

THINKING IT THROUGH:

1. Explain whether the Bible, as written in the original language, contains error?
2. Explain how the Old Testament applies to Christians?
3. What relationship exists between the written Word and the living Word?
4. Explain whether the Bible is written to a specific culture, for a specific time period, or for neither?
5. Explain whether any parts of the Bible are not inspired by God?
6. How is knowing, believing, and loving God directly related to our obedience?
7. What is the relationship between disobedience and unbelief?
8. What is the test of being a Christian?

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

The Bible is

Day 1: Read the narrative of King Josiah, 2 Kings 22:1-23:3. What did you learn about Scripture?

Day 2: Read Psalm 119:1-24, 89-112. What did you learn about Scripture?

Day 3: Read the narrative of Jeremiah, Jeremiah 1. What did you learn about Scripture in regard to inspiration?

Day 4: Read the narrative of God questioning Job, Job 38:1-40:5. What did you learn about Scripture in regard to wisdom?

Day 5: Read the narrative of the temptation of Jesus, Matthew 4:1-11. What is a practical use for Scripture when we are tempted?

Day 6: Read the narrative of Jesus and the Pharisees, Mark 7:1-13. What is the difference between Scripture and the traditions of men?

Day 7: Read the parable of the builders, Matthew 7:21-27. What did you learn about Scripture?

Memory verse:

Learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written. "Then you will not take pride in one man over against another.

1Corinthians 4:6

Lesson 2

The Measure of a Man

THE WORD OF GOD

God authored the Bible Himself because He did not desire man to remain in ignorance. God desired man to know His will so that they would have the opportunity to serve Him:

*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**. (2Ti.3:16-17NIV)*

The Bible is God-breathed; the very words came from God's mouth:

*We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that **when you received the word of God that you heard from us**, you accepted it not as a human word **but as what it really is, God's word**, which is also at work in you believers. (1Th.2:13 NRSV)*

Men did not necessarily hear the audible voice of God; they heard the inner voice of the Spirit within their hearts:

*But know this first of all, that no **prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation**, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, **but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God**. (2Pe.1:20-21 NASB)*

Those individuals who took dictation from God were so acutely aware of the Spirit's leading that they knew what was from God and what was from themselves. Paul, when answering the specific questions of the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 7, differentiated between that which came from God and that which came from himself:

*To the married I give this command—**not I but the Lord**—that the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does separate, let her remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife. To the rest I say—**I and not the Lord**—that if any believer has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. (1Co.7:10-12 NRSV)*

changes? What is this test? To find the test, we need to go to the beginning of the book of 2 Corinthians:

*I wrote for this reason: to test you and to know whether you **are obedient in everything**. (2Co.2:9 NRSV)*

What is excluded from everything? Nothing! Obedience to the living Word as revealed in His written Word is God's minimum standard for the church. If we are not obedient in everything, we have failed the test and do not have a saving faith. When Jesus gave His commission to the apostles, He commanded them:

*Therefore go and **make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and **teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you**. (Mt.28:19-20 TNIV)*

The test of a Christian is based on Christ's commission to His disciples: to be obedient in everything. Are you trying to appease God? Or are you striving to please God? Even though we will never be perfect, Christians strive to please God:

*Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, **let us purify ourselves from everything** that contaminates body and spirit, **perfecting holiness out of reverence for God**. (2Co 7:1 TNIV)*

We need to believe the Word of God; and we also need to have an appropriate response of obedience to the living Word of God. Obedience to God's Word is not only the test of each person but also the test of every ministry and every mission. Did you pass His test?

The Word of God is not to be studied like a textbook; rather, it is to be obeyed. Therefore, to disobey the Word of God is equated to unbelief; and the penalty is the wrath of God, which will come upon those who are unsaved:

*If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, **no sacrifice for sins is left**, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.* (He.10:26-27 TNIV)

THE MEASURE OF MAN AND MINISTRY

The Christian life is not about rules but about a relationship with Christ. As you read the Scriptures, do you feel the Holy Spirit drawing your attention to a certain verse which you need to apply in your life? The New Testament is not a new rule book:

*But now we have been **released from the Law**, having died to that by which we were bound, so that **we serve in newness of the Spirit** and not in oldness of **the letter**.* (Ro.7:6 NASB)

Christians live by the living Word, which agrees with the written Word. Do not read the Scripture like you read the latest novel. Take time to pray and talk to God about how He wants you to incorporate Scripture into your life. The living Word applies the written Word to situations that we face every day:

*You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written **not with ink** but with **the Spirit of the living God**, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of **human hearts**.* (2Co.3:3 TNIV)

We need the living Word to understand the written Word, and we need the written Word to discern the voice of the living Word:

***Test everything**; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.* (1Th.5:21-22 NRSV)

We must test everything by God's standard. The Bible commands us to test even ourselves:

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!** Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you — **unless indeed you fail the test? (2Co.13:5 NASB)

You can fail the test. Do you want to wait until you die and stand before God to find that you have failed the test and cannot alter your fate? Or do you want to find out now while you can still make

The writers of the Scriptures were highly aware when their inspiration was from the Spirit of God. Hence, all the words contained within Scripture are from the eternal, unchangeable God:

*God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that **he should change his mind**.* (Nu 23:19 NIV; Ja.1:17; He.1:11-12; 1Sa.15:29)

Since God does not change, His words are as applicable to the church today as they were two thousand years ago:

*Heaven and earth shall pass away, **but my words shall not pass away**.* (Mt.24:35 KJV; 1Pe.1:25)

Jesus is not only referring to the words He spoke while He walked on earth, but He is also talking about all New Testament Scripture, which was written by His authority:

*For you know **what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus**.* (1Th.4:2 NASB)

The whole of Scripture is God's Word for His people. The Old Testament was written primarily for Israel. Through these Scriptures, Christians also learn about God's love and justice. However, the New Testament was specifically written for the direction of His church. To reject Scripture is to reject the dictates of God:

*Therefore **he who rejects this does not reject man, but God**, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.* (1Th.4: 8 NKJV)

Therefore, the New Testament is the timeless Word of God to His people for all matters of life and doctrine:

*Learn from us the meaning of the saying, "**Do not go beyond what is written**." Then you will not take pride in one man over against another.* (1Co.4:6 NIV)

ILLUMINATING THE SINFULNESS OF MAN

Sin is disobedience to God's expressed commands. When Adam and Eve first sinned, their actions were in rebellion to God's authority. Rather than serve God in the garden, they sought to be like God by becoming masters of their own destiny. For Satan said:

*Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it **your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil**." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and **a tree desirable to make one wise**, she took of its fruit **and ate**. She also gave to her husband with her, **and he ate**.* (Ge.3:5-6 NKJV)

When Adam and Eve rebelled against God through disobedience, they dishonored Him. Consequently, God banished them from the garden, into the world. For four thousand years after the fall, man lived a life separate from God because of their sin. The Old Testament contrasts the nature of God with the rebellious nature of Israel. The Scriptures teach who God is and what He required of Israel, in order to expose the nature of man's hearts. Similar to Israel, many people, including church-goers, are ignorant of God's will because they are ignorant of His Word:

*Come back to your senses as you ought, **and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God--I say this to your shame.***

(1Co.15:34 NIV)

The Old Testament does not directly apply to the New Testament church because it was written for the nation of Israel, which was under the covenant of Law. However, the Old Testament teaches us about God, His moral absolutes, and His reaction to sin; it describes His historical relationship with man:

For 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.

(Ro 15:4 NIV; 1Co.10:11)

The Old Testament instructs us, but observance of its laws is powerless to enable man to live a life pleasing to God and to secure eternal life:

*You search the Scriptures, **for in them you think you have eternal life**; and these are they which testify of Me. **But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.***

(Jn.5:39-40 NKJV)

No one who died under the Old Testament entered heaven by keeping the Law. Nor could the Old Testament practices remove the penalty for our sin or restore our relationship with God:

*These were all commended for their faith, yet **none of them received what had been promised.** God had planned something better for us so that **only together with us would they be made perfect.***

(He.11:39-40 TNIV)

The Jews studied the Scriptures in the hope that their knowledge would lead to God. They could not understand that the purpose of the Old Testament Law was to convict mankind that they were sinners:

*Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so **that every mouth may be silenced, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.** For "no human being will be*

*To you then who believe, he is precious; but **for those who do not believe**, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner," and "A stone that makes them stumble, and a rock that makes them fall." **They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.***

(1Pe.2:7-8 NRSV)

Not only can "not believe" and "disobey" be used interchangeably as in the previous verses, but other Scriptures tie these two concepts together as well:

*To the pure all things are pure, but **to the corrupt and unbelieving** nothing is pure. Their very minds and consciences are corrupted. **They profess to know God, but they deny him by their actions.** They are detestable, **disobedient**, unfit for any good work.*

(Ti.1:15-16 NRSV)

If we believe God, we will obey Him. If we claim to believe Him yet disobey Him, our actions are incongruent with our words. For the Bible speaks of disobedience as a past way of life:

*As for you, you **were** dead in your transgressions and sins, **in which you used to live** when you **followed** the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit **who is now at work in those who are disobedient.** All of us also lived among them at **one time**, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, **we were by nature objects of wrath.***

(Eph.2:1-3 NIV)

We can say that God's wrath comes upon those who do not believe in Christ, or we can equally say that God's wrath comes upon those who are disobedient:

For this you know with certainty**, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has **an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.** Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things **the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

(Eph.5:5-6 NASB)

No matter how one might say it, those who are referred to as disobedient are equated to the unsaved. The Bible questions the eternal fate of those who continue to disobey the Scriptures:

***For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God**; and if it begins with us first, what **will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God**? And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner?*

(1Pe.4:17-18 NASB)

don't." Can you love your parents and not obey them? Or is our obedience a true indicator of our love? Jesus said:

"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me." (Jn.14:23-24 NKJV)

Many verses tie our love for God to an appropriate response of obedience toward God:

*In fact, **this is love for God: to keep his commands.*** (1Jn.5:3 TNIV)

If anything keeps us from obeying the Scriptures, then we love that thing more than we love God. To love something more than Christ is idolatry!

*And **this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands.** As you have heard from the beginning, **his command is that you walk in love.*** (2Jn.1:6 NIV)

The truth is, if we love God, we will obey Him. In this lesson, we looked at believing God, knowing God, and loving God; and in every case, the appropriate response was obedience. Therefore, obedience is not optional in the Christian life.

DISOBEDIENCE EQUATES UNBELIEF

In many churches and from many platforms, "free choice" is preached—"I don't have to do it if I don't want to; I have the right to choose to refuse to obey God." Many Christians do not realize that the first sin was a sin of disobedience to the command of God, which was a rejection of His authority:

*For as **by one man's disobedience many were made sinners**, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.* (Ro.5:19 NKJV)

Disobedience to the first command had eternal consequences, and our disobedience to the commands of Christ has eternal consequences as well. The Bible states that a direct relationship between belief and obedience exists. Consider the Greek word "apeitheo." Scripture uses this word 16 times. In the KJV, it is translated as follows: believe not—8 times; disobedient—4 times; obey—3 times; unbelieving—1 time. The concept of disobedience equating to not believing is clearly seen in Scripture:

*justified in his sight" by deeds prescribed by the law, **for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.*** (Ro.3:19-20 NRSV)

Israel's attempts to live a life favorable to God failed. Even David, who had a heart that sought after God, lied and committed adultery and murder. We are convicted that we are sinners by both the historical record of the Old Testament and by our own experience of failing to keep God's Law. Once we know our need, we can then seek the solution—God's Savior. He alone can restore His honor and save us from our sin:

*So **the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.** Now that faith has come, **we are no longer under the supervision of the law.*** (Ga.3:24-25 NIV)

The Law does not save us but establishes our need. Only Christ can save us. Once we accept Christ, the Law becomes obsolete. Through Christ, we are reconciled with God and live by the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Only through Christ has the purpose for the Law and the prophecies of the Old Testament been fulfilled:

*Do not think that I came to destroy **the Law or the Prophets.** I did not come to destroy **but to fulfill.*** (Mt 5:17 NKJV)

Therefore, the Old Testament teaches us about God, man, and sin, convincing us that we are sinners who need a Savior.

RELEVANT FOR TODAY

A person does not become a Christian by the human process of weighing out the facts and making a cognitive decision. Accepting the truth about Christ has a spiritual dynamic. The Holy Spirit works within a person, convicting his heart:

*For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, because **our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction.*** (1Th.1:4-5 TNIV)

The Gospel came not merely as words which were spoken or written on a page, but the Gospel also came with power and conviction through the Holy Spirit. Our acceptance of the truth of Christ is an acceptance of Christ Himself. His Words contain life which gives birth to our spirits, and thus, we are born again:

You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God. (1Pe.1:23 NRSV ; Ja.1:18)

The New Testament Scripture is different than that of the Old Testament. We can learn truths from the Old Testament, but the New Testament Scriptures teach us that truth came with Christ:

*For the law was given through Moses, but **grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*** (Jn.1:17 NKJV)

Truth is eternal. It never ceases to be true in principle; hence, truth cannot become obsolete. The Old Testament was written in the context of the first covenant, which could not give freedom to mankind. When Christ came, He ushered in the new covenant, which was far superior to the old covenant. Therefore, the old covenant became obsolete:

*By calling **this covenant "new,"** he has made **the first one obsolete;** and what **is obsolete** and ageing will soon disappear.* (He.8:13 NIV)

Christ ushered in the final covenant which is eternal, based on truth which will not change. Only through the truth that is found in Christ can Israel be free from their sins:

*For this reason **Christ is the mediator of a new covenant,** that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—**now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.*** (He.9:15 NIV)

Israel's experience was one of hopeless defeat, but Christ came to grant them the truth which would free them:

*To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you **hold to my teaching,** you are really my disciples. Then **you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.**"* (Jn.8:31-32 TNIV)

The New Testament truth enables people to live in holiness:

*Make them **holy by your truth;** teach them **your word, which is truth.*** (Jn.17:17 NLT)

The New Testament is not just God's will for the church, but it is also truth that gives life to His church. God revealed Himself in Christ; and in the New Testament, He also reveals Himself to the church. Both the Word and Christ are truth:

*Jesus said to him, "**I am** the way, **the truth,** and the life."* (Jn.14:6 NKJV)

Jesus is the truth, the living and eternal Word of God. Those who walked with Jesus and observed His actions experienced the living and eternal Word of God, and we can experience this same Word today by reading the New Testament. John writes:

The truth is that faith without an appropriate response is dead. Our faith must go beyond mere beliefism. If there is no appropriate response to what we claim to believe, then from God's perspective we really do not believe!

*In the same way, **faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.** ... You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and **his faith was made complete by what he did...** You see that a person is **justified by what he does** and not by faith alone... As the body without the spirit is dead, **so faith without deeds is dead.*** (Ja.2:17,22,24,&26 NIV)

As parents, we would not allow our children the luxury of blatant disobedience that some church-goers show toward God. And yet we think that God, our heavenly Father, will tolerate disobedience from us, His children. Jesus asked:

*Why do you call Me, '**Lord, Lord,**' and do not do what I say?* (Lk.6:46 NASB)

You can tell me that you believe in Christ, but I can tell what you believe by your actions. We confirm what we truly believe when our actions are altered according to our words. Belief in a truth always alters one's actions in an appropriate response, according to that truth:

*Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles **to the obedience that comes from faith.*** (Ro.1:5 NIV)

To say that people believe in Christ or to say that they became obedient to Christ is the same:

*And the word of God kept on spreading; and **the number of the disciples continued to increase** greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests **were becoming obedient to the faith.*** (Ac.6:7 NASB)

Our obedience is the only appropriate response to a saving faith in Christ. So many church-goers think that they can be saved apart from their actions. Yet we read:

*Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, **he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.*** (He.5:8-9 NRSV)

We can either say that we believe in Christ or that we obey Him; for a saving faith will always be accompanied by obedience. Many people would say, "But you don't understand. We love Jesus, and the demons

commands are liars, and the truth is not in them. **But if anyone obeys his word**, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: **Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.** (1Jn.2:3-6 TNIV)

To know God is to obey God. Our knowledge must go beyond an intellectual exercise; our knowledge must also have an appropriate response. Faith in God's Word produces an appropriate response:

They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, **disobedient**, and disqualified for every good work. (Ti.1:15 NKJV)

To claim to know God means nothing if our actions are not altered according to that knowledge. People who know about God yet continue in disobedience will go to hell with the demons:

He will punish **those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus**. They will be **punished with everlasting destruction** and shut out from the presence of the Lord. (2Th.1:8-9 NIV)

Two kinds of faith exist. One is a stagnant faith, which merely acknowledges something as truth—as a statement of faith. The other is a dynamic faith, in which knowledge causes a change of action in accordance to what is held as truth. Jesus said:

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?' Then I will declare to them, **'I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.'** (Mt.7:21-23 NRSV)

Lip service, "Lord, Lord," means nothing; only he who does the will of the Father will enter heaven. An acknowledgement of something as truth is no substitute for an application of the truth in our lives. Satan and his demons lived in the presence of God. They were present at the creation of the world. Some were even at Christ's death and resurrection. They know the face of God; however, they spend every moment plotting against Him and His people:

You believe that there is one God. You do well. **Even the demons believe — and tremble!** (Ja.2:19 NKJV)

The demons believe that God exists but lack an appropriate response. They continue in their disobedience—for which they will receive hell. If we continue in a demonic faith, our end will be the same as theirs.

In the beginning was **the Word**, and the **Word was with God**, and **the Word was God**. He was in the beginning with God. **All things came into being by Him**, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. (Jn.1:1-3 NASB)

When God spoke the world into being, the living Word of God created everything. Both the written Word and the living Word are God's revelation to man. We cannot separate the person of Christ from the Word of God:

That which was from the beginning, which we **have heard**, which we **have seen** with our eyes, which we **have looked** at and our hands **have touched**—this we **proclaim concerning the Word of life**. (1Jn.1:1 NIV; Jn.1:14)

The Word of God is not simply words written on a piece of parchment; the Word of God is Christ Himself:

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; **it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart**. (He.4:12 TNIV)

The living Word is active, for He continues to speak into our lives. We are born again as infants, and Christ causes us to grow to maturity. Christ, the living Word, empowers the written Word:

Like newborn babes, **long for the pure milk of the word**, that **by it you may grow in respect to salvation**, (1Pe.2:2-3 NASB)

The Word enables us to grow because it is dynamic. The association between the written Word and the living Word causes the Scriptures to be as applicable today as they were two thousand years ago. For neither the written Word nor the living Word has changed:

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. (He.13:8 KJV)

To make the statement that the New Testament does not apply in today's culture causes a separation between the living Word and the written Word. This renders the Word powerless:

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, **"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."** (Jn.8:31-32 TNIV)

If the church denies the inspiration of the New Testament, then its words will be reduced to lifelessness, similar to the many novels authored by man. The Scripture is inspired by the living Word of God:

We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that **when you received the word of God that you heard from us**, you accepted it not as a human word but **as what it really is, God's word**, which is also at work in you believers. (1Th.2:13 NRSV)

The living Word of God is at work in the church. The written Word was given by the authority of the living Word—Jesus. To reject any part of the written Word is to return to the rebellion of our first forefather:

Finally, brothers, **we instructed you how to live in order to please God**, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. For you know **what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus**. (1Th.4:1-2 NIV)

The New Testament is calling us to fulfill the living Word's will for the church. Even though many letters were written to specific churches which had specific problems, the solutions given are not culturally specific. Scripture calls all cultures to God's universal, eternal truth—a heavenly standard. For this reason, the letters were shared among all the New Testament churches:

And when this letter has been read among you, have **it read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you read also the letter from Laodicea**. (Co.4:16 NRSV)

The universality of the New Testament as absolute truth is clearly seen in the letter to the Corinthians:

He will remind you of **my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church**. (1Co.4:17 NASB)

This is my rule in all the churches. (1Co 7:17 NRSV)

As in all the churches of the saints, women should be silent in the churches., (1Co.14:33 NRSV)

But if one is inclined to be contentious, **we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God**. (1Co.11:16 NASB)

If the letters were culturally specific, we would find conflicting teachings amongst the various letters. However, the New Testament never contradicts itself; for the written Word is universal truth and, therefore, does not change. Consider Paul's charge to the Thessalonians:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers and sisters, to **keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive**

and **does not live according to the teaching you received from us**. (2Th.3:6 TNIV; note 14-15)

Today, many Christians reject parts of God's written Word and classify them as merely Paul's writings. However, Peter writes:

Just as our dear brother **Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him**. **He writes** the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. **His letters contain some things that are hard to understand**, which ignorant and unstable people distort, **as they do the other Scriptures**, to their own destruction. (2Pe.3:15-16 NIV)

Peter declares that Paul wrote while inspired by God, which equates Paul's letters to the rest of the Scriptures. Therefore, the whole of the New Testament is the Word of God, which was given to the church so that the Living Word could transform our lives.

OBEDIENCE: OUR APPROPRIATE RESPONSE

Many church-goers can tell you many Bible stories. Some can even quote entire books of the Bible from memory. Yet many do not realize that Satan knows the Scriptures as well; in fact, Satan can quote the Scriptures better than we can. Consider when Satan tempted Christ:

If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: **'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'** (Mt 4:6 NKJV)

Even though Satan knows the Scriptures, he persists in his rebellion toward God. To know and memorize Scripture is good, but if we do not apply Scripture to our lives, we profit nothing. The difference between knowledge and wisdom is that knowledge understands but wisdom puts the understanding into practice. What you know is not important; what you do with what you know is important. Knowledge alone is stagnant; wisdom is dynamic:

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. (Ja.1:22 TNIV)

To **know about** God is not enough; we must **know Him**, the living Word. I know about President Obama; I know about Tom Cruise; I know about Tiger Woods. Often one of them is mentioned in the newspaper, but I cannot personally address any of them. There is a difference between knowing about people and knowing them:

We know that **we have come to know him if we keep his commands**. Those who say, **"I know him," but do not do what he**