

GROWING DEEP IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Returning to Our Roots

STUDY ONE

The Value of Knowing the Scoop

1 Timothy 4:1–6; 1 Peter 3:13–16

God wants us to pursue spiritual knowledge with passion and with our whole heart.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

In the internet age, we can search the web on any subject with just a few taps on our smartphones. So vast is the knowledge at our fingertips that our brains can't process it all. In the massive mountain of data, which facts are truly meaningful? How do we know what is true? Which of the so-called experts should we believe?

It's understandable when people say they suffer from *information overload*.

In the *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, we search the *Scriptures* to find the truth our souls crave and the information we can't live without. On these ancient pages, we discover the surest answers to life's deepest questions:

- Does God exist? What is He like? How can I know Him personally?
- Is this mortal life all there is? What happens when I die? What does the future hold?
- What is my purpose? Where do I belong? How should I live?

We won't find dependable answers to these questions in any storehouse of human musings, no matter how vast. The knowledge we seek exists only in the infinite mind of God which, thankfully, He has revealed in His Word.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

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The Value of Knowing the Scoop

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In our information-saturated times, it's vital that we know the real scoop on what matters most and that we root ourselves in God's truth. Our souls depend on it.



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Before searching the Scriptures, we always pray for God's Spirit to illumine our minds and hearts. You may wish to pray as Pastor Chuck Swindoll prays: "I often pray, 'Lord, speak to me. Help me understand what this passage is saying. I am listening. I am sensitive to Your truth. Lead me into it.'"¹ Write your prayer below.



Searching the Scriptures Study Tool

For helpful instruction from Pastor Chuck Swindoll on this method, consult the Insight for Living Ministries online instructional web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)." There, you can also follow the [link to purchase a copy](#) of Pastor Chuck's book, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

The Scriptures place a high value on spiritual knowledge. In Exodus, God etched His words into stone. In Deuteronomy, Moses placed knowledge of God's law at the center of family life (*Deuteronomy 6:1–6*). In the gospels, Jesus often appealed to the Scriptures in debates with opponents: "Have you not read?" (*Matthew 12:3–5; 19:4; 22:31*). And in the epistles, Paul frequently pressed his points: "I do not want you to be unaware" (*Romans 1:13; 1 Corinthians 10:1; 12:1*).

Choose "knowledge rather than pure gold," counsels the writer of Proverbs (Proverbs 8:10). Why is knowledge of God and His Word so valuable? Let's look at two main reasons.



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Observation: Reasons for Knowing the Scoop

Searching the Scriptures is a four-step Bible study method. In the *observation* phase, we examine what the biblical passage says. Take your time as you read. Notice the action words. Observe commands, statements of truth, contrasts and comparisons, figures of speech, and cause-and-effect. Careful observation is the key to accurate understanding.

To Explain Our Hope in Christ—1 Peter 3:13–16

Read *1 Peter 3:13–16* to understand the first reason knowing doctrine is valuable. In this passage, Peter urged his persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ not to “worry or be afraid” of the threats from their enemies (3:14). Instead, what did Peter tell them to do? What manner and reason did he give them for obeying his instruction according to *3:15–16*?

To Counter False Teaching—1 Timothy 4:1–6

Turn from Peter’s instructions to Paul’s warning in *1 Timothy 4:1–6*—the second reason for knowing doctrine. Read carefully the warning in *4:1*. Who is the source of the warning? How did Paul emphasize the warning’s serious nature? What did Paul say would happen? When? Why?



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Paul responded to the false teaching by explaining several points of sound theology in *1 Timothy 4:2–5*. What points did Paul list?

In *4:6*, what was Paul's conclusion to Timothy about the reasons for knowing "good doctrine" (*4:6 NASB*)?

I must constantly nourish myself in the Book. The greater the pressure and the more the problems, the more I have to pore over this Book. As my mind stays sharp with the truth, then I can deliver it and, most importantly, live it. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Training in Sound Doctrine

The next phase is *interpretation*, in which we seek to understand the meaning of the passage for the original readers. In *1 Peter 3:15*, Peter used the Greek word, *apologia*, which his readers would have recognized "as a legal term in the courts," according to Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest.² "Make a defense" is the New American Standard Bible's translation of the word.



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What did Peter mean by using this term? How would Peter have expected his readers to “be ready” to defend their faith (1 Peter 3:15)?

Peter urged his readers to explain their faith using reasoned arguments, much like the arguments a defense attorney might present in a courtroom. In a similar way, Paul corrected false teaching through reasoned arguments based on solid doctrine. How would Timothy have understood Paul’s admonition to nourish himself “on the words of the faith” and “good doctrine” (1 Timothy 4:6 NASB)? To what was Paul specifically referring?

So, whether we’re defending our beliefs to unbelievers or correcting believers who have drifted into false teaching, knowing the doctrines of our faith is essential. Draw your own conclusions about the value of sound doctrine. In what ways will “knowing the scoop” benefit you?



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Correlation: Consequences of Lack of Knowledge

In *correlation*, we examine similar passages to aid understanding. In Hosea’s day, the people of Israel had morally descended into a deep pit of sin. What transgressions did the Lord identify in *Hosea 4:1–3*?

At the root of their sin was an absence of virtue—“no faithfulness, no kindness”—and the reason for their absence of virtue was their lack of “knowledge of God” (4:1).

Who was responsible for teaching spiritual truth, according to *Hosea 4:4–6*? What were the consequences of their lapse of responsibility?

What warning can you draw from Israel’s negative example?



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Ignorance is not bliss. Ignorance is the breeding ground for fear, prejudice, and superstition. What is true regarding general knowledge is even more true in the realm of spiritual knowledge. Sound doctrine is invaluable as a means to survival. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Bringing the Benefits Home

Now that we understand the importance of knowing God’s Word and the dangers of not knowing it, the next step is *application*: “How can I put the principles I learned into practice?”

Pastor Chuck Swindoll summed up the passages we studied with six benefits of knowing the scoop about sound doctrine.

1. *It gives substance to my faith.* I don’t have to rely on emotion or another’s opinions.
2. *It stabilizes me during times of testing.* I stand on God’s Word amid life’s stormy trials.
3. *It enables me to handle the Bible correctly.* I am less likely to misinterpret Scripture.
4. *It equips me to detect and confront error.* I can spot false teaching and warn others.
5. *It makes me confident in my walk with God.* I live with contentment and conviction.
6. *It filters out my fears and superstitions.* I trust the Sovereign Lord who made it all.

Which of these benefits sounds the most helpful for you today as you seek to cultivate intimacy with Jesus and obedience to His Word? Why is that benefit most important to you right now?



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Of the questions listed in the introduction, which ones echo the questions your heart is asking? Are there other questions to which you'd like to find answers in the Scriptures?

What goal would you like to set at the outset of our in-depth series on Bible doctrines? What would you like to achieve through your study?

Close your study time with a prayer of willingness to seek God's knowledge as a treasure more valuable than any riches this world can offer. In this quiet moment, hear God's invitation:

*Choose my instruction rather than silver,
and knowledge rather than pure gold.
For wisdom is far more valuable than rubies.
Nothing you desire can compare with it. (Proverbs 8:10–11)*



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A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I truly desire Your knowledge more than pure gold and godly wisdom more than the costliest gems. Nothing I own is as precious to me as the assurance of Your promises and the hope of Your Word. I know that You have a plan for my life that is far more wonderful than I can imagine. Teach me Your Word. With all my heart, I seek to know You. In Jesus' name, amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2016), 128.
2. Kenneth S. Wuest, *First Peter in the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1942), 89.

