

Sola Scriptura—

It's remarkable how a simple 71-page booklet and two words—*sanctification* and *reformation*—have opened my eyes, allowing me to see deeper into scripture and theology while relating these truths to my own life experiences.

Christianity is like an umbrella, encompassing many denominations, yet all are united under the same God and the same Christ. Regardless of the denominational differences, we all worship the Almighty God, and it is this unity in faith that truly honors Him.

From what I've gathered so far, the bylaws created by people for different denominations do not reflect God's ultimate desire for His Church. I believe that God would be more pleased if humanity came together as one united body—The Church—worshiping Him without division. As Galatians reminds us, where two or more are gathered in His name, God is present among them.

I've come to realize that I can interpret scripture without being confined by the doctrines of any particular denomination or swayed by others' interpretations. My life experiences have given me wisdom, intelligence and understanding, allowing me to apply scripture to my heart in a deeply personal way. What scripture means to one person may differ entirely from what it means to another—and that's not only okay but a testament to its divine richness. This is a humbling reminder for those who claim righteousness: they do not own God, for the holy scriptures are a gift meant for all His children.

If we were to return to *sola scriptura*—scripture alone—and follow the early teachings without the influence of councils or religious leaders, we would rediscover God's truths in their purest form.

The Holy Spirit is not a minor aspect of faith but is central to God's work in the world and within believers. The Spirit brings life, transformation, unity, and power, fulfilling God's plan from creation to eternity. By focusing on the Holy Spirit's role and the foundational truths of Scripture, we reconnect with the essence of early church teachings, untainted by human influence.

I'm grateful for how I discovered the Bible—through an encounter with a deacon, while doing something I love: riding my bike. I believe God orchestrated that moment as part of His greater plan for my life. It's a reminder that God places us where we need to be, even in the most

unexpected ways.

However, as I reflected on the deacon's responses, I realized they weren't rooted in compassion or love. He went so far as to say I am not going to heaven—for reasons known only to him. It seems, in his mind, he has appointed himself the gatekeeper of heaven. But I believe he is deeply mistaken.

He's right—I am not going to heaven in the way he imagines. Instead, I am standing firm on the promises of God as revealed in Scripture. I await the fulfillment of His word: a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3:13). I cling to His vision, where the dwelling place of God is with humanity, and He will wipe every tear from our eyes (Revelation 21:1-4).

I look forward to walking with God on streets of gold and in the beauty of His renewed creation, where He makes all things new (Revelation 21:5). On that day, the only memory Bob will have of us is our backs, for I will have moved forward with my God, leaving behind those who chose to stay rooted in the hate.

For I trust in the Lord's words: "Behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll" (Revelation 22:7). And I will press on toward His promises, knowing that His plans for me are good and eternal (Jeremiah 29:11)

Ultimately, my walk with God is personal, lifelong, and sanctifying. It's not for others to judge, but for Him to shape. As Paul writes: "*Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.*" (Romans 14:4)

No one on this planet has the authority to decide my salvation. It is God who justifies, forgives, and saves. I am secure in His love and grace when my faith is in Him.

Walking with my God,
Teddy