



There can be a huge gap between “God said” and “I believe.” Many say, “I know what the Bible says, but I believe ...,” ignoring what Almighty God has said and standing on what *they* believe. Not a new problem—from the beginning of the Bible, we see God’s people knowing what God has said and instructed, but intentionally inserting their own will. That’s not helpful behavior. What *is* helpful is reading our Bible because it exposes us to God’s character, presenting who He is: His sovereignty, power, glory, majesty, discipline, and judgment—all decision-making factors as we determine the extent to which we will cooperate with God. That’s why it’s so important to decide and establish in our heart that we believe the Bible is God’s Word. The season ahead is going to require a lot from God’s people, and we need to prepare for it by believing in and being grounded in the Word of God.

I. RECEIVE GOD’S WORD

Hebrews 4:2 *For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.*

- A. Challenges to Believing God
- B. Other Influences Challenge God

1. **What does it mean to say “yes” to God? Share a time in your life when saying “yes” to God changed your life.**
2. **We all have a carnal nature that we cannot justify. What are some ways you have resisted your carnal nature and obeyed God’s will?**
3. **Followers of Jesus Christ have lost their voice of God’s truth in our current culture. Why do you think Christians have been silent on important issues? What steps do we need to take to get our voice back?**

II. TIMELINE ... KNOW THE STORY OF THE BIBLE, NOT JUST BIBLE STORIES

**Creation –Abraham –The Exodus –Judges –United Monarchy –Nation Divided –The Prophets
–The Exile –The Second Temple –The Gospels –The Church –Jesus’ Return**

A. The Significance of Creation

Genesis 1:1 *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

Ephesians 3:9 ... and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.

Colossians 1:15–16 **15** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. **16** For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

Hebrews 1:10 He also says, “In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.

Revelation 4:11 “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”

Revelation 10:5–6 [Angels believe God created Heaven & Earth] **5** Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven. **6** And he swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, “There will be no more delay!

Revelation 14:6–7 **6** Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language, and people. **7** He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

4. **The creation account in both the old and New Testament describes the “how” of creation as much as it bears witness to the “who” of creation, God. Why must a Christian believe in creation?**

B. Abram/Abraham

Jesus & Abraham

John 8:56–59 ⁵⁶ *Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.* ⁵⁷ *“You are not yet fifty years old,” the Jews said to him, “and you have seen Abraham!”* ⁵⁸ *“I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!”* ⁵⁹ At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

Our Confidence Derived from Secondary Things

Matthew 3:9 *And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.*

5. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put your confidence in other things. How can you encourage others who are putting their confidence in secondary things?

Do Not Be Offended by God

John 8:31–48 ³¹ *To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”* ³³ *They answered him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?”* ³⁴ *Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. ³⁵ Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. ³⁷ I know you are Abraham’s descendants. Yet you are ready to kill me, because you have no room for my word.*

³⁸ *I am telling you what I have seen in the Father’s presence, and you do what you have heard from your father.”* ³⁹ *“Abraham is our father,” they answered. “If you were Abraham’s children,” said Jesus, “then you would do the things Abraham did. ⁴⁰ As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. ⁴¹ You are doing the things your own father does.”*

“We are not illegitimate children,” they protested. “The only Father we have is God himself.”

⁴² *Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. ⁴³ Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. ⁴⁴ You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵ Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! ⁴⁶ Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don’t you believe me?*

⁴⁷ *He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.”*

⁴⁸ *The Jews answered him, “Aren’t we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?”*

Hebrews 12:4 *In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.*

III. THE SOLUTION

Hebrews 12:9–10 ⁹ Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! ¹⁰ Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.

6. Share a time in your life when you remember making a conscious decision to turn away from something you knew was wrong and you chose a different path instead. What was the outcome?

PRAYER

Father, thank You for Your Word and its truth, and for your Holy Spirit who is present to help us. We acknowledge our opportunity in this season of tremendous change. You’re searching the earth for men and women who will choose You, and we humble ourselves today to confess our own duplicity and sinfulness. We offer no excuse or justification for frequently demanding our way and ignoring Your way—forgive us. Lord, as we begin a new year, we come in humility to ask for Your to be done in the earth as never before—in our communities, homes, schools, hospitals, courtrooms, boardrooms, job sites, factory floors, and churches—let Your will be expressed on the earth as it has been in Heaven. We praise You and acknowledge Jesus as Lord of our lives. We submit to Your authority and truth and accept Your invitations. Holy Spirit, help us. Thank You for outcomes, which will exceed anything we could do or could imagine. In Jesus' name, amen.