Question #2

**What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?**

*The word of God, which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.*

**WARM UP**

Have you ever had a time where you and a friend were playing a game and your friend began changing the rules while you were playing? How did that make you feel? What did you do about it?

A bomb is about to explode. You have 30 seconds to diffuse it. A girl beside you, who you know goes to cosmetology school, suddenly exclaims, “Cut the blue wire!” How would you react? Do you cut the wire? Why?

You have determined to throw the best birthday party ever for your mother. What would you do at the party? What kinds of things would please her? How do you know?

**MAIN POINT**

God has given us the Bible so that we may know the truth and live life as we ought. Without Scripture, we do not have no real basis for determining what is right or wrong, good or bad, true or false, beautiful or ugly. We must therefore put our faith in what He has revealed and not lean on our futile human thinking.

**SCRIPTURE STUDY**

The Bible is a unique book because it is God’s word. Everything in it is completely true and deserves our acceptance. All our thoughts, words, and actions are to be guided by it and anything that contradicts the Bible is to be rejected, no matter how appealing it may be.

Psalms 19:7-10

*The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul;*

*the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;*

*the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;*

*the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes…*

*the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether.*

*More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold;*

*sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.*

1 Thessalonians 2:13

*We also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.*

2 Timothy 3:16-17

*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.*

2 Peter 1:20-21

*Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

**POINTS TO PONDER**

***Life:*** In a debate in 2008 the Democrat presidential candidate Barak Obama was asked, “At what point does a baby get human rights?” The question dealt specifically with the issue of abortion and its legal ramifications. To be sure, it was a “hot button” issue and would be a major factor for many voters who were watching.

Despite his awkward attempt to avoid the question, Obama’s answer was interesting. He responded by saying, “Answering that question with specificity… is above my pay grade.”

This radical (and perhaps accidental) moment of honesty is refreshing. Obama might have had some of the most liberal views on abortion of any presidential candidate up to this point. But he is absolutely right: The question of when life begins (or when a person receives human rights) is not within the grasp of human understanding. It is above our paygrade because it is a question that *only God can answer*.

***Gender:*** Recently a major retail store in the United States began allowing men the right to use the women’s bathroom (and *vice versa*). Policymakers expressed that they wanted to allow people to use the facilities that suited their self-designated "gender identity."

The store’s policy comes at a time when many people are trying to figure out one simple question: what is my gender? Some people would say that the answer is easy to find: Just look in your pants. But others are wondering if biological makeup is a legit guide for determining one’s gender. They might say, “What if you look like a man but you *feel* like a woman?” These people would argue that what you feel in your heart is more important than what you find in your underwear.

If the truth be told, nobody is able to determine his or gender on their own. One cannot find it merely by looking at his genitalia, examining how he feels, or by taking a popular opinion poll. Gender, like the question of when life begins, is above our paygrade. It is a question only God can answer (Genesis 1:27, 2:18.

***Hell: “***I can’t believe in a God who sends people to hell.” This is a common objection to Christianity. Many people reject the faith because they find the doctrine of eternal, conscious punishment adverse to the notion of a loving God.

But think about such a statement. From whence comes their understanding of God? Is their belief rooted in God’s revelation of himself? Not at all. They started with their own conception of God and love. In essence, they can’t believe in a God who sends people to hell because they don’t want to believe in such a God. They put a greater emphasis on their own understanding and deny what God has said about himself. What they end up doing is fashioning their own god—one that will suit their own preferences.

All of the above examples deal with some of life’s most fundamental questions. And they all illustrate why we need the Bible. We must have a direct revelation from God to guide us into all truth. If we do not have this infallible guide, everything becomes subject to our own opinions, whims, and futile thinking—much like a board game where you make up the rules as you go.

When it comes to the issue of truth, we might invoke the “*Grand Sezwhoo*.” No, he’s not a wizard with a pointy hat. It is the question you pose in order to determine one’s basis for knowledge and truth.

Someone might postulate a belief, such as, “Life begins at the 20th week of a pregnancy.” To this we will respond and say, “*Says who*?” *Who says* that this is when life begins? What authority or standard determines this? Science does not tell us when life begins. It might tell us about the life of a baby at that point—about how this child has a heartbeat, fingers, eyes, etc. But no human understanding can deduce the true existence of life from the mere biological make-up.

Neither does society determine when life starts. If we get enough people to vote and say that life doesn’t begin until the 40th week of pregnancy, we can change it.

*Then who’s to say when life begins?*  The answer is God, the one who creates each individual person! In the Bible He tells us that life begins at conception (Isaiah 44:24, Jeremiah 1:5, Psalm 139:13–16). This is why we should not abort children at any stage in a pregnancy. Rather, we should do all we can to protect and preserved the unborn from the very beginning.

God is the only authority that can give us a firm foundation for knowing anything. This is why the Bible says that the beginning of wisdom is found in the fear of God (Proverbs 1:7). We must acknowledge God and His word if we want to have a sure foundation for determining what is right and wrong, true and false, good and bad.

Think back to the opening discussion questions. How absurd would it be for a cosmetology student to think that the blue wire on a bomb should be the one that is cut? She might feel that it is the right one, but her feelings may not correspond to what is true. If she trusts in her own understanding, it might be costly!

When it comes to bomb diffusing, you want a guide that is not going to fail you. You want an expert, someone who knows what he is doing, to give you the truth and not lead you astray. The same is true for life. It is foolish to lean on one’s own understanding or the understanding of foolish men. You should seek an expert who will give you the truth and not lead you astray.

The good news is that God is the ultimate expert when it comes to life. What’s more, he has given you a trustworthy guide for living. He has revealed everything you need for life and faith in the Bible. This is why the catechism says that the “Word of God, which is contained in the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him.”

Why do people not want to trust the Bible?

Why are these silly reasons?

List some other beliefs that people have. How can asking “Says who?” help to show how those beliefs are right or wrong?

**FURTHER STUDY**

Read the following passages. Notice the importance of God’s word in each.

Proverbs 3:5-7

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.*

Galatians 1:8-9 ESV

*But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.*

What authority does each passage say should be trusted?

What is to be rejected?

Can a person be smart and not wise? What does it mean to be “wise in your own eyes?”

**BRING IT HOME**

At the beginning of this chapter it stated that the Bible is a unique book. The following terms help us understand how it is unique and why we should accept it (as opposed to other religious books, such as the Koran, Book of Mormon, etc.).

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| --- | --- | --- |
| THE BIBLE IS… |  | SUPPORTING PASSAGE |
| Inspired | God supernaturally guided the authors of the Bible, causing them to write exactly what He intended |  |
| Inerrant | The Bible is without error in all of its teachings and does not contradict itself or contain anything false. |  |
| Infallible | The Bible is completely trustworthy and will not lead you astray. |  |
| Sufficient | God’s word is able to address every issue of your life. Its truth is sufficient to answer all of life’s questions. |  |
| Clear | Bible’s teaching is not difficult to understand. God speaks in such a simple way that virtually everyone can grasp what He wants us to believe and do. |  |

Fill in the last column by going back through the chapter and looking at the various Bible passages that were quoted. Match the verses that support each definition/term.

**PRAYER**

*Heavenly Father, Thank you for revealing yourself to us in the Bible and for showing us how we can glorify you. Help us to live by your word alone and let its teaching shape everything we believe and do.*