



What We Believe

YOURJESUSJOURNEY.COM

UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE | FIND COMMUNITY | BECOME A DISCIPLE-MAKER

We're here to point people to Jesus, teach the Bible, and encourage people to continue on the path following Jesus, practicing the things He teaches in their everyday lives.

WELCOME

Welcome to Your Jesus Journey! We are delighted that you're here, seeking to understand what we believe. This is an important step for you to determine if this is a ministry you can trust to encourage and equip you on your journey to grow as a disciple of Jesus.

Our purpose is clear and rooted in the Word of God.

We're here to point people to Jesus, teach the Bible and encourage people to continue on the path following Jesus, practicing the things He teaches in their everyday lives. Our purpose aligns with the teachings of Scripture, including:

John 14:6 (New International Version): "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"

1 John 2:6 (New International Version): "Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did."

1 Corinthians 11 (New International Version): "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ."



Learn more about this exciting ministry at www.YourJesusJourney.com

With this clarity of purpose, let's dive into what we believe and why.

When people begin their faith journey, regardless of their age or season of life, they often encounter a mix of emotions. On one hand, there can be a feeling of a weight lifted off, which comes with salvation and the freedom from the guilt and shame associated with sin. Things they are now freed from, thanks to Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection. At the same time, many people often face discouragement and confusion. It's easy to be overwhelmed by all the different Bible translations, study guides, religious denominations, and church options. Adding to that confusion are the many opinions of family and friends about what a Christian is supposed to believe. And finally, all the things you've heard about what a Christian is NOT supposed to do or say or think.

As a result, it seems that people tend to commonly navigate this in one of two ways. One group is quickly overwhelmed with all of it, and their original commitment to follow Jesus fades. It seems like it's all too much. They may try to read the Bible or attend a church, but in time they pull back or completely give up.

Others dive right into the deep end, take on all sorts of studies, groups, and more. This group tends to look at the Bible as if everything is key. They feel a need to learn it all and learn it quickly.

Yes, these are just generalizations, but it highlights the fact that as people, it's common to approach new things with an all-or-nothing approach. In the case of Christianity and the Bible, either it's all important or none of it is. But in truth, neither approach is healthy.

Which is why it's very helpful to learn upfront that while we do believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and that all of it is good for teaching, correcting, and uplifting the believer in various seasons and circumstances, not all of it is equally important. In the midst of God's instructions, there is actually much more freedom than many people are aware of.

Much like a family that raises their children with some core family values, those same parents acknowledge that there are many beliefs and choices that their kids are free to make even if they are things the parents may not believe or do.

Similarly, we believe that God's word does include some Core teachings that are essential to embrace if we are to be genuine disciples of Jesus. We call these things "Essential for Salvation".

Beyond the "essentials," there are things that are important teachings to embrace for a person to grow and mature as a disciple of Jesus, but not knowing them or knowing them and not doing them doesn't stop someone from being saved. We call these "Important for growth".

Finally, there are many things in the Bible that fall into the category of "Personal preferences". Things where the Bible allows a great deal of freedom. For the types of things that fall into the category of personal beliefs, it is quite common to find a lot of different perspectives which is 100% okay. People can be all over the map regarding these "personal beliefs" and have no impact on their salvation.

So, before we break them down, let's summarize.

We believe that lessons taught by God through the Bible fall into 3 categories:

1. Instructions that are essential for salvation.

Here's what we find really encouraging. The number of essential lessons is actually quite small. In other words, what you truly need to learn from the Bible and embrace in terms of salvation can be summed up on 1 piece of paper!

2. Instructions that are important to grow as a disciple.

The number of lessons to learn that fall into the next category of "Important for growth" is much larger. But the great news regarding these lessons is that God designed them to be learned along your journey as you go. We don't expect 1st graders to understand algebra, and likewise God's plans for your growth are realistic and loving.

3. Topics that personal preferences can vary greatly about.

Finally, the number of things that come up in the Bible that fall into the category of "personal preferences" is actually the largest category. Whether you know about many of these and have beliefs about them or know about very few of them, it is far less important than anything in the first categories.

Now, with a firm grasp on how we intend to break down what we believe, let's quickly look at each category.



CATEGORY 1: ESSENTIAL FOR SALVATION

Remember, these are lessons God teaches in the Bible that we believe are essential to learn and embrace if a person is to be a born-again believer as the Bible instructs. The order they're listed in is not meant to say one is more important than another. All are critical to learn and embrace. Scripture references are given in support of the statement but not necessarily including every scripture that may support the statement. While there may be nuanced ways to break these out, we want to say that we've done our best to share the lessons God teaches that we believe are essential for our salvation.

What God teaches about Himself:

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God.

Biblical references: Genesis 1:1, 26–27; 3:22; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2

What God teaches about Jesus:

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on the cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven's glory and will return again someday to claim His own and take them to that same Heaven.

Biblical references: Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:22–23; John 1:1–5; 14:10–30; Acts 1:9–11; Romans 1:3–4; 1 Corinthians 15:3,4; 1 Timothy 6:14–15; Titus 2:13; Hebrew 4:14–15

What God teaches about the Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son. He is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, guidance in doing what is right, and is our intercessor. As Christians, we seek to live under His control daily.

Biblical references: John 14:16; 16:7–14, 17; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:26–27; 1 Corinthians 2:12; 3:16; 2 Corinthians 3:16–17; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 1:13; 5:18

What God teaches about Himself as Father:

Jesus Christ did not have a biological human father. God is His Father, and Jesus was born of a virgin mother by the power of the Holy Spirit, yet still, all three exist as one God. The Fatherhood of God is eternal; therefore, Father, Son, and Spirit have always existed in a love relationship. God revealed Himself as Father in both Old and New Testaments. God adopts believers in Jesus Christ into a relationship with Him as their Father. Through Christ, believers have the privilege of being heirs to God's glory. As Father, God actively prunes and disciplines believers so they may grow in character, wisdom, and knowledge of Him and bear the fruit of Christlikeness.

Biblical references: John 15:1-4; Deuteronomy 32:6; Isaiah 9:6. 63:16; John 20:17; Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:6

What God teaches about the Bible:

The Bible is God's Word to us. Human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit, wrote it. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is God inspired, it is the truth without any mixture or error.

Biblical References: Psalm 119:105, 160; Proverbs 30:5–6; Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16–17; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:20–21; 3:15–16

What God teaches about People:

People are made in the spiritual image of God, to be like Him in character. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, all of us are marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called "sin." This attitude separates people from God and causes many problems in life.

Biblical references: Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3–6; Isaiah 53:6; 59:1–2; Romans 3:23

What God teaches about Eternity:

People will either exist eternally separated from God by sin or exist eternally with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is eternal death in Hell. To be eternally in union with Him is eternal life in Heaven. We believe that Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence.

Biblical references: John 3:16; 14:17; Romans 6:23; 8:17–18; 1 Corinthians 2:7–9; Revelation 20:15

What God teaches about the Priesthood of Every Believer:

The Bible teaches that every Christian is called to "full-time" Christian service, regardless of his or her vocation. We practice the truth that every believer is a minister by encouraging every member to find a place of service and ministry. Every believer has direct access to God through prayer and Bible reading. We believe people are called to witness and to minister.

Revelation 1:6 (NASB): "... and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father ..."

1 Peter 2:9 (NIV1984): "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

James 2:14-20 (NIV): "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily

food. If one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and well-fed,' but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, 'You have faith; I have deeds.' Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder. You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?"

What God teaches about Salvation:

Salvation is God's free gift to us, but we must accept it. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting Jesus Christ and God's offer of forgiveness can anyone be saved from sin's penalty. When we turn from our sin-ruled life and turn to Jesus in faith, we are saved. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ as Lord of their life. This is evidenced by repentance, confession, baptism by immersion, and a life committed to His service.

Biblical references: John 1:12; 14:6; Romans 5:1; 6:23; Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5

What God teaches about Baptism:

We teach that those who have believed the message of the gospel, repented, and confessed Christ as Lord and Savior will be baptized as an act of obedience in following Jesus. In the book of Acts, people were immediately baptized once they accepted Christ. As Christians, we want to respond with the same sense of urgency in a timely act of obedience following a confession of faith. Baptism literally means "to be immersed," and we honor our role in obedience to Christ through the physical act of baptism in water by immersion. God's role is spiritual baptism. Baptism is a picture of death and resurrection. Because we do not believe a baby, or small child, is lost before the age of accountability (the age where they have the ability to know the truth about God, Jesus, and sin), we do not baptize infants. (Matthew 18:1-6)

Biblical references: Matthew 28:18-21; Acts 2:37-38, Acts 8:35-39, Romans 6:4, Colossians 2:12



CATEGORY 2: IMPORTANT FOR GROWTH

Remember, these are lessons God teaches in the Bible that we believe are important for the Christian to learn and embrace along their journey in order for them to continue to grow and mature as a disciple of Jesus. There is no “magic formula” or “correct order” to learn and embrace these important lessons from God. While it must be said that you do not have to know these lessons or walk them out in order to be saved, they are crucial to the growth of every believer.

These lessons would include things like:

- Learning to be intentional about serving others so that you point people to God. (Matthew 5:13-16)
- Learning that harboring emotions like anger and hate are not just unhealthy but actually hurt your relationship with God. (Matthew 5:21-26)
- Learning that there’s more to being a faithful spouse than just not cheating on each other. Learning to be aware of lust and how to handle your secret thoughts and desires are crucial

skills to growing as a disciple. (Matthew 5:27-30)

- Learning to be a person of your word and not making promises you can't or won't keep. (Matthew 5:33-37)
- Learning that the relationship with a person who's done you wrong is more important than revenge. (Matthew 5:38-42)
- Learning that a growing disciple of Jesus is someone who chooses to love people who are hard to love or even outright mean to you. (Matthew 5:43-48)
- Learning that the motives behind your generosity are usually more important than the actual act of generosity. (Matthew 6:1-4)
- Learning that there are some wrong ways to pray. (Matthew 6:5-8)
- Learning how to pray and talk to God is a huge lesson for a growing and maturing disciple. (Matthew 6:9-15)
- Learning about sacrifice and giving things up and why it matters to God. (Matthew 6:16-18)
- Learning about what God says is valuable versus what the world says is valuable. (Matthew 6:19-34)

- Learning how to approach other believers when you notice them acting or saying something that is not in line with what God teaches. (Matthew 7:1-6)
- Learning about the character or kind of person that God says is likely to get their prayers answered. (Matthew 7:7-11)
- Learning about how you should treat other people, regardless if they are a Christian or not. (Matthew 7:12)
- Learning to recognize that hard times in your life may actually affirm that you're on the right path that leads to a fulfilling, growing life in Christ. (Matthew 7:13-14)
- Learning why it's important to look at the fruit in a Christian Teacher, Pastor, or Author's life. A skill that helps prevent you from being taken advantage of or worse yet, led astray. (Matthew 7:15-20)
- Learning that there's more to being a true disciple of Jesus than simply saying you're one. (Matthew 7:21-23)
- Learning what it looks like to build a healthy, growing relationship with God as you follow Jesus. (Matthew 7:24-27)



CATEGORY 3: PERSONAL PREFERENCE

Remember there are LOTS of topics in the Bible that are outside the realm of essential for salvation. Many of them also fall outside the realm of things that are important to learn for a growing disciple of Jesus. Personally, I find this incredibly comforting. As a child, I wasn't a natural-born student, and as I grew older, so did my sense of "do I really need to know this?" I longed for the day I would be done with what felt like a largely meaningless education and could get on to learning the important things in life, like how to build things and fix things and find a wife. (Ironically not lessons that are taught in most public schools)

What we personally believe about many of the topics in the Bible won't have any effect on our salvation or possibly how we mature as a disciple, but they generally do affect how we practice our faith. They tend to be things that draw believers together in groups or denominations but are not essential for salvation.

These topics might include things like:

- What do you personally believe about end times? Based on what you read in scripture, you may come to some personal opinions about how, when, etc. While these opinions are valuable and may help you find common ground with others who think similarly, it's not important that other believers think what you think.
- What do you personally think about angels and demons.
- What do you personally think about the concept of a rapture or "catching up of the saints."
- What do you personally think about different choices people make like, drinking alcohol, smoking, or getting a tattoo or piercings.
- What do you personally think about miraculous gifts of healing or the ability to speak French to a French person when you've never spoken or learned a word of French in your life (tongues).

The number of topics that arise in this category is enormous and as varied as the people who hold

strong opinions about them. There are two important things to remember when it comes to this area of personal beliefs.

1. Other Christians don't have to agree with you.
2. You can be wrong about what you believe and it wouldn't have any impact on your salvation.



WHAT'S REALLY IMPORTANT AS WE FINISH THIS UP:

As you reflect on your personal beliefs, this framework helps you understand where each belief falls - Essential, Important, or Personal. Like Jesus, we strive to balance grace and truth in our lives and interactions. Grace and truth complement each other:

- Grace without truth becomes flimsy and cheap.
- Truth without grace becomes oppressive and cold.

John 1:14 (New International Version): "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

- John 3:16-21 emphasizes how God sent Jesus, full of grace and truth, to save us.

In matters of personal preference or topics that fall outside the essentials, we follow Paul's advice in Romans 14:

1. Love and unity for fellow believers who hold different views.
2. Setting aside personal preferences for the sake of Christians who are "younger in their faith". (We don't look down on a 4-year-old for simply not yet learning about something that would later be clear to them as an adult.)

3. Avoid unnecessary debates and arguments with non-believers on disputable matters, focusing on sharing essential truths.

Here at Your Jesus Journey, we aim to uphold essential beliefs, maintain unity, and prioritize love in our interactions. We encourage you to join us to explore and deepen your faith, focusing on those core beliefs essential for salvation while extending grace to others on disputable matters. Let's journey together, learning and growing in our walk with Jesus.

If this sounds like a ministry that you would like to be a part of then your next step is simple. Reach out to us so we can set up a time to meet and begin getting to know you. Learning more about you and where you are in your Jesus journey will help us guide you to the best people and resources to help you keep growing as a disciple of Jesus.

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