

On What is Your Faith Based?

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. That the Word of God says this is certainly sufficient, but have you ever wondered *why* this is so? Think about it for a moment...

We can know God exists from the evidence provided in the world He created that surrounds us, and from the wonders present in our own bodies. Such didn't just happen by chance, 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 *Scriptures* are 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 Scriptures, 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* without 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 thoughts, feelings, and desires?** How can you tell? If God's Word contradicts what you *think, feel, or desire*, which takes precedence in your life? When we substitute our own thinking, feelings and desires for what God has said, we have become **become our own god instead of humbly submitting to the God. In such cases, we are selfishly choosing our will over His will.** Remember that even *Jesus Christ*, would not 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 (His *revealed will*), 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).” They view their *physical blessings*, or even salvation from *physical peril or tragedy* as evidence of God's *spiritual acceptance* of them and therefore *fellowship* with Him. But let's think about these things. Do ‘bad things’ happen to ‘good people’? Yes. Do ‘good things’ happen to ‘bad people’? Also, yes. Then how can our ‘good’ experiences be either the *cause* or *validation* of our “faith”? Note the truth from God's word on these matters, “...He (God) permitted all the nations to go their own ways; and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He **did good** and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness,” Acts 14:16b-17. God loves and sustains even those who don't love Him (cf. Matt.5:45), but does so as a “witness” giving evidence of **His existence** and **nature** rather than as evidence of **our faith and fellowship** with Him. So how do we **know** we are *acceptable to* and *in fellowship with* God? His Word explains it very clearly in 1John 2:3-6, “By this we know that we have come to know Him, **if we keep His commandments.** The

one who says, **“I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.**” This is why our *faith* MUST come from and be based in the Word rather than our own experiences... even those “better felt than told” ones.

- **Is your faith based on God’s Word, or your families’ or friends’ convictions?** Many people are what they are religiously because of the influence of their family and/or friends. If your family/friends led you to and taught you the Truth of God’s Word, that’s great. But if they influenced you to believe a “different” or “distort(ed)” version of “the gospel” that is “according to man” rather than “the revelation of Jesus Christ,” they are “accursed” according to Gal.1:6-12. How can you know whether your faith is based on the *true* or a *distorted* gospel? It’s actually very simple: **Read and study your New Testament.** It was delivered and is meant to be both *read* and *understood*, Eph.3:3-5. If what you have been taught by your circle of friends and family does **not** match what the Bible says you have a choice to make. You can believe *them*, or you can **believe God**. But remember, it is not the *opinions* or *doctrines/teachings* of your family that will judge you in the end, “*He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word that I spoke is what will judge him at the last day,*” John 12:48. Your family and friends may have themselves been deceived by *false teaching* and *perversions* of the gospel, so on what should **your faith** be based? Honestly answer one question: If your family and/or friends believe and practice something *other than* the revealed truth of the gospel, which will you accept and follow?

By God’s **grace** we are saved *through faith*, Eph.2:8. But for God’s *grace* to save us “*through faith,*” that faith has to *come from* and be *founded upon* “**the word(s) of Christ**” (Rom.10:17) rather than our own *personal thoughts, feelings, desires, and experiences* or the *anyone else’s convictions*. It has to be **YOUR faith** produced and sustained by **the truth of the revealed “word of God.”** Now please consider carefully our title question, “**On what is YOUR faith based?**” Your eternity depends upon the answer. (Philip C. Strong; Viking Drive Church of Christ; 3791 Viking Drive, Bossier City, LA; online at vikingdrivechurchofchrist.com; email to mrpcstrong@hotmail.com)