



F.Y.C.

For Your Consideration

Show (Prove) Your Faith

Faith, along with love, mercy, kindness, and other attributes, can only be proved (made evident) by actions. One may say "I love God" or, "I am a kind person" or, "I know Jesus," but such are only empty words unless they are evidenced (proved) by actions.

BOOK OF JAMES

QUESTIONS

- 2:14 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?
- 2:15-16 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?

CONCLUSION

- 2:17 **Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.***
- 2:18 But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works, show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."
- 2:19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.
- 2:20 But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that **faith without works is useless?**

WORDS EXPRESS IT – ACTIONS PROVE IT

A disciple of Jesus is one who demonstrates his discipleship by actions. Words are not enough. Having one's name on a church or fellowship role is not enough. Adhering to a creed or to church doctrine is not enough. It's keeping **His** commandments faithfully.

"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

John 14:15

DO YOU KNOW JESUS?

*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**.*

1 John 2:3-6

*bold face emphasis mine

‘But I Thought . . .’

We all have thoughts. They are based on our knowledge and understanding. Such thoughts are fashioned from our perspective which may lack pertinent information or be colored by emotions and or prejudice. All of us can recall, when confronted with the facts, replying, “But I thought ...”

We are not alone. There are numerous references of Bible characters who, to their dismay, said “I thought.”

OLD TESTAMENT: ‘I THOUGHT’

In the Old Testament, Abraham lied to Abimelech “... because I thought, surely there is no fear of God in this place; and they will kill me because of my wife” (Genesis 20:11).

Eli thought Hannah was drunk because, as she prayed in the temple, he didn’t hear her say anything! (1 Samuel 1:13).

Naaman, seeking a cure for his leprosy “was furious and went away and said, ‘Behold, I thought he will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place, and cure the leper’” (2 Kings 5:11).

NEW TESTAMENT: ‘I THOUGHT’

In the New Testament, Jesus used parables to show the fallacy of Jewish thought. They envisioned themselves receiving preferential treatment because they had been God’s chosen people for so many years. Jesus said in one parable, “And when those hired first came, they thought that they would receive more ...” (Matthew 20:10).

Simon, a new convert, thought he could buy the gift of laying on of hands from the Apostles. But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money” (Acts 8:20).

Paul the Apostle said, while explaining his former actions, “I thought to myself that I had to

do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth” (Acts 26:9).

These references clearly show that our thoughts are limited by what we know, but God’s thoughts are limitless. Our ability to see with our mind’s eye is feeble when compared with the mind of God. The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 11:33, “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!”

TODAY: ‘I THINK’

So much of what passes for teaching in many churches today is nothing more than an assortment of “I thought.” Some think that the account of creation in Genesis isn’t inspired because it doesn’t agree with their understanding. Others think that a loving God will not condemn anyone to torment for all eternity. Many think that the Bible is only a suggestion book, rather than a rule book (This includes some “deep thinking” theology professors). A great number of individuals think they are going to heaven based on what they think.

THINKING DOESN’T MAKE IT SO

There is everything right and nothing wrong with thinking. However, we need to recognize the limitations of our thoughts. We must not attempt to make our thoughts the basis for doctrine or religious practices. God has given us the Bible in order to change the thoughts, hearts, and lives of mankind, not the other way around. His word has the power to save. Our thoughts are powerless.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Romans 1:16



No Turning Around

After one said, "I will follow you [Jesus]," he began to offer excuses. *But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."*

Luke 9:62

Sin definitely has allure. One may begin to reconsider what was given up to follow Jesus. But going back to old ways of living puts one in an unenviable position. While enjoying the previous lifestyle, the one source of salvation is lost. To have gained salvation in Christ and then lose it is worse because there is no other source.

DIRE CONSEQUENCES

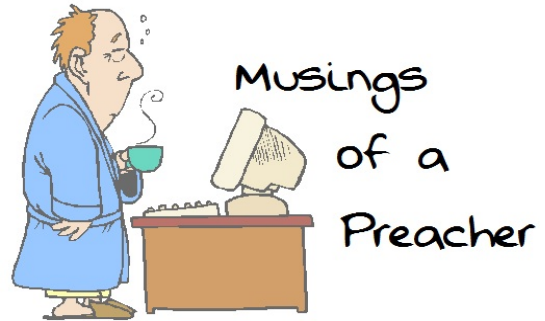
For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them. It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire."

2 Peter 2:20-22

NO GOING BACK

But my righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

Hebrews 10:38-39



I Was Impressed

A young man, who had moved to another state to complete his education, returned home one summer. He said he was working on his thesis for a Masters degree in his field of study. Before he moved away, he had on occasion given a talk or sermon, so he was asked to speak at the next Sunday evening service.

That Sunday evening he presented a most impressive lesson. I was very much impressed. But not in the usual sense. It wasn't the content of the lesson that impressed me, it was his vocabulary. He used words that I had never heard before.

I spent most of my time trying to understand what those words might mean. I tried to write the words down so I could look up the definitions later, but I wasn't sure how to spell the words.

On that occasion, something made an indelible impression upon me. As a preacher I must speak in terms easily grasped and use words that are understood by the audience. I need to impress the listeners with the greatness of the message, not my vocabulary.

A passage of scripture found in First Corinthians, chapter 2, came to mind:

"And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."



Ponder This

Knowledge and Discernment

Knowledge:

The state or fact of knowing.

Discernment:

Exhibiting keen insight and good judgment.

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ.

Philippians 1:9-10

real knowledge

We need to know the true contents of the New Testament (the Gospel).

all discernment

We need to exhibit acute insight and exercise good judgment in determining how it is to be applied.

so that you may approve the things that are excellent.

We need to combine the knowledge gained with good judgment in approving how we live.

in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ.

Our goal needs to be to live throughout our days so as to be found blameless.

Singing with the Understanding . . .



UNDERSTANDING WORDS FOUND IN OUR HYMNS

The writers of hymns often use poetic language in the lyrics. Sometimes we find ourselves singing phrases that we may not fully understand. Here are three examples:

Night With Ebon Pinion

Ebon refers to a color, black (as related to ebony). A "pinion" is a bird's wing. The song is about Jesus agonizing in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before His betrayal. It was a "dark" night for Jesus as He prayed.

The Great Physician

The chorus contains the phrase "sweetest note in seraph song." The word "seraph" is the singular of the plural, seraphim. Seraphim is a word used to describe angels in Isaiah 6:2, 6). Thus, the name of Jesus is the sweetest name that the host of heaven can sing.

Jesus, Rose Of Sharon

"Sharon" is from a Hebrew word (saron: a plain, a level tract extending from the Mediterranean to the hill country to the west of Jerusalem; a fertile plain), The rose of Sharon is a reference to a beautiful wild flower that grows there. "Jesus, Rose of Sharon", is taken from the Song of Solomon 2:1: "I am the rose of Sharon, The lily of the valleys." The words in the hymn are intended to express the beauty of Jesus Christ.

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Bible references are from the NASB except where another translation is referenced.

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Be thoughtful and kind!

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