

WHY WE BELIEVE...

1 & 2 Timothy 3

January 7, 2024

BELONG

Get to Know One Another

Take a couple of minutes to look over the list of 8 questions. Which one will you be intentional about in 2024? [Abbreviated list of Donald Whitney's "10 questions to ask at a Christmas gathering"]

1. What's one thing you could do in 2024 to increase your enjoyment of God?
2. What's the most humanly impossible thing you will ask God to do in 2024?
3. What's the single most important thing you could do to improve the quality of your family life in 2024?
4. What is the single biggest "time-waster" in your life, and what will you do about getting rid of it in 2024?
5. What is the most helpful NEW way you could strengthen FBC Portland in 2024?
6. For whose salvation will you pray most fervently in 2024?
7. What is one thing you can do to improve your prayer life in 2024?
8. What single thing that you are planning to do in 2024 that will matter most in 10 years? In Eternity?

BELIEVE

Read this Week's Scripture

Throughout 2024, we are going to periodically cover sermons entitled, "**Why We Believe...**" Our hope is that this series will be thought-provoking as we do a deep dive into the core tenets of our faith as found in Scripture. In each of these sermons, we will address topics that the church is facing. Then we will examine these topics through the lens of Scripture - fostering a deeper understanding of how **our faith** shapes **our responses** to the challenges of the modern world.

Today, we are going to discuss why it's essential for the Bible to form the foundation of our beliefs. While this may seem like a simple concept, it serves as a crucial reminder for the Church. It seems that more often in church world, churches start teaching by addressing the perceived needs of their congregation rather than starting with Scripture. This can lead to church leaders attempting to shape God's Word to fit our agenda, rather than vice-versa. Additionally, societal influences often oppose the teachings of the Bible. In our discussion today, we'll explore how the Bible serves as the fundamental foundation of our faith and the bedrock of truth for Christians. Our main focus will be on two passages from Scripture, **1 & 2 Timothy 3**.

Quote to Wrestle: "Why do men and women hate this gospel? It is because the gospel message condemns our religiosity and all our efforts to make ourselves good and earn our own salvation." - Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Question 1: What stands out in this quote to you?

- Do you believe this quote accurately reflects culture, the Church or both?

BUILD

Engage and Apply the Scripture

Have someone in your group read **1 Timothy 3:14-16**

Question 2: Why did Paul write these instructions? **[3:14-15]**

Question 3: How should the church be a “pillar and foundation of truth” in this world? Is the church accomplishing this?

- How has Jesus equipped the church to be a pillar and foundation of the truth to the community that we interact with on a daily basis?

Have someone in your group read **2 Timothy 3:10-17**

Question 4: In **verse 10**, how did Paul demonstrate being a “pillar and foundation of truth” to Timothy?

- How else did Timothy follow Paul **[verse 11]**? *[In persecutions and sufferings]*
- What was the result of Paul enduring persecutions and sufferings? *[He endured and the Lord rescued him.]*
- What is the promise for all who want to live a “godly life” or to be a “pillar and foundation of truth”? *[all will be persecuted - verse 12]*
- Is this, “Live the godly life and guarantee persecution,” good “advertisement” for the Christian faith?
 - If, “Live the godly life and guarantee persecution,” was FBC Portland’s mission statement, then what would attendance look like at Membership Matters?

Question 5: In **verse 14**, Paul encourages Timothy to “continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed.” Are you continuing to learn the Bible?

- In what ways, are you intentionally pursuing the study of Scripture? *[plug the Bible reading plans at fbcportland.org/biblereadingplans]*

Have someone read **2 Timothy 4:3-4**.

Question 6: Regarding Scripture, what do you think people **want** to hear? What do they **NEED** to hear?

- What are “itching ears” and what is the result of turning from sound [biblical] teaching?

Question 7: If there is time, look up these additional passages. How does each one contribute to our understanding of the importance of scripture for our lives?

- **Psalm 1:1-3**
- **Psalm 119:9-11**
- **Proverbs 30:5-6**
- **1 Peter 1:20-21**

Additional Content: James W. Sire’s “The Universe Next Door”

James W. Sire's, "The Universe Next Door," poses eight basic worldview questions that help individuals understand and evaluate their beliefs about reality. Our responses reveal our basic worldview.

These eight questions are:

- **What is prime reality—the really real?** — Possible answers are God (theism), or the gods (paganism), or the material cosmos (naturalism).

- **What is the nature of external reality, that is, the world around us?** — Here our answers point, as Sire notes, to whether we see the world as created or autonomous, as chaotic or orderly, as matter or spirit; or whether we emphasize our subjective, personal relationship to the world or its objectivity apart from us.
- **What is a human being?** — We might say that a human is an illusion, a complex machine, a “naked ape,” or a person made in the image of God.
- **What happens to a person at death?** — We may answer that after death a person ceases to exist, is reincarnated and returned to life, or enters into another realm or state (such as Heaven).
- **Why is it possible to know anything at all?** — Our ability to think and reason may align with reality because it was designed by an all-knowing God or our cognitive processes may have developed accidentally through the process of evolution and have no certain claim to being able to determine truth.
- **How do we know what is right and wrong?** — What is morally right may be known because it is rooted in the character of a beneficent God or it may be mere agreement among humans that was necessary for cultural or physical survival.
- **What is the meaning of human history?** — To this we might answer, says Sire, that the meaning is to realize the purpose of God or the gods, to make a paradise on earth, to prepare a people for a life in community with a loving and holy God, and so forth.
- **What personal, life-orienting core commitments are consistent with this worldview?** — We can provide abstract or purely intellectual answers to the previous seven questions. But answering this last one reveals whether we truly live out what we claim to believe. Failure to properly consider this question could lead to **syncretism** [*Syncretism operates on the assumption that combining certain teaching or religious traditions produces a better way or a different path to knowing and/or reaching God.*]

In the context of **2 Timothy 3:16-17**, which states, ***“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”*** we can address the eight basic questions as follows:

- **What is prime reality?**
 - According to **2 Timothy 3:16**, prime reality is God. The Scriptures are considered His authoritative and inspired Words. They reveal His nature, His will, and His purpose.
- **What is the nature of external reality?**
 - External reality is viewed as a creation of God, and its nature is consistent with Scripture. The Scriptures provide insights into the nature of the world and how it came into being.
- **What is a human being?**
 - Humans are seen as created beings in the image of God, with inherent value and purpose. In **2 Timothy 3:16-17**, provides guidance on how the Word of God provides understanding of human nature and the purpose of human life.
- **What happens to a person at death?**
 - The Bible, including **2 Timothy 3:16**, teaches that after death, individuals will face judgment. This aligns with Christianity. Scripture emphasizes the eternal consequences of sin opposed to the intercession of Christ for His sheep.

- **Why is it possible to know anything at all?**
 - Knowledge is possible because God has revealed Himself through Scripture. The Bible is considered a reliable source of truth and knowledge, providing a foundation for understanding the world.
- **How do we know what is right and wrong?**
 - Morality is grounded in God's character and revealed through His Word. **2 Timothy 3:16** suggests that Scripture is profitable for teaching and training in righteousness, providing a moral framework for believers.
- **What is the meaning of human history?**
 - Scripture reveals, from Genesis to Revelation, that human history is seen as part of God's plan and purpose. Those Scriptures, as outlined in **2 Timothy 3:16-17**, reveal that all of history [its meaning and direction] was ordained and breathed out by God.
- **What personal, life-orienting core commitments are consistent with this worldview?**
 - A consistent commitment involves accepting the authority and relevance of Scripture in all aspects of life. This commitment shapes our beliefs, values, and actions in accordance with the teachings of Scripture.