

Beginnings – ORIGIN *(Where did we come from?)*

- **Only Two Choices**
- **Realize the Significance**
- **Is it Faith or Science?**
 - LAB - Lookable, Accessible, Breakable
- **Guess at the Evidence**
- **Inspect the Evidence**
 - Universe = "Decay"
 - Age of the Earth = "Can't Say"
 - Origin of Life by Chance = "No Way"
 - Evolution of Species and Man = "Lacks Genes and Tweens"
- **No Compromise**

DON'T - Death, Orders of Creation, Names in genealogies, Ten Commandments refer to seven-day week

Intent of Life – LIFE *(Why are we here?)*

- **Love - GOD and MAN**
- **Increase - GROW**
- **Faithfulness - Time, Talent, Treasure**
- **Eternity – Past, Present, Future**

Authority – POWER *(Who's in charge?)* A God Who is:

- **Personal and Loving**
- **Omnipotent**
- **Wise and All-Knowing**
- **Everywhere and Eternal**
- **Righteous and Reliable**

Standards – RULES *(What are the rules?)* God's rules are:

- **Revealed supernaturally, not derived by reason**
- **Universal and apply to everyone, everywhere, all the time**
- **Loving**
- **Enforced**
- **Steadfast**

Impossible Instructions?

The instructions and commands God gives us are more than difficult for us to do. They are impossible to do in our own strength. But God promises to enable us to do the things He commands us to do. He is the one who gives us the ability to live the life He calls us to.

*May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and **he will do it.*** 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

*Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, **he is able to help those who are being tempted.***
Hebrews 2:18

***His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness** through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.* 2 Peter 1:3

God's Will for My Life?

Often people will talk about God's will for them when they are faced with big decisions like careers, college, marriage, etc. We certainly should seek God's wisdom and guidance, but sometimes I think the term "God's will" is not properly used. At times God may give individuals a clear long-term vision or show them a lifetime direction. But normally God doesn't lift the veil of the future and show us where he's going to take us. He gives us guidance in the smaller day-to-day decisions we make, and these add up to a lifetime of following Him.

What God does show us clearly is who He wants us to **be**. My ability to please God with my life is not dependent on my ability to decipher the mystery of His long-term plan for me. What is important is that I respond in a God-honoring way to whatever happens. The story of Job is a lesson in humbly accepting God's right to bring blessings or allow curses – *"The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised."* Job 2:21. See also 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7, 1 Peter 2:15.

Whether or not I always make perfect decisions, I can always know God's will for me because He tells me plainly in the following verse:

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

L - Love

When Jesus was asked to identify the greatest commandments from God, this is what he said:

"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:29-31)

Obviously this topic of love is very important to God. In our culture we tend to view love in emotional terms, but the Bible paints love in the context of obedience. Jesus said "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me." (John 14:21) Jesus didn't say we had to feel loving toward him, although it is natural for us to love him in return for the incredible sacrifice he has made and continues to make for us. If love is simply an emotion, we can easily use the excuse of not being able to help how we feel. **But if love is instead a commitment to doing what is right and in the best interest of another**, then we CHOOSE to love by choosing to obey God's instructions on what is right.

If Jesus says these are the greatest commandments, let's look at how we accomplish God's purpose in our lives by obeying in the areas of loving Him and others:

Loving GOD

If we rely on our own intellect to figure out ways to love God, we are quickly forced to admit defeat. Let's consider just a few of the challenges:

- **God is infinite** (*where do you find Him?*)
- **God is spirit** and we can't see him in a literal sense (*how do you give Him a hug?*)
- **God owns everything** (*what gift do you give to someone who truly has everything?*)
- **God is perfect** (*how long is He going to enjoy being around me?*)

Mercifully, God has not left us to figure out how to love him. As with the statement of Jesus above, God says that we love Him by doing what He requires of us. This involves having the **right perspective, right actions**, and **right beliefs** related to God.