Section: Doctrine of the Word of God (Bibliology)

**TEACHING NOTES**

**Q26. How is the Bible to be read and heard?**

The Bible is to be read and heard with joy, diligence, respect, carefulness, and prayer, that we may accept sound doctrine with faith, store it in our hearts, and practice it in our lives. In it we find God’s revealed will; therefore, we study it to know, trust, love, and obey God.

**Psalm 119:11**I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

**1 Peter 3:15** but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect

**Psalm 119:104-105**Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

**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.

**Psalm 1:1-2** Blessed is the man who...his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

Let’s pray

I am really excited to bring the teaching tonight. This is a very practical lesson this week that has an incredibly important place in the life of every believer. The Protestant Reformation was grounded on the basis of Scripture Alone as our authority for all matters pertaining to life and godliness. Sola Scriptura (the Latin phrase for scripture alone) was the backbone of the reformation because all of the other issues they faced (including justification by faith alone) always came back to the question; by what authority do we decide these matters? The papacy was arguing that there was another authority besides the scripture – they believed that church tradition and the Pope were equally authoritative. But at the end of the day – in its practical application – scripture actually becomes subject to the authority of the Pope and his own interpretation.

As the preacher in Ecclesiastes has said, “there is nothing new under the sun.” The dangers of usurping the authority of God’s word with some other authority are just as real and prevalent for us today as they were then and really always have been. The first sin ever committed was a result of Adam rejecting the authority of God’s word. “Do not eat of it or you shall surely die” were God’s words to Adam. His word was clear, understandable, sufficient, and authoritative. There may have been many unanswered questions for Adam in regards to the forbidden fruit, but what he needed to know was plain. Adam chose to disregard what he knew and understood of God’s word. He treated the Word of God with contempt and did not give it the reverence and respect it was due.

The answer to our question this week has several points that are each an important component of how we should read and hear the Bible. Steve spent three weeks teaching about the origin and transmission of the Bible and how we know that it’s the infallible Word of God. If you missed it I would encourage you to get the notes and go back through it with someone in your group.

So...we are approaching our lesson tonight with the assumption that our acceptance of the Bible as the infallible and inerrant word of God has been established.

When we ask the question “how is the bible to be read and heard?”- if we apply the principle of Sola Scriptura it means that we are really asking “what does the Bible say about how we should read and hear the Bible?”

The Bible is chocked full of very clear and understandable statements having to do with how we should read and hear the Bible. The answer to this week’s Catechism question is a summarized statement of what the Bible teaches in regards to how we should read and hear God’s written word, so let me read it and then we’ll unpack it.

Q.26 HOW IS THE BIBLE TO BE READ AND HEARD?..........

The Bible is to be read and heard with joy, diligence, respect, carefulness, and prayer, that we may accept sound doctrine with faith, store it in our hearts, and practice it in our lives. In it we find God’s revealed will; therefore, we study it to know, trust, love, and obey God..

* With Joy

We start with joy. Why is it important to be joyful in our reading and hearing the Bible? Because if we are not approaching it with joy then we are not taking it for what it really is! The infinite, all-powerful, all-knowing, perfectly holy, God of all creation……… the maker of Heaven and Earth, and all that is in them has spoken to us. He has told us everything we need to know about who He is and why we were created and what will satisfy our deepest needs and desires and how we can be in intimate fellowship with Him for all eternity.

The **London Baptist Confession** makes this point: “The whole counsel of God concerning everything essential for his own glory and man’s salvation, faith, and life is either explicitly stated or by necessary inference contained in the Holy Scriptures.”

When we hold a Bible in our hands, we are in possession of every single word that God deemed necessary and good for us to have. If that does not fill us with joy, we need to do business with what we really believe about the value of God’s word.

Listen to the Psalmist in Psalm 1:1-2

*Blessed is the man [whose] ... delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night.*

His delight is in the law of the Lord. He finds joy in what the law has to say. The commands, the rules, the promises, the warnings; they are all a delight to him. It doesn’t say “one of his delights is in the law of the Lord”, it says “his delight”. In other words, when you look at his life and evaluate how he spends his time and energy you see that as a whole, his delight in God’s law is greater than his delight in anything else.

In our sinful flesh, even the ***word*** law has negative connotations. We like the law when it works to protect us from others or when it aligns with our own desires for how things should operate, but most people are not in love with the idea of being bound to a law that rules over their lives. It goes against our fleshly desire to be the master of our own lives, to be our own ruler. We don’t want anyone or anything to restrict our desire to live however we choose.

But God’s law is not only written by God who is perfect, but it is a reflection of His own perfect character. God’s law is perfect and good and beautiful because it is from Him. As children of God who have come to know Him as a loving father, we do not see any of His commands as restricting our desires or our joy. We have been given a new heart with new desires and we see His commands as loving instruction and it is our desire to be corrected where our thinking is still being sanctified.

**1 John 5:3** For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

When we see God’s law for what it is – God’s love for us being expressed in His loving instruction for how we can find true joy and happiness, how we can know Him and be like Him – when we see God’s law this way, it will not be burdensome, it will be our joy!!

We’ll approach God’s word with a humility that is eager to be corrected by God’s law because we know that it is the means to true happiness. We will keep the commands of God because we see how good they are. With a clear view of His law, we’ll see the foolishness and hideousness of our sin. With a clear view of the gospel we’ll live a joyful life of genuine, ongoing repentance, a repentance that is shaped and instructed by God’s word.

The man whose delight is in the law of the Lord is a blessed man, and on God’s law he meditates day and night. This is not a formula for blessing that we just follow like a recipe. We don’t just make a decision to delight in God’s word and then spend all day thinking about it while we wait for the blessings to show up. Our delight in God’s word is part of the blessing. The Psalmist meditates on it all the time because it’s his delight. He loves to think about God’s law because in it he sees the divine revelation of the beauty of who God is and what He is like.

Psalm 119:97 says: Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.

This doesn’t mean that the law is the final object of worship. It means that the law of God is a means to true worship. The man who is blessed delights in the law because it reveals the invisible God. We cannot see God, but through His word we come to know Him more fully and can see amazing glimpses of His glory. Surely that causes JOY in a Christian!

If we delight in God as our savior and believe that the Bible is how He has chosen to most clearly reveal Himself to us, how He has determined to speak to us, doesn’t it make sense that our joy in Him would directly overflow into joy for His word?

Let’s look at the next part of our answer:

* DILIGENCE

The Bible also teaches us to be DILIGENT in our reading and hearing the word of God. The principle in Psalms 1 of meditating day and night on the word of God is found in several commands of scripture.

**Joshua 1:8** “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it.”

**Deuteronomy 6:4-9** "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

“You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.” This does not mean that there are 4 particular times of the day when we are to teach and talk about God’s word. It means we are to focus on God’s word ALL the time. There is no time during our 24 hour day that we should not be mindful of how God’s word is instructing us and those God has given us the opportunity to lead. This doesn’t just mean our children. When you are given opportunity to counsel others, is it God’s word you are pointing them to? The best counsel we can give anyone is the truth that we can attribute to His word. And that goes for anyone we’re counseling whether they’re a believer or not.

This passage also says, “You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.” The Pharisees actually wore phylacteries as a way of keeping this command. These were leather boxes with scripture in them that they actually tied on their wrists and on their foreheads. They took this command very literally but the symbolism of the command was meant to remind them to make God’s word the governing ruler of what they did with their hands (their actions), and what they thought in their minds. God’s word should govern everything we do and everything we think.

“You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” This is meant to convey the principle of letting God’s word rule in your home and everywhere outside of your home. Where does that leave for us to not be under the authority and rule of God’s word? God is being very thorough here in describing the kind of diligence we should take to be governed by His word.

Websters dictionary defines diligent as: characterized by steady, earnest, and energetic effort **:** painstaking – which means to take pains.

This almost sounds contradictory to what we just learned doesn’t it? How does taking pains in our receiving the Word reconcile with us being joyful in receiving the word? If we don’t understand this, our efforts to be diligent can quickly become a joyless obligation to perform.

The diligence we are talking about here is the natural result of our delight in God’s word. Joy and diligence are necessarily connected.

If we truly delight in something, we are going to be diligent in our pursuit of it. If a man says that his delight is his children but he spends all of his time working and pursuing other activities and rarely ever spends time with his children we would question the veracity of his claim to delight in his children. He may have a genuine affection for his children and truly enjoy the time he spends with them, but if he is unwilling to prioritize spending time with them over the time spent doing other things, how much is that delight actually being expressed?

If a man truly delights in his children, if he truly loves them, he will prioritize the time to cultivate that love and delight. He’ll take pains to make sure that he spends time with them. The pain of giving up the time to do other things is out weighed by the joy he gets from spending time with his kids.

Let’s look at a biblical example of this:

Matt 13:44 The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

When the man finds the hidden treasure he immediately recognizes it’s worth. He is filled with joy knowing that what he has found is worth more than everything he has spent his life accumulating. Because he knows it’s value he is diligent to take whatever steps are necessary for him to have it.

That is the kind of diligence we should approach the word of God with. If we see it as precious treasure, we will take pains (joyful pains) to have it. Our diligence will pay dividends in our ongoing and increasing joy. The more that we commit ourselves to knowing and meditating on God’s word, the more we will enjoy it’s fruit.

Next…we’re to receive God’s word with respect.

* **Respect**

To respect is to hold in high esteem. We mean to give it reverence and honor. Showing honor to God’s word is the natural by-product of a right fear of God. If we fear God we will have great reverence for the words He has spoken to us.

**John 14:15** "If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”

If we honor Christ we will honor His word. We obey Christ when we obey His word. So giving respect to the Word of God also means that we accept it as authoritative, we receive it with obedience, we don’t disregard what it says. We show respect to it in the same way we would show respect if Jesus were speaking to us in person.

Let me say too that the respect for God’s word is a respect for the words themselves and the meaning behind those words. It’s a respect for what it teaches.

There are some who claim such a reverence for God’s word that they refuse to accept anything as biblical truth unless it is stated clearly in chapter and verse. A quick example of this kind of error is when people reject the doctrine of the trinity because there is no verse in the Bible that expressly says “God is trinity”. This is an improper respect for the Word of God because it is dismissing the way that God’s word communicates truth to us. The truth contained in scripture is not always easy to understand. The holy, infinite, all knowing, all powerful God who created the universe and everything in it has spoken to us. We cannot demand that he make every word He speaks to us simple and easy to understand. We must respect the fact that the Word of God will not be simple and easy for us to grasp, because of the fact that it is God’s word.

This respect for God’s word also means that we should not be flippant or careless with His word. So our next point is that we need to receive God’s word with carefulness.

* Carefulness

Joshua 1:8 “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it.”

Being careful means avoiding danger. This passage states that we avoid the danger of not doing what is written in God’s word by not letting it depart from our mouths, and by meditating on it constantly. Not only should we be regularly speaking God’s word to those around us, I think that what is meant by not departing from our mouths is that His word should always be affecting our speech. Our mouths and the words that come out of them should be ruled by the Word of God.

**Psalm 119:11**I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

If God’s Word is what is in our heart, if it is held with affection, if it is cherished in our thoughts, it will come out in our words and actions. If our hearts are filled up with God’s word, there will be no room for sin to reside there.

Jesus said in Luke 6:45 The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

The words that come out of our mouths come from what is stored up in our hearts.

Part of being careful with the Word planted in our hearts means to take care of it by not adulterating it with evil.

We’ve all heard the saying “garbage in garbage out.” Right? We live in a fallen sinful world and it would be impossible for us to completely abstain from hearing or seeing evil. This is why we must be diligent to counter act the influence of the world on our hearts and minds with the word of God. But think about how much we counter act the Word of God in our lives when we willingly choose to watch, listen, and enjoy the things that God’s word says we should avoid. We need to take care against the world’s influence.

We need to be on guard against letting evil into our hearts by filtering what we view and listen to. Think about it, what good would it do if I filled a bucket with purified water for drinking, but I just left it sitting out with no lid on it for trash to get in it or where others could use it to wash their hands in?

It would be a waste of time to store up good water and not make any effort to keep contamination out of it. We need to be on guard to protect our investment.

This is where the mandate to meditate on His word day and night comes in again. The more we are being influenced by the word of God, the less we will be influenced by the world.

One of the dangers so prevalent in the world is the danger of being deceived.

**1 Timothy 4:3-4** For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

There are many today who have found ways to twist the word of God in order to try and make it say what they want. They disobey the plain teaching of scripture and fabricate elaborate myths in order to deny the truth. The debate over biblical marriage and sexuality is an obvious example, but we are just as susceptible to the same kind of deception when we aren’t careful in our reading and interpretation of scripture. We must take great care in how we read and interpret scripture because our natural man is inclined to follow our own passions over the corrective word of God. This can play itself out in making quick, incorrect assumptions about what is being said, rather than making a slow and careful consideration of what the author was actually meaning to communicate and how a particular passage fits into the rest of scripture.

Many people today will say things like “God knows my heart” as a way of saying they believe that God is pleased with whatever effort they make but Scripture states otherwise. Paul, speaking of his Jewish brothers says in:

**Romans 10:1-2** Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

They (Paul’s peers) were diligent and eager in their efforts and belief but they operated in ignorance and rejection of the truth. What they believed and taught about God was wrong. Paul begins by acknowledging that they are NOT saved – “my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved”. True saving faith requires a right understanding of God’s word (particularly the gospel) with the fruit of good works being the result of that faith.

We must be careful to remember that hasty conclusions and careless interpretation of God’s word can have eternal consequences. We need to study and KNOW God’s word so that we will not be deceived by plausible arguments of human wisdom. “for the foolishness of God is wiser than men…”

* Prayer

And finally, we need prayer;

Prayer is a very important component. We need to remember that God’s Word is first and foremost His revelation of Himself to us. He is communicating who He is to us and showing us what makes Him worthy of our praise. When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, the foundation of the prayer was praise and worship for who God is, “our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.”

As we read and hear God’s word (Scripture) we should be compelled to let those words roll back off our tongues in worship and praise to Him.

We also need to pray for God to help us understand His word.

**James 1:5** “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.”

In our reverence and humility for God’s Word we must acknowledge that we are incapable of hearing or seeing the truth of God’s Word apart from the work of the Holy Spirit.

The **historic confession** again: “We acknowledge that the inward illumination of the Spirit of God is necessary for a saving understanding of what is revealed in the Word.”

God has promised to give us wisdom, but we are not to take His gifts for granted. We must acknowledge our need and ask Him. We certainly see this modeled for us in scripture.

**Psalm 119:124-125** Deal with your servant according to your steadfast love,  
    and teach me your statutes.  
**125**I am your servant; give me understanding,  
    that I may know your testimonies!

So we approach the word of God with joy, diligence, respect, carefulness, and prayer;

Our answer says we do this:

* SO THAT we may accept sound doctrine with faith, store it in our hearts, and practice it in our lives.

So that we may accept sound doctrine… This does not happen automatically church. Accepting sound doctrine very often begins with undoing our UNSOUND doctrine. Everyone starts out with a doctrine about God, whether they believe in him or not.

Most, if not all of us have had the experience of finding out that we have held to certain doctrines or beliefs about God that actually had no real grounding in scripture. It is a very difficult thing to have our beliefs undone, but it is also wonderful when we have the scales removed from our eyes.

It has been such a blessing to watch us grow as a church in the Word of God. The main way that God has brought this spiritual growth is through our commitment to Sola Scriptura/Scripture Alone.

Many of you have shared how God’s word has reformed your understanding of Him through the preaching on Sunday, your time here at midweek and in discipleship, and through your growing hunger for His word throughout the week. These stories almost always come with a humble acknowledgement of how wrong your thoughts were before the light of the word brought needed correction.

**Psalm 119:104-105**Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

As we grow in understanding we reject every false way. We don’t try to save face for our false understanding, we gladly reject it as foolishness that we have been set free from by His word and His Spirit. Then we embrace the way that the light of His word reveals the false ways that would lead us astray.

Our inherited sin nature is to want to make our own determinations about what is right and wrong. This means that our natural response to anything in God’s word that challenges our own thoughts, ideas, feelings, or beliefs is to reject it. Of course this rejection rarely if ever comes in the form of outright rejection.

The easiest way that I have found to dismiss God’s word is to find other’s who agree with my point of view, or to write it off as too difficult to know for certain, or to focus my attention on my own understanding in an arrogant way of saying I KNOW I am right and plug my ears to any message that would try to challenge that view.

When we read and hear the Bible we are receiving God’s word which is always sound. The problem is when we misunderstand it and actually believe something different than what is meant. Sound doctrine only comes from the kind of diligence and respect we have talked about. That’s why the call in 2 Timothy 2:15 is to “**rightly handle** the word of truth.” There’s a way to rightly handle the Bible, and there’s many ways to wrongly handle it.

Meditating on God’s word is more than just thinking about the wonderful promises of God and glorying in the beauty of who He is; it is definitely that, but it is also thinking deeply about what God’s word say’s so that we may understand it properly. There is a big difference between someone who can recite the entire book of Ephesians versus someone who rightly understands what the book of Ephesians is saying. Remember, the Pharisees in Jesus’ day knew what the word of God said, they literally memorized entire sections of scripture, but they did not understand it rightly, their doctrine was not sound. They stored the word of God up in their brains as a way to boast in their self-righteousness, but they did not submit to its authority in a reverent way where they allowed themselves to be taught by it and corrected in their thinking.

**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.

The scripture is profitable FOR teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness. The way we profit from it is by being taught by it, by being reproved by it, by being corrected by it, by being trained by it.

We need to understand that this is not a one and done thing. We don’t ever get to a point where the scripture no longer has anything to teach us.

If we are going to profit from scripture we must be humble enough to acknowledge our need for teaching, reproof, correction, and training.

Teaching is opposed to ignorance

Reproof is opposed to foolishness

Correction is opposed to error

And training in righteousness is opposed to sin and lawlessness

Most of us would probably rather not be called ignorant, foolish, wrong, or sinful; but we must be humble and willing to have these things identified in us if we are to profit from scripture. As we submit to the word of God we are made complete, and we will see the fruit of good works in our lives as our thinking is brought in line with Scripture.

* With Faith

So that we may accept sound doctrine ***with faith, store it in our hearts, and practice it in our lives.-***

**Hebrews 11:1** Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Our faith will grow in direct proportion to our joy, diligence, respect, carefulness, and prayer as we read and hear God’s word. The genuineness of our faith (our assurance of the veracity of God’s word – our confidence in it) will be displayed as we put God’s word into practice in our lives. If we are not practicing - if we are not living our lives in obedience to all of God’s revealed will, then we are not truly receiving it with faith as the word of God.

**Matthew 6:21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

We store God’s word in our hearts because of its great value to us. We store it in our hearts AS we meditate on it and SO we can meditate on it

* In it we find God’s revealed will

**1689 LBC:** “The whole counsel of God concerning everything essential for his own glory and man’s salvation, faith, and life **is either explicitly stated or by necessary inference** contained in the Holy Scriptures”

Everything essential..**is either explicitly stated or by necessary inference** contained in the Holy Scriptures.”

When you want to know what holy living is, you find his commands in the text of the Bible. When you want to know what wise living is you find His wisdom in the text.

God has given liberty on many things and has given specific commands on others. We need to know what His revealed will is. Where there is liberty there is still revealed will that governs us. Christian liberty does not mean there are areas of life where we have freedom to decide for ourselves how we will live.

Not sure you should be dating that person? God’s will has commands about that. It doesn’t tell you WHO you should date or marry, but it tells you the kind of person you should marry and that you may marry.

Not sure if you should take that new job? God’s word has commands about that and wisdom layers to add. . It doesn’t tell you WHAT job you must take, but it tells you the kind of work you may do, how to do it, and for Who you do it.

Not sure what shirt to wear tomorrow? Yes even things as simple as that. God’s word has commands about that and wisdom layers to add. It doesn’t tell you WHAT shirt you must wear, but it tells you the kind of clothing you must wear (modest clothing) and for Who you should point to with your choice (not you, but your Creator).

There is no part of our lives that God’s word does not speak to in some important way. Show me a person who believes that there are certain areas of life that God’s word does not speak to and I’ll show you a person who struggles to know God’s will for MOST areas of life.

If you don’t believe that God’s word is sufficient to inform you in every area of your life you will look for answers outside of God’s word to inform you, and will by default treat them as more authoritative and more sufficient.

So, because God’s word reveals His will for our lives, our answer goes on to say:

* therefore we study it to know, trust, love, and obey God.

If we want to know God and His will we must be growing in our knowledge of His word through diligent study. As our knowledge grows, if Jesus truly is our Lord, we’ll see our trust in Him grow stronger, our love for Him grow deeper, and our obedience to Him grow more faithful.

I am so thankful for the work God is doing in all of you, in your diligence to be here on Sunday to hear the word preached, and here at Midweek for further study, along with all the other ways study is happening throughout the week. I don’t think you need any evidence for the high value we place on the study of God’s word here at Disciples Church. But the thing we want to be known for even more than that is that we make disciples – not just people who know sound doctrine, but people who live sound doctrine and are teaching others to live sound doctrine. “We study it to know, trust, love, and obey God.”

This is Jesus’ command to us in **Matthew 28:19-20** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, …*teaching them to observe* (not just to know intellectually, but to obey, to do*)* all that I have commanded you.

A true disciple of Christ wants to know His word because it is how we can know Him, and we want to know Him because we love Him, and we want to obey Him because we trust Him and know that in His perfect love for us, His commands for us are how we experience a closer walk with Him.

I want to read you the lyrics of a spoken word song by Beautiful Eulogy called Devotion. It’s a little long but I think you will find them very helpful for our topic. They are not in your handout so just listen as I read them.

What is authentic faith?  
The cultivation of an optimistic outlook on life with a kind of spirituality attached to it?  
A holy hoping for the best?  
Is this how you think of faith?  
Authentic faith is the confident assurance in events not yet seen  
Faith is not a call to believe in things when common sense tells you not to  
Faith is not a mindless stab in the dark  
It is not a crossing of the fingers and hoping for the best  
It is not a leap into apparent nothingness  
It's a word that speaks of reasoned, careful, deliberate, intentional thought  
Thought upon what? God and his promises  
If you are absolutely gripped by the coming realities that have been promised to you by God, then how you live your life in the present will be radically different than if you did not possess that certainty  
This is what faith is, my friends! Positive certainty expressed in action  
Authentic faith is not merely believing in God. It is believing God  
Taking God at his word, living in obedience to his revelation whatever the cost because you know down deep in your bones that God will always do what he says, that his speaking is his doing  
It is an abiding assurance in God and his promises that animates you to persevere in your obedience to Him  
Do you wish to be a more consistently obedient, steadily persevering Christian?  
A stronger Christian?  
A more courageous and outspoken Christian?  
Then you need to strengthen your faith!  
Your faith instinctively strengthens in direct proportion to the expansion of the object of your faith!  
You expand your understanding of the object of your faith and faith itself will obediently follow  
The object of your faith-if indeed you are a Christian-is Jesus Christ and all of his promises  
Is your faith weak?  
It is owing to the fact that you don't know the object of your faith well enough  
But when Jesus Christ becomes progressively bigger, or better yet, your understanding of who he is progressively conforms to reality, your faith will become increasingly stronger  
But how does that happen?  
By immersing yourself in the faith-arousing Word of God  
Read of Jesus Christ!  
The same powerful Word that long ago brought the universe to life is the same Word that can bring you to life and furnish you with a faith that is truly and authentically Christian.

End quote.

Praise God for the work of His Holy Spirit to give us an authentic, saving faith grounded in the testimony of Scripture alone! And praise Him for the work of His Holy Spirit giving us ongoing and increasing knowledge of Him revealed in the testimony of Scripture alone!

If you truly love God, then surely you love His word.

Go to His word, live in His word, submit to His word, and live His word. Read and hear His word with **joy, diligence, respect, carefulness, and prayer, that we may accept sound doctrine with faith, store it in our hearts, and practice it in our lives. In it we find God’s revealed will; therefore, we study it to know, trust, love, and obey God.**