# Are You Searching For The Truth?



Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

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Learn to be a truth-seeker

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### **Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series**

Study Number: DGW8

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**About the author:** My name is Eric Krieg. I am a disciple of Jesus, a Bible student, a truth seeker, and an evangelist. My interest is in using the Bible as my only guide in my faith. My desire is to help others understand the message of the Bible and pursue true, New Testament Christianity.

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**My plea:** It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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# Are You Searching For The Truth?

Are you searching for the truth? This is a question you need to honestly ask yourself. Of course, we are discussing seeking the truth - in the context of the truth that is contained in the Word of God (the Bible)!

There are some common responses to this question. (1) "I've already found the truth – so I don't need to keep searching." (2) "This study is too basic for me." (3) "Truth is subjective and differs from person to person." (4) "I don't have enough time to really study the Bible." (5) "I don't want to study the Bible."

Or, perhaps your immediate response is, "Yes, I am searching for the truth." If so, you need to honestly evaluate yourself so as to see whether you are *really* seeking the truth or not. It is my sincere hope that we are all eagerly seeking the truth today!

You are either a truth-seeker or you are not a truth-seeker. You may want nothing to do with the Bible. Or, you may have a burning desire to know what the Bible teaches and to follow after it. Or, you may deceive yourself – saying that you are a truth-seeker when you really are not.

The purpose of this study is to provoke honest self-evaluation and to gain a better understanding of what it means to be a truth-seeker. This study is a beginning point. This study does not teach everything you will need to understand as you seek the truth. This study simply aims to provoke a desire that is properly channeled to seeking the truth and to help you on your life-long, truth-seeking journey!

### Are You A Truth-Seeker?

### Why you need to be a truth-seeker

Take a few moments to consider why it is that you should be a truth-seeker.

(1) You should be a truth-seeker because you will be judged by the truth. Revelation 20:11-15 describes the great judgment scene around the throne of God. Verse 12 specifically states: "And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books." Notice that the passage says the dead will be judged by the things written in the books. What are these books being mentioned in this passage? These are the individual books that are contained within the pages of the Bible.

Both John 12:48 and Romans 2:16 identify that these books (containing the word of God) will judge us. John 12:48 says, "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day." Romans 2:16 says, "in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel."

Notice that your judgment will consist of how you have lived your life in comparison to the things that are written in these books (Revelation 20:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10). Therefore, your eternal destination will be determined by whether or not you are obedient to the things that are written in these books of the Bible!

(2) You should be a truth-seeker because the truth will set you free. That's what Jesus taught in John 8:32: "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Free from what? Free from the sin that you have been enslaved to! To understand the seriousness of slavery to sin and the importance of being obedient to God, consider Romans 6:20-23! Quite simply, the word of God tells you what you must do in order to be saved and be forgiven of your sin! There is no salvation apart from obeying Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9)!

(3) You should be a truth-seeker to overcome the lies of this world rather than being overcome by them. You need to understand that there are many lies that exist in the world today. There are even many lies that exist in religion and so-called "Christianity." Please take the time to read and meditate on Romans 16:17-18, Galatians 1:6-9, and 2 Peter 2:1-3.

2 Peter 2:1-3 says: "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber."

So, you must be a truth-seeker so that you will be able to know what is true and what is false – and not be taken captive and led to destruction by following after a lie that is told by mankind!

### Far too many people are not real truthseekers

There are many who will classify themselves as being "religious" – but who do not *really* seek the truth! They may attend church regularly. They may be involved in many good deeds. They may even spend time reading their Bibles. However, they may be blindly following the teachings/beliefs of their parents, "preachers," friends, or others (Matthew 15:14). Or, they may only have a passive interest in serving the Lord (i.e. perhaps only when it is convenient for them) – instead of truly having a hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matthew 5:6).

Concerning such individuals, Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:21-23).

### True disciples are truth-seekers

Those who are not truth-seekers are not true disciples! True disciples will assign great value to finding and following the way of truth! Read Jesus' parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl of great value in Matthew 13:44-46: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it."

These parables help us understand the great desire that true disciples will have concerning the truth and being part of God's kingdom. True disciples and truth-seekers, then, will buy the truth and will refuse to sell it (Proverbs 23:23). That is, true disciples and truth-seekers will buy the truth *no matter the cost* and will refuse to sell it *no matter the offer*!

### Examples Of Non-Truth-Seekers

Consider some examples from the Scriptures that demonstrate what it means *not* to be a truth-seeker. Please read and consider the passages that follow.

### John 6:26-27, 60

John 6:26-27 says, "Jesus answered them and said, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him." Verse 60 says, "Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, 'This is a hard saying; who can understand it?"

Here are individuals who turned away from following Jesus. They turned away from following Him because of their carnal minds. They could not understand Jesus' teaching about being the Bread of Life because they were focused on a physical application. Furthermore, they were only following Him because they were looking to be fed (as He had just fed the 5,000 with five loaves and two small fish). Thus, their motivation for following Him (in the first place) was not what it should have been – and Jesus pointed that out to them! They were not truth-seekers.

### Matthew 19:3

Matthew 19:3 says, "The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?"

Here are individuals who have a question for Jesus (Note: Questions are one method of acquiring information) – and a profitable question at that (a question about divorce)! However, notice that these individuals were asking this profitable question from an improper motive. These were religious individuals (Pharisees, the strictest sect of the Jewish religion). Therefore, we may want to conclude that these individuals were asking a sincere question that truth-seekers would ask. However, these individuals were not really interested in finding and following the truth. Instead, they were interested in trying to test and trap Jesus! They were not truth-seekers.

### Matthew 19:16-22

Matthew 19:16-22 says, "Now behold, one came and said to Him, 'Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?' So He said to him, 'Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.' He said to Him, 'Which ones?' Jesus said, ''You shall not murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'' The young man said to Him, 'All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?' Jesus said to him, 'If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.' But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions."

Here is (seemingly) a good man. He even seems to be a man who is searching for the truth – wanting to know what he must do in order to have eternal life. However, this man was only a truthseeker up to a certain point! He was not willing to do all that true discipleship would require – putting Christ above all else! Therefore, Christ's instruction was too much for this man to accept! He was not a truth-seeker.

### Matthew 21:23-27

Matthew 21:23-27 says, "Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, 'By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?' But Jesus answered and said to them, 'I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John — where was it from? From heaven or from men?' And they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet.' So they answered Jesus and said, 'We do not know.' And He said to them, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.""

Here are individuals who questioned Jesus' authority. Now, it is a good practice to question why certain things are being done – so as to make sure that the truth is being followed. However, these individuals did not question Jesus from the proper motives. They were not asking a sincere and honest question. Furthermore, they would not be honest with themselves concerning the answer to Jesus' question. They were not truth-seekers.

### Luke 10:25-29

Luke 10:25-29 says, "And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?' So he answered and said, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'' And He said to him, 'You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.' But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'

Here is another individual who inquired concerning what he must do in order to inherit eternal life. Again, on the surface, this is an excellent question. However, this individual asked both of his questions from improper motives. The first question he asked because he was testing Jesus. The second question he asked because he wanted to justify himself. Both motivations hinder individuals from obtaining the truth! He was not a truth-seeker.

#### Acts 24:24-26

Acts 24:24-26 says, "And after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, 'Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.' Meanwhile he also hoped that money would be given him by Paul, that he might release him. Therefore he sent for him more often and conversed with him."

Here is a man who was touched by the Gospel (the scriptures tell us that he was afraid). He recognized that he needed to make changes to his life! However, he was not willing to make those changes to his life. Rather than taking action, he procrastinated and was hoping that he could take some sort of bribe to grant Paul's release. He was not a truth-seeker.

### Acts 26:26-28

Acts 26:26-28 says (note that Paul is speaking to King Agrippa), "'For the king, before

whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe.' Then Agrippa said to Paul, 'You almost persuade me to become a Christian.'''

Here is a man who knew the truth about Christ. Paul was convinced of this. However, he was not willing to be obedient to the Gospel. He would not take the necessary action and he put off the decision to become a Christian. He was not a truthseeker.

### Characteristics Of Those Who Are Not Truth-Seekers

Take a moment now to consider some characteristics of people who are not truth-seekers. Certainly, there are many different characteristics of those who are not truth-seekers. However, I want to focus on just a few (many of these characteristics can even be seen in the examples we have been considering). Additionally, please understand, that those who are not truth-seekers may only possess *one* of the following characteristics. Yet, just one of these characteristics is enough to be counted among those who are not seeking the truth!

### Motivated by a desire to please self/others

Some want to find a way to do what they want to do – regardless of whether it is right or not (yet, some still want to feel justified in doing it – 2 Timothy 4:3-4)! Some want to do what makes their family members, friends, and others happy – regardless of whether it is right or not! Some want to do whatever will make the most people happy and that will offend the least – regardless of whether it is right or not!

### Not willing to honestly evaluate self

Some are not willing to look in the mirror to make honest self-evaluations! Some just want to be told that they are right or that others are wrong! Some don't see the changes that they need to make in their own lives because they simply do not *want* to see them!

### Not willing to listen to the truth

Some will distance themselves from any and every opportunity to listen to the gospel's message! Some will make many excuses as to why they "can't" study the Bible (but, it all comes down to the fact that they don't *want* to study it)! Some will remove themselves from situations in which the gospel is being presented (either physically removing themselves or disconnecting by thinking on other things)! Some will not tolerate sound Gospel preaching – so they will go listen to someone who teaches them what they want to hear (2 Timothy 4:2-4)!

### Mock the truth and/or those who teach it

Some will blaspheme the way of truth because it's not what they want to hear (2 Peter 2:1-3)! Some will blaspheme the way of truth because it's not what they're used to hearing (Acts 17:32)! Some will mock those who teach the truth because the message is not what they want it to be!

### Not willing to make changes

Some do what they do because that's the way they've always done it – and they will not change no matter what evidence is presented! Some will make "small" changes but will not make "large" or "lifealtering" changes! Some will not make changes that are viewed as being too "radical" or too "costly"!

#### Not willing to make changes now

Some will only talk about making changes – but, never actually get around to making them! Some will procrastinate with regard to making any changes in their lives (perhaps waiting until the change is "easier" or less costly to them)!

### **Examples Of Truth-Seekers**

At this point in our study, let's begin to "switch gears." Let's begin to focus on what it means

to be a truth-seeker, contrasting such with the things we have already studied. For the moment, let's discuss some examples of truth-seekers. Again, please read and meditate on the following passages.

#### Acts 2:36-42

Acts 2:36-42 says (Note that Peter is speaking), "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom vou crucified, both Lord and Christ.' Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.' And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation.' Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."

Here are individuals who heard the gospel preached. Notice their response. First, they made personal application of the message they heard and wanted to know how they needed to respond to the message. Second, they were obedient to the instructions they were given. Third, they continued steadfastly in this new way they had just learned and obeyed! These individuals did not allow anything or anyone to prevent them from obeying the truth! They were truth-seekers.

#### Acts 8:26-40

Acts 8:26-40 says, "Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, 'Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' This is desert. So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go near and overtake this chariot.' So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' And he said, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. The place in the Scripture which he read was this: 'He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth. In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth.' So the eunuch answered Philip and said, 'I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?' Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, 'See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?' Then Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea."

Here is a man who desired to learn the scriptures. Notice his response. First, he accepted help in understanding the scriptures. Second, he made personal application of the instruction and evaluated himself (as seen in the fact that he understood what he needed to do and determined to do it). Third, he was obedient to the truth. Fourth, he rejoiced after obeying the truth. This man did not allow anything or anyone to prevent him from obeying the truth! He was a truth-seeker.

#### Acts 10:1-8

Acts 10:1-8 says, "There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always. About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, 'Cornelius!' And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, 'What is it, lord?' So he said to him, 'Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do.' And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. So when he had explained all these things to them, he sent them to Joppa."

This passage is just the beginning of Cornelius' story. Please continue studying through chapter 10 and into chapter 11 to read his entire story. Here was a good and religious man who had an opportunity to learn what he needed to do to be saved. Notice his response. First, he sent men for Peter (who was appointed to preach to him). Second, he did so immediately (Acts 10:33). Third, he was eagerly awaiting Peter's arrival, desiring to hear the message Peter was bringing to him. Fourth, he had also gathered his close friends and relatives to hear the teaching (Acts 10:24). Fifth, he had gathered them together for the purpose of hearing the things God had commanded (Acts 10:33). Sixth, he made personal application of the message and was obedient to it (notice that he was baptized according to the commandment, Acts 10:48). This man did not allow anything or anyone to prevent him from obeying the truth! He was a truth-seeker.

### Acts 17:10-12

Acts 17:10-12 says, "Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men."

Here are individuals who wanted to know the truth and who did not want to be deceived by anyone! Notice their response. First, they received the word with all readiness (they were wanting to know what the truth was). Second, they made their own daily search of the Scriptures to compare what they were being taught with what the scriptures said. Third, they were obedient to the truth they had just learned. They did not allow anything or anyone to prevent them from obeying the truth! They were truthseekers.

### Acts 18:8

Acts 18:8 says, "Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized."

Here were individuals who made changes to their lives after hearing the gospel's message! Notice their response. First, they were willing to hear. Second, they believed. Third, they obeyed – even making large-scale changes (1 Corinthians 6:9-11 says that they were involved in many sinful things prior to becoming Christians – i.e. fornication, homosexuality, theft, covetousness, drunkenness, idolatry, etc.). They did not allow anything or anyone to prevent them from obeying the truth! They were truth-seekers.

### Characteristics Of Truth-Seekers

We have already considered some characteristics of those who are not truth-seekers. Now, I would like you to spend some time considering characteristics of those who are truthseekers (each of these characteristics can be seen in the examples we have been considering). While I am sure that there are other points we could make concerning the character of truth-seekers, we will only look at a few here. It is also important to understand that *all* of these characteristics will be present within an individual who is really a truthseeker!

# Motivated by a desire to know and obey the truth

A truth-seeker wants to know the truth - no matter what the truth will require of him/her! Such a

one will not compromise the truth in order to accommodate his/her lifestyle, the desires of others, or anything else! Such a one recognizes that nothing but the truth will set him/her free from sin and produce the true hope of eternal life in Heaven!

### Desire to study the Bible

A truth-seeker puts forth daily Bible study efforts (Acts 17:11)! Such a one is diligent to rightly divide the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15)! Such a one has a love for the instructions and commandments of God (Psalm 119:97-105)!

# Will not accept those who teach false doctrine

A truth-seeker will love the truth so much that those who persist in teaching contradicting doctrines will be marked and avoided (Romans 16:17-18; 2 John 1:9-11)! Such a one will also be willing to change his/her beliefs if they have been found to be false – even if changing beliefs goes against his/her family or friends! Such a one will be determined to hold fast the pattern of sound words contained in God's Word (2 Timothy 1:13)!

### Willing to make honest self-evaluation

A truth-seeker is willing to compare his/her life with the teachings of the scriptures! Such a one has the desire to put the Word of God to work in his/her life! Such a one *wants* to be molded by God – to become what God desires! Such a one *wants* to know what changes he/she needs to make in order to be pleasing to God and in order to be prepared for the Judgment!

### Willing to make changes

A truth-seeker is willing to do what the Bible says must be done! Such a one is not a hearer only – but, is a doer of the Word (James 1:22-25)! Such a one is willing to make *any* change that is necessary – no matter the cost (Luke 14:25-27, 33; Matthew 10:34-39)!

### Questions That Truth-Seekers Will Ask

Before we close this study, please consider some questions that truth-seekers will be asking. (1) Where is the authority for what I am doing (or for what is being done)? (2) Do I believe what the Bible teaches concerning doctrinal matters? (3) Does what I am doing please God? (4) Have I done what the Bible instructs regarding salvation? (5) Am I living in a way that is pleasing to God? (6) Is the church I associate with following the Bible pattern? (7) Have I followed false doctrine in any area of my life?

### Conclusion

Are you searching for the truth? You must be actively engaged in searching for the truth if you want to be pleasing to God! You will not "accidentally" make it to Heaven! In order to go to Heaven, you must make a determined effort to live in a way that is pleasing to God!

I strongly encourage you to be a truth-seeker and to respond to this lesson by having a new or renewed zeal to study the Bible and to be obedient to its instructions!

### **Study Questions**

Are you searching for the truth? Explain your answer.

### 1. Are You A Truth-Seeker?

Why do you need to be a truth-seeker?

Are there any who are "religious" but who are *not* truth-seekers?

Explain why true disciples are truth-seekers.

### 2. Examples Of Non-Truth-Seekers

Briefly discuss the following examples of those who were not truth-seekers:

1. John 6:26-27, 60 –

2. Matthew 19:3 –

- 3. Matthew 19:16-22 -
- 4. Matthew 21:23-27 -
- 5. Luke 10:25-29 –
- 6. Acts 24:24-26 -
- 7. Acts 26:26-28 -

## **3.** Characteristics Of Those Who Are Not Truth-Seekers

Identify some characteristics of those who are not truth-seekers:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
  - 5.

#### 4. Examples Of Truth-Seekers

Briefly discuss the following examples of those who were truth-seekers:

1. Acts 2:36-42 -

2. Acts 8:26-40 -

3. Acts 10:1-8 -

4. Acts 17:10-12 -

5. Acts 18:8 -

#### **5.** Characteristics Of Truth-Seekers

Identify some characteristics of those who are truthseekers:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

#### 6. Questions That Truth-Seekers Will Ask

Honestly answer the following questions:

1. Where is the authority for what I am doing/for what is being done?

2. Do I believe what the Bible teaches concerning doctrinal matters?

4. Have I done what the Bible instructs regarding salvation?

5. Am I living in a way that is pleasing to God?

6. Is the church I associate with following the Bible pattern?

7. Have I followed false doctrine in any area of my life?

\*Are you searching for the truth?