suicide before facing enemy – but not commended.
- Other examples of suicide: Samson, Ahithophel, Zimri, Judas
- Suicide is a sin... it is murdering yourself. God clearly condemns that sin, but also forgives ALL sins on the cross (before all of us who live today).
- We will all face judgment at our death, and God knows the heart of each person. He will judge.
- Committing suicide is no different than any other sin when it comes to salvation, He will forgive the sins of His followers. That doesn't give us freedom to commit murder on ourselves, but we can take solace in the fact that "He is faithful & just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness..."

Q: Can your relative that has passed on actually watch over you on earth?

Can our loved ones in heaven see us? Will I recognize my family and friends in heaven?

1Sam 28:15, Luke 16:19-31, Matt 18:10, Luke 22:43, Acts 12:7-11, Job 1:8, Matt 17:5

1Samuel 28:15 - Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?"

Luke 16:27-28 - He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

- There is nothing in the Bible that demonstrates a human watching over people on earth.
- The only stories related to people in eternity show that they are not involved with actions on earth
 - Samuel being called upon by Saul/witch of Endor
 - Parable of Lazarus and the rich man
- There is involvement of angels watching over God's Kingdom (though questionable if they are individually assigned)... see Matt 18:10, Luke 22:43
- Souls watching over us has no power to help, but Jesus / Holy Spirit / Angels bring great power!
- Remember: Greater is He who is IN YOU ... instead of counting on a dead relative, count on God's Spirit!

Q: How can I control my fleshly choices?

Why are humans so predisposed toward sin? Why does it seem we have to battle our "human nature" to do what is right? It's so easy to be selfish, jealous, angry etc. God created us in his image but why are we so flawed?

Gen 3:17, Psalms 51:5, Rom 7:18-25, Jer 17:9, Matt 15:18-19, Rom 3:23, Rom 3:10-18, Rom 12:1-2

Romans 7:24-25 - What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Romans 12:1-2 – Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

- When sin entered the world, it entered all creation (our sin nature born from Adam & Eve)
- The sin-nature is our attraction to Pride, Selfishness, Sin (Lust of eyes, lust of flesh, pride of life)
- We have a Sin-Nature, and Sinful Behaviors. All come from the HEART (accdg to Jesus)
- The Cross covered our sin-nature, our surrender to Christ as Savior covers our sin behaviors!
- Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we must allow God to 'renew our minds' ... meaning we:
 - Seek His mind & heart over our own desires
 - Change our thinking
 - Develop a desire (habit) for the holy
 - Practice righteous habits as replacement to the sin
- It is not a one-time fix, but a lifetime of transformation.

Q: How do you grieve over losing a loved one while trying not to be angry with God? I feel like grief can make you blame someone and I feel like God is often blamed (Asking for family, and how to support/guide them)

Job, David (Psalms), Jeremiah/Lamentations, Jesus (John 11:32-35, Lk 19:41-44, Matt 26:36-39)

John 11:33-35 – When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. 34 "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. Jesus wept.

- Bible has several examples of people who went through grief. We don't usually see the whole journey but can extrapolate the typical stages of grief from it
- The Slippery Slope of grief:
 - Shock – numbness and detachment from the crisis or situation
 - Denial – the mind unable to digest the reality of the crisis (unbelief in the event)
 - Anger – frustration at the crisis, the cause, the people and even self in permitting it
 - Bargaining – negotiating with yourself, God or others on how to avoid/restore it
 - Depression – isolation, anxiety, dread, and often quitting on daily life due to pain
 - Testing – attempts at replacing or fixing the hurt, or jumping into other options to avoid
 - Acceptance – coming to reality with the event, the results, and how to move forward
 - (new) Meaning – the new reality leads to other life purpose leveraging the experience
- A person often "slides" back and forth in this process and repeats in new crisis.
- God uses all of these stages to walk with us, bring relationships around us, and grow us. He doesn't waste it, nor does He try to rush it.
- Often there is a way God will use us to help others who go through similar grief.
- For those of us surrounding people in grief, the BEST responses tend to be like Job's friends (before they started judging him)...

- **Be Present** – physical presence and attention
 - **Be Caring** – meeting immediate needs and serving
 - **Be Listening** – creating safety for the person to express freely their emotions
- When the person is ready to receive help, we can also '**Be Asking**' (seek how to help and let them process out loud their struggles).
 - NOTE: If they are processing anger, it can make those around feel defensive. Instead of trying to defend God or others, listen and validate the hurt/pain, and possibly consider seeking more clarity in describing their emotions. Often, the best way to help them out of their anger is to help their brain move from emotional to logical thinking. (i.e. how God spoke to Job)

Q: In Job, is not God at Fault as well(if not more) for what happens to him for giving the Devil free reign again and again?

Job 1-2, Job 38-42; see also: Joseph (Gen 50:20), Blind man (John 9:1-3), Paul's thorn (2Cor 12:7-10), Jesus/Cross (Gospels), Early Church (Acts 8:1-4, et.al.)

Job 1:12 – The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger."

- It's accurate to connect the circumstances of Job's pain to the will of God. God permitted Satan to have some direct impact on Job's life and circumstances. So yes, God was involved.
- Our misunderstanding comes in connecting suffering with evil. (i.e. God is evil for allowing Job to suffer, or... A Good God would not permit us to suffer.).
 - God is God – He has purposes for both favor and suffering in our lives
 - God did not execute the evil on Job, Satan made that choice. God permitted Satan to exercise his own free will and set boundaries on what Satan was allowed to do.
 - Sadly, Job suffered without cause – like most of us do when we face suffering from someone else's choices. God doesn't wish that for us, but permits it for the sake of completing His plans as well as developing our faith.
 - NOTE: Faith is not forged in constant favor, but in believing/hoping for God's Good through the waiting and sufferings of life. It can't be faith if we always get what we want or expect.
- We expect that a Good God will not permit us to suffer, yet that cannot be true if we believe in the Cross as our payment for sins by God letting His Son suffer/die.
- SUGGESTION: As God provided a "hedge" of protection around Job, we also can pray and thank God for the spiritual hedge of protection He gives us, and the ultimate gift of salvation we didn't earn or deserve.

Q: Did God create Adam and Eve only or other men and women (Genesis 1.27) and place Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. Any men and women were outside the garden of Eden?

Acts 17:26, Rom 5:12,18-19, 1Cor 15:22,45-47, Gen 3:20, et.al.

Acts 17:26 – "And He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth..."

Gen 3:20 – "The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living."

- Great question! It's challenging to imagine all of the nations and peoples coming from Adam (when the timeframe for Adam seems to establish a world based on 6000-8000 years).
- Scripture DOES point to Adam and Eve as the source of all humanity
 - Acts 17:26 – from one man came every nation
 - Gen 3:20 – she became the mother of all the living
- We have nothing from God or Jesus to contradict this. And the design of Eden seems to indicate a connected Heaven/Earth that became split by the original sin. So there is no reason to believe humanity existed outside of the Garden.