

On What is Your Faith Based?

A church member once told me she thought she was losing her faith. Knowing her as well as I did, I asked if she had lost her Bible. She didn't get it. She didn't understand because her "faith" was based on the wrong thing(s)...

Biblical, saving "faith" comes from and is built upon the Word. "*So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ,*" Romans 10:17. The Word of God is certainly sufficient on this point, but have you ever wondered *why* or *how* this is so? Think about it for a moment...

We can know that God exists from the evidence provided in the world He created that surrounds us, and from the wonders present within us. The exacting specificities of the universe, the complexities of the human body (as well as animal and plant life forms), and the wonderfully symbiotic relationships present in our world didn't just *happen by chance*. They were the products of divinely intelligent design, power, and goodness, cf. Romans 1:18-20 and Hebrews 3:4. But these **natural revelations** of God, though they tell us of His *existence, power, and nature*, do not tell us how to live in response to God. For this we needed a **specific revelation** from God. The Bible is that **specific revelation**, "*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work,*" 2Timothy 3:16-17. From the Bible, we "*learn what is pleasing to the Lord,*" Ephesians 5:10. Without knowledge of God's Word, our faith is, at best, *immature, incomplete, and impotent* since it is based only on the knowledge of God's existence and nature, but lacks the ability to provide us the information needed to *please* and be *in fellowship* with Him, Hebrews 11:6. With these things in mind, please consider the following very carefully and honestly.

Is your faith based on God's Word, or your personal feelings/desires? How can you tell? If God's Word contradicts what you *feel* or *desire*, which takes precedence in your life? When we substitute our own feelings and desires for what God has said, we are becoming our own god instead of humbly submitting to *the God*. In such cases, we are selfishly choosing *our will* over *His will*. Remember that *the Man, Jesus Christ*, would not even do this. When facing the horrors of the cross, He prayed, "*Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done,*" Luke 22:42. He set aside His own personal feelings and desires, as difficult as such surely was, to submit to God's will. Is your faith based on God's Word, or your own feelings and desires?

Is your faith based on God's Word, or your experiences? For some, "faith" is the result of their own personal experience(s) with God. Let's think about that more carefully and specifically. Eve had personal experiences with both God and Satan. But on what was her condemnation based? Through her experience with Satan, she was tempted to and indeed violated **what God said**, cf. Genesis 2:16-17; 3:3-7, 13-24. Is it really any different for us today? We experience both the wonders of God's world and its blessings, as well as the sufferings of evil and sin from Satan. But if our "faith" is based solely on these "experiences," haven't we, like Eve, missed the point of true faith, which is obedience to what God says? Isn't a faith that is based in experience "walking by sight" rather than "*walking by faith, not by sight*" as 2Corinthians 5:7 requires? Is your faith based on God's Word, or you're your own personal experiences?

Is your faith based on God's Word, or your families' convictions? Again, how can you know? Are you what you are religiously because **you** understand and are trying to follow God's Word, or because it's your families' religion? If you learn that what your family believes or practices is contrary to God's Word, which will you believe and follow? Jesus said, "*He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me,*" Matthew 10:37. Each one of us will be judged "*according to what he has done, whether good or bad,*" 2Corinthians 5:10. Is your faith based on God's Word, or what your family believes and practices?

Your faith, in order to be the kind that pleases God and enables salvation, has to be firmly based on God's Word. **Is it?** Please, **hear** (read and learn) God's Word, **believe** God's Word, and **obey** God's Word, because that's **biblical FAITH!** (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org; email to mrpcstrong@hotmail.com)