

*In
Search
of*

Truth and Right

Tim Henderson, Editor

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"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things." Philippians 4:8 (NASB-U)

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You're not a Christian just because ... [3]

By: Steven Harper

For the last couple of weeks, we have considered some faulty ideas some people have about what it means to be a Christian. Those faulty associations, and others we will cover today and the next couple of weeks, give false impressions to others and false comfort to ourselves if we believe them true. Please take the time to consider these faulty associations and see **why** the association is faulty that you may understand what it means to **truly** be a disciple of Jesus Christ [a Christian]. If you, the reader, are holding any of these faulty associations and assumptions about what it means to be a Christian, my hope is that you will honestly examine these things and choose to do what **God** says you must do to become a child of God.

That said, let us now take a look at some more faulty associations or beliefs about who is a Christian:

You Are Not A Christian Just Because: You Know What The Bible Says. I have met a few people who seemed to know a lot about what the Bible says; some knew a lot of what the Bible says so they could justify themselves and what they already believed; some knew a lot of what the Bible says so they could point out its supposed "contradictions" and "errors"; some knew a lot of what the Bible says, but nothing of what it **means**. In each of these cases, a knowledge of what the Bible says did not make any of them right in the sight of God. **Knowledge**, by itself, is not enough to make one a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Consider the temptation of Jesus: After Jesus had already answered one temptation of Satan, the devil then quoted Scripture in an effort to get Jesus to do his will (**Matt. 4:5, 6**). Satan knows

TIMES OF SERVICES	
SUNDAY	
Bible Classes*	10:00 AM
AM Worship	10:45 AM
PM Worship	6:30 PM
WEDNESDAY	
Bible Classes*	7:00 PM
(* Bible Classes for All Ages)	

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Scripture? Yes, he does! The problem is, **knowing** Scripture does not make him a believer any more than it does anyone else! Remember that James tells us that even the demons believe God is (**Jas. 2:19**), but are they saved? No. In the same sense, simply knowing what God's word says does not make one a Christian and, thus, does not save us based on that alone.

Many men study God's word diligently in an effort to prove it is **not** God's word, that it cannot be trusted, or that it is no more worthy of belief than a fairy tale. Some honest men who have done this have come to the conclusion that it is, indeed, God's word, but others have simply justified their pre-conceived notions; why the difference? If two men can read the same words and come to completely opposite conclusions, how can this be?

I submit to you that it is not the word of God that is the problem, but the hearts of those who read it. When Jesus told the parable of the sower, He spoke of a man who sowed seed without concern about where the seed fell (**Mark 4:1-20**); some seed fell by the wayside and it was quickly eaten up by the birds; some seed fell on stony ground and it took root for awhile, but was burned up in the heat of the day; some seed fell on thorny ground and sprang up, but then was choked out by the thorns; some seed fell on good ground and it produced fruit. In explaining the parable, Jesus plainly tells us it was not a problem of the seed [which represented the word of God], but the type of soil onto which the seed fell. So it is when the word of God is taught to, or heard or read by, men today.

When Jesus concluded the Sermon on the Mount, He then pointedly laid out the choice the audience then had: listening and doing, or listening and doing nothing with the words He had spoken. If they chose to **do** what He said, they would be wise, but if they chose to hear and **do nothing**, they would be found foolish (**Matt. 7:24-27**). **Obedience** to the words of Jesus Christ is what makes us His disciples (**John 8:31**), simply knowing what He says **does not**. The writer of the book of Hebrews tells us Jesus became the Savior of those who would **obey** Him (**Heb. 5:9**), not the ones who just knew what He said!

Please do not misunderstand what I am saying; knowledge of Christ's words is absolutely necessary to become His disciple [following His teachings is what defines a disciple], but it is more than knowing, we must also **obey** those words. So important are those words to the disciple that they teach them to others with the understanding that they are the words of life (**John 6:68**) and they are the words by which the lost can be saved (**Acts 11:14**) if **obeyed**!

You Are Not A Christian Just Because: You Believe God Exists. As was stated earlier, James tell us, *"You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe and shudder!"* (**Jas. 2:19**). In the context of that statement, James argued against the idea that faith alone is what saves anyone. I know that is a shocking statement to many religious people today, but it is straight from God's word! Listen to what James said: *"You see that a person is justified by works and **not** by faith alone"* (**v. 24**). He would say at least three times in the same context that faith without works is dead, or useless (**vv. 17, 20, 26**). A faith that simply admits the existence of God and then does nothing [based on that belief] is a **dead** faith; is this the kind of faith that saves a man? Many religious leaders seem to think so, but this is merely equal to the faith demons have, and at least they tremble at the thought! They do not ever obey God's will, but they know who God is and they tremble in fear at this knowledge.

How many men today admit the existence of God but go no further in their faith? Far too many, it seems, and many such men make up the churches across this country! I know that sounds like a harsh statement, but I believe it is true, nonetheless. I know it is true because of the many conversations and studies I have had with individuals who claimed to have faith in God [or even in Christ] but who did not show by their lives that they **actually** believed. Many men

Today's Sermon:

"Bility"
Family

believe **portions** of God's word and many men believe **portions** of what Jesus said, but they will then willfully reject the portions that are not agreeable, the portions that are difficult, and the portions that society believes "backward" or "politically incorrect." Some professing Christians do as little as they can and follow as few of Christ's commands as they feel comfortable with, all believing that this minimal service is somehow acceptable to God and Christ. They deceive themselves (**Jas. 1:22**) and some who know them, but God is not fooled.

True, saving faith is that which admits the existence of God, but which also admits we must diligently seek Him and His will (**Heb. 11:6**). True, saving faith admits Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (**John 20:31**), but it then moves us to recognize He has been given all authority (**Matt. 28:18**) and that we have **none** in the realm of spiritual matters. True, saving faith is that which is convicted by the evidence (**Heb. 11:1**) but then is moved by that conviction to please Him in all things (**2 Cor. 5:9-11**). The question we must all ask ourselves is this: Do I have **that** faith?

Under the Old Testament, when God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, they turned back to Egypt in their hearts and rejected God (cf. **Num. 13-14**); because of this rejection, God rejected them and they did not enter into the Promised Land. It is said that these people, the same ones who had witnessed the great power of God in their deliverance, "*rebelled*" (**Heb. 3:16**), "*sinned*" (**v. 17**), "*were disobedient*" (**v. 18**), and "*were unable to enter because of unbelief*" (**v. 19**). Now, did those people stop believing that God existed, or was it something else? They still believed God existed, but they had rebelled against Him, sinned, and were disobedient—and these were God's own people! Friends and brethren, please understand that the same could be said about you; believing God exists is not enough!

News N Notes

Remember these in your prayers:

- Trudell Tennant
- Lucille Harless, Dave Harless' mother
- Blake Headen, Alberta's husband.
- Blake Swanson, Dorothy Lancaster's grandson
- Virginia Malick, Peggy Miller's mother
- Roy Rhodes, Peggy Miller's brother
- Merl Frey
- Tammy Garrison, Zeda Goddard's daughter
- Audrio Gaudio, Nancy Morris' great-granddaughter
- Mabel Fleming
- Ed & Marie Roberts, & Ed's father, Jim Roberts.
- Ila Marshall, Harold Marshall's mother
- Cary & Grace Lancaster

Nursing Home:

- Hazel Carroll
- Pauline Sellers

Shut-ins:

- Ethel Mahan
- Josephine Clow
- Mabel Fleming
- Pauline Midcap
- Rhea Henthorn