

LESSON 1 – Introduction

Our Biblical Worldview and Seeking to Understand

(based on the Foreward pp. v-xiv)



Introduction

The drip, drip, drip of this world's attitudes and philosophies can erode the foundation of our faith and overshadow our thinking with clouds of doubt and confusion. We may get so discouraged by what we see and hear that we don't want to talk about our faith with anyone. But God placed us on this earth at this time for a reason. He says to us, *"In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer (lit. "apology" = "defense") to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander"* (1 Peter 3:15-16). The popular book *Quick to Listen* gives us insights into the thoughts and arguments used by some who espouse those attitudes and philosophies. This Bible study leads us to dig deeper and consider a biblical response that might lovingly and gently guide others to the truth. With God's help, this introduction to *Quick to Listen* will accomplish three goals:

- Our faith will be better prepared and strengthened against Satan's attacks that come our way as we listen to evolutionists, atheists, skeptics, and members of the LGBTQ community.
- We will clearly understand God's big purpose for our life.
- We will be filled with compassion for those who do not yet know (or who doubt or resist) God's love and plans for them so that we will be *quick to listen* and eagerly look for ways to share all the truth that God has given us.

1.) What challenges or arguments do you foresee in listening to the following people?

- Evolutionists
- Atheists
- Skeptics
- Friends and members of the LGBTQ community

2.) Read the following quotes from the Apostle Paul and Martin Luther in which they describe their past and the introduction of God's grace in Christ into their lives. What similarities do you see? How did their conversions transform their perspectives? How is the same true of us?

St. Paul: I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service. Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Timothy 1:12-17)

Luther: Though I lived as a monk without reproach, I felt that I was a sinner before God with an extremely disturbed conscience. I could not believe that he was placated by my satisfaction. I did not love, yes, I hated the righteous God who punishes sinners, and secretly, if not blasphemously, certainly murmuring greatly, I was angry with God, and said, “As if, indeed, it is not enough, that miserable sinners, eternally lost through original sin, are crushed by every kind of calamity by the law of the Decalogue, without having God add pain to pain by the gospel and also by the gospel threatening us with his righteousness and wrath!” Thus I raged with a fierce and troubled conscience. Nevertheless, I beat importunately upon Paul at that place, most ardently desiring to know what St. Paul wanted.

At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words, namely, “In it the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, “He who through faith is righteous shall live.”” There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel, namely, the passive righteousness with which merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, “He who through faith is righteous shall live.” Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates.

Evolutionists, atheists, skeptics, and the LGBTQ community have worldviews that are radically different than that of Paul, Luther, and ourselves. Their worldviews also determine the way they look at things. In our study of *Quick to Listen*, we will seek to understand their worldviews and the rationale behind them. This will help us listen without becoming defensive so that as God gives us the opportunity, we may share the reason for the hope that we have. But first let’s sharpen our understanding of our own worldview. We will do this through a study of 2 Peter 1:1-4, in which Peter prepares his readers for life in the end times.

God’s gracious plan and purpose for our lives

2 Peter 1:1-2 Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained the same kind of faith as ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

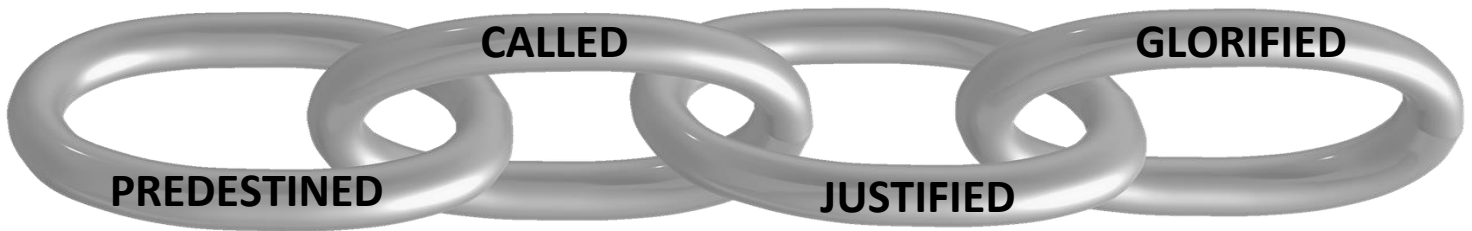
- 3.) On what basis did God choose us to believe and trust the same things the apostles believed and trusted?

Ephesians 1:3-5 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.

4.) The Apostles' and Nicene Creeds are good summaries of what the apostles believed, trusted, and taught. Why do you think these summaries have stood the test of time and are still such an integral part of our worship services after all these years?

5.) What does being chosen to have the same kind of faith as the apostles mean for us?

Romans 8:28-30 We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.



Resting on the truth

While we can never rationally grasp that God loves us from eternity to eternity, we can rest on this truth and rejoice in it! Our salvation is entirely God's doing!

6.) Because God has chosen us for eternal life with him, of what can we remind ourselves when...

- we have doubts whether something God clearly tells us in his Word is really true?

Isaiah 55:8-9 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth."

Psalms 119:93 I will never forget your precepts, for by them you have preserved my life.

John 6:63 "The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life."

- like Job, we have lost everything we hold dear and it feels like our prayers are bouncing off the ceiling?

Psalms 22:1-5 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, and am not silent. Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the praise of Israel. In you our fathers put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them. They cried to you and were saved; in you they trusted and were not disappointed.

- all around us it seems that wrong is now right, right is now wrong, and evil is winning?

Malachi 3:14-18 “You have said, ‘It is futile to serve God. What did we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the Lord Almighty? But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly the evildoers prosper, and even those who challenge God escape.’ ”

Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honored his name. “They will be mine,” says the Lord Almighty, “in the day when I make up my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him. And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.”

1 Corinthians 15:25 For [Christ] must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

In the weeks ahead, we will discover that there isn’t much people can say to us to which we can’t say back, “We know how you feel. We’ve been there ourselves,” or, “We have similar thoughts or have done similar things.” What enables us to overcome those challenges to our faith is the knowledge of God’s purpose in giving us faith. In the following verses, Peter explains that purpose.

2 Peter 1:3-4 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and excellence. Through these he has given us his precious and great promises so that through them you may share in the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that sinful lust causes in the world.

7.) What was God’s purpose for us when he gave us faith to believe all that Christ did and won for us?

8.) For the sake of Christ’s merits, what else did God give us when he gave us faith?

9.) How do Peter’s words fortify our new man when our sinful flesh says, “I can’t change the way I act; this is just the way I am.”

Galatians 5:16-17 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.

10.) How do Paul’s words encourage us when our willpower falters or we struggle with confusion about the meaning and purpose of our lives?

Closing Thought

Next Time: Listening to Evolutionists