

# I. My Life of Faith—*what I believe about the nature of my faith*

1. My life as I am led by God
  2. Understanding my faith
  3. My motivation in life
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## 1. My life as I am led by God

*The Bible's place in the faith and life of believers*

### Introduction

What kind of information are Christians looking for when they use the Bible?

Who is God? What does he want? What does he say? What is right or wrong? (guide for life)

Hope, comfort

- Proofs for Bible teachings
- History

Which is the most important use of the Bible?

Shows us the plan of salvation. Come to know and believe in Jesus. Purpose of Scripture.

The Scriptures Say **Later draw principles from these.**

1. The Bible has two main teachings, the law and the gospel. The law shows us our sin. The gospel announces God's forgiveness to us. One of those goals is superior to the other. How do the following Bible passages show this? **How do these passages show the gospel is superior?**

**Romans 6:23** The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is **eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Eternal life is better than death**

**Romans 1:16** I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings **salvation** to everyone who believes. **Only the gospel has power to save.**

**John 20:31** These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the  
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Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

The purpose of all of Scripture.

2. If you ask a question or state a position, you likely will be confronted with a variety of opinions and philosophies. Each of us has our own personal feelings and opinions, but being a Christian means we align our opinions with God's. Use the following Bible passages to show why we do this. **Why is God's opinion/Word more important than ours?**

**John 17:17** Your word is **truth**.

**2 Samuel 7:28** Sovereign Lord, you are God! Your covenant is **trustworthy**, and you have promised these good things to your servant. **Objectively true.**

**Hebrews 4:12** The word of God is alive 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.

God's Word is not influenced by outward appearances, opinions; it cannot be manipulated. Not a product of polls. It changes hearts.

Yet, it can be misused...

3. Satan quoted Bible passages even as he tempted Jesus to sin (Matthew chapter 4). The Bible is not a collection of single passages but a book written by one divine author. God reveals his will about various subjects in many different places in the Bible. When we consider all God says about any given subject, we are better able to know the mind of God. How is this reflected in the following Bible passages?

**2 Timothy 1:13** What you heard from me, keep as the **pattern of sound teaching**, with faith and love in Christ Jesus.

**Titus 1:9** He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by **sound doctrine** and **refute those who oppose it**.

**Titus 2:1** You, however, must teach what is appropriate to **sound doctrine**.

What is the common thread?

What is doctrine?

What is the difference between the Bible and the Catechism?

Sound doctrine doesn't just tell you what to believe and do; it also tells you what? (What not to believe.)

4. Motivated by the good news of our salvation through Jesus, we learn and believe  
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God's teachings and apply them to our lives. The better we see the big picture of the Bible, the better we will **apply** his teachings to our lives. The teachings of God are meant to be believed; the way we live is a reflection of what we believe. How does the Bible demonstrate that in these passages?

**Matthew 7:24-27** Everyone who hears these words of mine and **puts them into practice is** like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and **does not put them into practice** is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.

**1 Corinthians 4:17** For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of **my way of life** in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.

**James 1:22** Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. **Do what it says.**

**What's the point? Put the word into practice. Apply the principles to life.**

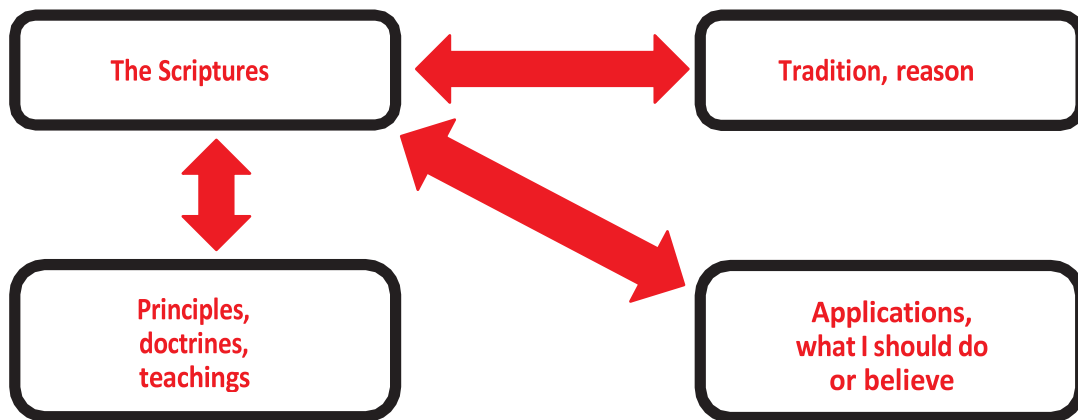
## The Principles

*Because the Bible clearly teaches the following truths . . .*

1. I believe that the gospel alone, found in the Bible, has **the power to save**.
2. I believe that God's objective truth, the Bible, is necessary **to recognize what is false and dangerous about worldly opinions**.
3. I believe that as I study God's Word, I will grow in my understanding of his truth **(principles/doctrines/teachings). S.I.S. (historical, grammatical, and scriptural setting) Distinguishing Law and Gospel**.
4. I believe that through his Word, God leads me to **recognize** and **apply** these teachings to my life.
  - Note the function that both law and gospel have in our salvation.
  - Note the importance of objective truth, which is also timeless.
  - Note the importance of seeing the bigger picture.
  - Note how important it is to also live according to the truth.

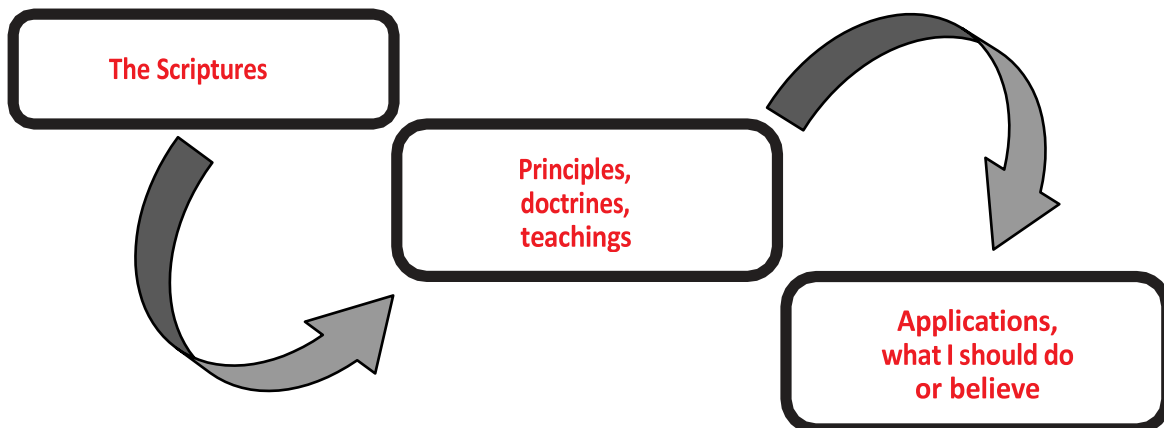
## Focus

*What Guides the Faith and Life of Many Christians?*



1. Tradition and reason are what create denominations.
2. Doctrines should be drawn from Scripture.
3. Some use doctrines and applications to interpret scripture. (e.g. I want to condone this lifestyle, so I'll interpret the Bible this way.)

*What Guides Us in Our Faith and Life?*



- Always must be in this order.
- Starts with most objective and moves to most subjective (as it applies it to me).
- Examples of principles, doctrines, teachings: Lutheran Confessions (including the catechism).
- "I believe that I cannot by my own thinking or choosing, believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but the HS has called me by the gospel..."
- We do not despise preaching and his word...

## What Does This Mean?

1. What real spiritual danger do we risk if we don't follow this pattern?
  - What if we disregard the Scriptures in our faith and lives?

We make up our own rules; our reason is misguided by our sinful nature. It creates a work-righteousness; no peace, no gospel.

We make ourselves god.
  - What if we disregard the principles, doctrines, and teachings in our faith and lives?

We can easily take passages out of context. This is why the Confessions are so important. Allow us to properly understand conversion (vs. decision theology), Lord's Supper, baptism.
  - What if we disregard the applications in our lives?

This becomes the root of hypocrisy: we say one thing but don't do anything or do something very different. Faith becomes a philosophy, not a way of faith *and* life.
2. What problems do you foresee if someone uses materials or follows practices that are not based on this view of Scripture?

Reasonable, often appealing doctrine that is Biblically twisted.

It will introduce a subjectivism into the study of the Bible that is foreign to the message of God's truth. Conclusions or applications would be based on a false interpretation of Scripture.
3. What problem do you foresee if someone understands biblical doctrine well but is cloudy on the Scriptures that support it?

Loss of confidence in the truth. Doctrine becomes tradition. Harder to defend/explain it to others.

We know WHAT we are to believe, but not why. It skews toward Law, not gospel. There is no power.

How widespread do you believe this problem is?

What are some solutions to this problem?

A class like this.

## What This Means for Me

- Take a few moments to write a short statement expressing the way these truths shape what you believe and how you live.

Distinguish Law and Gospel

Study Scripture in Context

Application to Head, Heart and Hands

Scripture is Power for Life