

~Scripture of the Week~

*Therefore ... perhaps He will ho‘omāmā – lighten His hand from you,
from your gods, and from your land. 1 Samuel 6: 5a, c NKJV*

Believing in God vs. Belonging to God - Ray Flores October 26, 2025

Many acknowledge God exists — but believing *in* God is not the same as *belonging* to Him.

James 2:19 NIV *You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that — and shudder.* Belief acknowledges God's existence. Belonging submits to His Lordship. Our truth must come from one source — **the Holy Bible**, the living Word of God.

2 Timothy 3:16 NIV *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,* God's Word does not change to fit the culture; culture must conform to His Word.

Isaiah 40:8 NIV *The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.*

Point 1: Belonging to God Is Relational John 14:15 NIV *"If you love me, keep my commands."*

Belief recognizes that God exists; belonging walks daily in obedience to His Word.

John 8:31b NIV *... "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples."* Belief stays in your head; following flows from your heart. Belief says, "God is real." Following says, "God is in control of my life."

Psalms 119:105 NIV *Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.*

A. Prayer — Relationship with God Prayer is our lifeline to God. Luke 5:16 NIV *But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.* Through prayer we listen, surrender, and align our hearts with God's will. Philippians 4:6c, 7a,c NIV *... by prayer and petition ... the peace of God ... will guard your hearts and your minds ...*

B. Obeying His Word Belonging means following His voice through Scripture. Psalms 1:2a, 3a NIV *... whose delight is in the law of the LORD ... That person is like a tree planted by streams of water.*

C. Relationship Before Religion Religion without relationship leads to emptiness. John 15:4a, 5c NIV *"Remain in me, as I also remain in you. ... apart from me you can do nothing."*

Point 2: Obedience — The Proof of Belonging Luke 9:23b NIV *"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."*

A. Faith Produces Obedience Faith without obedience is dead. James 2:17 NIV *Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.* John 14:21a NIV *"Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me."*

B. Daily Surrender Following is a daily decision to surrender our will. Romans 12:1b NIV *... offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God — this is your true and proper worship.*

C. Obedience Flows from Relationship True obedience is love in action. 1 Samuel 15:22c NIV *... To obey is better than sacrifice, ...*

D. Obedience Brings Blessing Deuteronomy 28:1a, 2a NIV *If you fully obey the Lord ... all these blessings will come on you ...*

E. Daily Cross, Daily Choice Will I follow my feelings or His Word? Will I follow culture or Christ?

Point 3: Following God Transforms You Romans 12:2a NIV *Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.* Believing informs the mind; following transforms the life.

A. Transformed by Christ 2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV *... if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!* Philippians 1:6b NIV *... he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion ...*

B. Evidence of True Faith A transformed life shows fruit of genuine belief. John 10:27-28a NIV *"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life ..."*

Point 4: Warning Out of Love Matthew 7:21a NIV *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven ..."* Belief without obedience can produce false security.

A. Belief Alone Cannot Save James 2:19b, 20b NIV *Even the demons believe that – and shudder ... faith without deeds is useless?*

B. Belonging Brings Eternal Reward Matthew 25:21b,d NIV *... "Well done, good and faithful servant... Come and share your master's happiness!"*

C. Love and Loyalty John 14:23b NIV *... "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them ..."*

D. Eternal Reward Revelation 22:12a-b, 13a NIV *"Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me ... I am the Alpha and the Omega ..."*

Conclusion: Belief vs. Belonging Belief **acknowledges** God's existence; belonging **surrenders** to His Lordship. Belief **informs**; following **transforms**. Belief may **impress people**; following **pleases God**. Belief may be **temporary**; belonging produces **eternal fruit**.

John 10:27-28a NIV *"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life ..."*