

# Seek Ye First...

"...the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

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## ATTITUDE AND ETERNITY

Michael Light

It might shock some to think of it, but our attitude is going to determine where we spend eternity. The Bible has much to say about our heart (attitude) and its importance in how we view God, His word, and our world. The sage of old said, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). Our attitude is to be guarded (maintained within the parameters God determined). If our heart is not right the word of God will be of no effect.

Perhaps the best single passage that illustrates God's view of our hearts is the Parable of the Sower recorded in Luke 8, Matthew 13, and Mark 4. In this parable Jesus discusses four different types of attitudes (hearts) and it is one of the few that the Lord interprets for us. Since this is the case, it's an extremely useful, and easy to discuss, parable. Jesus tells us that the seed is the word of God (Luke 8:11). The sower is anyone who spreads (teaches) the word of God (the seed). All Christians are to be sowers of the divine message of hope (Matthew 28:18ff). We will note the main points concerning each type of soil.

The Wayside (Hard-hearted) Soil. The first attitude talked about is the one that is impervious to the seed. It is hard, wayside, shoulder of the road. Unfortunately, the world in which we live is filled with people whose hearts are like this. Many seem interested only in work and entertainment. How to acquire more stuff seems the only stimuli that gets many excited in the modern day. Spirituality is an unknown character trait to these types of individuals. These are the people who have no problem whatsoever turning a deaf ear to the truth when they do hear it. Anyone who possesses and maintains this type of attitude will have no hope of heaven. They are resigning themselves to an eternity of torment (Matthew 25:46).

The Stony (Shallow-hearted) Soil. The second type of attitude is that of shallowness. The great book of Ecclesiastes deals at length with various vain and meaningless pursuits. Jesus speaks of those who hear the word with joy, but have no depth of learning. Individuals depicted in this segment of the parable lack commitment to the truth. The knowledge of the truth brings them some momentary happiness, but during the trials and temptations of life they fail to remain true to God. They have no root to sustain them when

things go awry. This being the case they wither and die (lose their souls).

The Thorny (Half-hearted) Soil. Perhaps the greatest problem that afflicts the church (individual members of the Lord's body) today is being beset by thorns in our lives. This heart (attitude) is one divided against itself. Only the Lord knows how many people have accepted the truth, only to become distracted by the cares of the world. Most of us have probably known people who "quit the church" (stopped being faithful to the Lord). I do not believe that many of them consciously decide to become unfaithful. Rather, they simply "get too busy" and their jobs, relationships, entertainment pursuits, etc... get in the way and over time, "choke" them spiritually. Left unchecked, this attitude of being constantly distracted from the work of the Lord will cause spiritual death and eternal damnation.

The Good (Honest-Hearted) Soil. The final type of soil mentioned is the good soil. God is looking for a few good hearts. These individuals have a good attitude. They are receptive to the truth. And once they find the Lord, they are committed (for life) to staying with His right way. For our readers I want to pose the following consideration. Have you ever wondered about the hesitancy on the part of some to obey the truth? We all know people who we say are "good people" or a "good prospect for conversion," yet they come to services for years and never respond to the invitation of the Lord. Some of these people have had hundreds of opportunities (literally) to heed the call, yet they linger. Based on this parable we can know that they do not possess a good and honest heart. When we read the biblical accounts of conversion we are (or should be) impressed with the rapidity of the conversions. In Acts two, after hearing a sermon that can be read in less than ten minutes, 3000 people responded to the message.

If you are one such person, you need to examine your attitude in light of this parable. A good and honest heart will heed the message of the Book of God (the Bible). Please give close and serious attention to this article then do something about it if you are not currently right with God.

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## Our Purpose

The editors of *Seek Ye First* produce this biblical journal to provide scriptural material dealing with the issues that are currently affecting our families, our nation and the world. Our intent is to challenge souls to return to the "old paths" (Jeremiah 6:16) for their sole source of authority in religious matters. Our policy is to speak as the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11), encouraging people to study to show themselves approved unto God, enabling them to rightly divide the word (2 Timothy 2:15). We make every effort to deal boldly with the issues that confront Christianity, with no apology, and strive to do so "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15).

# LOVE IS...LOVE WILL

Tom Moore

The Lamb of God declared, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). Love is a vital attribute for every Christian to possess, for the world will judge the church and us by how our love is manifested. If we backbite and devour one another the world will view us in a bad light. The apostle John said. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3:14-15). If we do not show the proper love one to another we will not go to heaven. My friends, the need for love cannot get any more critical than this! John further declares, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also" (1 John 4:20-21). It is impossible to love God as we ought if we fail to love our brethren. How can we love God whom we have not seen, if we cannot love our brothers and our fellowman who we have seen? To help us improve in the area of love, let us consider some important facts about love.

Love is impartial. This principal is taught in Deuteronomy 10:19, "Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." Our love is not to be extended or withheld because of race, how we are treated, one's wealth, or a host of other similar scenarios.

Love is unselfish. Jesus said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:39). All too often we are more concerned about ourselves than we are our brethren or our fellowman. If we would always treat others as we would like to be treated, and have as much concern about them as we do ourselves, the Lord's church would explode in number and strength.

Love is a proof of discipleship. It is proof to the world - "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35) and it is proof to God - "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen" (1 John 4:20)?

Love is sincere. Love does not say one thing and do another. "Let love be without hypocrisy" (Romans 12:9; ASV). Sincere love is seen in action. "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:17-18). Action is, in reality, the only way that love can truly be seen.

Love is abounding. "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you" (1 Thessalonians 3:12). Our love is to abound and be overflowing for one another. True biblical love will not try to love "just enough to get by!"

Love is fervent. The apostle Peter proclaimed, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Peter 1:22). Our love for our brethren and fellowman must be diligent, zealous, and boiling over. Love must not be taken lightly.

Love is keeping the commands of God. "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments" (1 John 5:2). We cannot truly love one another if we will not keep the commands of God. The liberals talk so much about love, but they don't love God, their brethren, or their fellowman, if they do not stay true to the Book. That is why Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

Love will treat others better than self. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Philippians 2:3). "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (Romans 12:10). How much less trouble would there be among our brethren and our neighbors if only we could truly practice this principle.

Love will share. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). "That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate" (1 Timothy 6:18). If we truly love we will share of our means and our biblical knowledge.

Love will forgive and be kind. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness" (Colossians 3:12-14). "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32). If we truly love one another, how can help but be forgiving and kind?

Love will strive to save the lost and restore the erring. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16). "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1). "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20). How can we say that we love our fellowman and brethren if we do not try to lead them to Christ, or correct the delinquent?

It's all very simple. If we want to go to heaven we must abound in love. If we want the church to be strong we must overflow in love. We all need to do our best to develop and improve in love.

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Theme This Issue:

## BIBLE BASICS

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# AMAZING GRACE

Jeff Sweeten

James M. Tolle once said, "It is high time that all who compose the Lord's church give to the wondrous sovereign grace of their Creator and God the attention, emphasis, and praise that it justly deserves." Who knows what brought about the spirit of this expression by Tolle, but the sentiment seems popular. There are many, especially in the Lord's church, that believe preachers have preached too sparingly on this topic, that teachers have rarely taught on grace, and that most Christians take it for granted to such a degree that it is rarely considered in worship, service, or personal prayer.

**Pivotal Grace.** The fact that grace is pivotal in the Christian's life is a theme frequently alluded to in both Old and New Testaments. Any serious Bible student will discover quickly that from the earliest beginnings of human sin and divine punishment, "Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (Genesis 6:8). Right off the bat, grace is both revealed and illustrated in the global flood. To argue that grace is a New Testament theology is to ignore Old Testament prophecy from its very beginnings (cf. Genesis 3:15). In preparation for the New Covenant, the apostle John wrote, "For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). Grace was manifested in the incarnation of the Christ to whom the entire Old Testament directs us (Galatians 3:24). Note also that inexorably joined together, grace and truth run hand in hand in the Christian's life and one's relationship with God is vain in the absence of either.

Paul, who lived in good conscience (Acts 23:1) and excelled in sacrificial righteousness (Philippians 3:5ff), humbly owned the correct Christian spirit, claiming God's grace to be his crown (1 Corinthians 15:10). The fact that meritorious works finds no place in the scheme of redemption has long been understood and defended by faithful Christians. Hurling this insult toward Christians (that they believe they are saved by works alone), because they also rightly believe that one cannot be saved by grace alone, is onerous as well as unfair. Christians understand and echo Christ's admonition, "when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do'" (Luke 17:10). Even as a light in the world, a Christian would never be out of the dark except by God's grace.

**Costly Grace.** Contrary to the convoluted message of modern-day grace-peddlers, however, the grace of God is not a cheap grace. It is not given without condition, it is not infused or imposed in spite of one's free-will choice, and it is not ours by some predestined birthright. There is sacrifice

involved in grace, such deep and divine sacrifice that the cheap-grace vendors should be ashamed. In divine specie, it cost God His only begotten Son and to argue that grace requires no human response exudes a nasty arrogance far beyond the power of puny humans. Grace is foundational to Christianity but it is also conditional and transformational. One cannot access the grace of God by accident or incident: it is an educated, determined, and convicted response. No response, no grace.

**Conditional Grace.** It is conditional in that one cannot access God's grace without having heard the Word of God (Romans 10:13-17), and actively pursued this grace (Romans 6:17-18). A fictitious grace that mysteriously drops from the sky absolves no more efficaciously than bird waste, meteor fodder, or distressed airplanes. Further, it is transformational in that one cannot attain or remain in the good grace of God without constant, honest, and self-critical reevaluation (Romans 12:1-2; Hebrews 6:1-8). Comfortable Christians often fall asleep at the switch, apathetic and oblivious concerning the eternal train-wreck that will define their eternity because they lose sight of their heavenly goal and the magnitude of God's grace (1 Corinthians 10:12; Galatians 5:4).

**Rejected Grace.** In the end, what is most amazing about grace is its rejection in the face of such simple invitations. Nothing that God has presented to us is so difficult that we cannot obey (1 Corinthians 10:13). Yet, masses of rebellious people refuse to sacrifice their pride and self-service to embrace humility in the sight of the Lord (James 4:10). It is not so complex that we cannot understand just what it is that we must do (2 Corinthians 11:3). Still a majority of the world lies in ignorance, often willful, in spite of technology so advanced that we are able to communicate the Gospel worldwide in a fraction of time and distribute Bibles in multiple languages for pennies (and often for free). Finally, from John Newton's *Amazing Grace*, the lyrics, "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound," assumes that there will be a hearing (Romans 10:17). "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14). Apathy on the part of Christians hinders opportunities for the soul running blindly on destiny's road.

Pity the poor soul whose ignorance, rebellion, or apathy hinders God's *Amazing Grace*.

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# WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

John Dickson

There has never been a more important question asked than this one. It goes right to the heart of man's greatest need: salvation. The Bible teaches that man's sin separates him from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). It further informs us: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Since the "wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23) then all are in need of salvation. We are fortunate that God has offered redemption to all of mankind (John 3:16). Paul proclaimed that salvation was an eternal plan of God (Ephesians 3:8-11). Thus, we have revealed to us in scripture God's plan of salvation.

An Examination of the Question. Let us examine the question presented to Paul and Silas by the Philippian jailor. "What" suggests that there is something required of man in order to obtain salvation. "Must" tells us that it is not a matter of option but that there is an absolute requirement. "I" denotes individual responsibility in regard to salvation. "Do" implies that there must be activity on the part of man in attaining salvation. "To Be Saved" is the desired result sought by the one posing the question. God has done His part; all that remains is man's part. "What must I do to be saved?"

Hear the Gospel. First, one must hear the gospel. Paul declared, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16). The preaching of the gospel is the method that God in His wisdom chose to bring about salvation (1 Corinthians 1:21). One must hear the gospel, before one can believe the gospel (Romans 10:17).

Belief on Jesus Christ. Second, one must believe on Jesus Christ. Christ plainly taught that belief is absolutely essential to man's salvation when he said, "ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). The Hebrews writer confirmed this principle stating, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). Proper belief or faith, based on the evidence of God's word, is essential to man's salvation (Hebrews 11:1).

Repentance. Third, one must repent of past sins. Our Lord commands all men everywhere to repent: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). Repentance is a decision to turn away from all that is wrong and follow Christ. The word carries with it the concept of the military command of "about face," that is, to turn and go in a new direction. It must also include an acknowledgement of wrongdoing, a realization that one has not lived as God

would have him to live. The person who is not willing to turn away from his sins, through repentance, does not love the Lord and will not be granted salvation (Acts 17:30).

Confession. Fourth, one must confess Christ. Paul stated, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9-10). Peter confessed Christ when he said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). We also have the example of the Ethiopian Eunuch, who just prior to his baptism boldly stated, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37). Christ has promised us that if we confess Him before men He will confess us before the heavenly Father (Matthew 10:32). We must confess Christ in order to gain salvation.

Baptism. Fifth, one must be baptized in water for the remission of sins. The Greek word baptiso translated "baptism" in our English Bibles has always meant immersion and does not include within its meaning the different modes of "baptism" practiced today. One must be immersed in water to obtain the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). John the Baptizer chose a suitable location to immerse people because "there was much water there" (John 3:23). Jesus, when baptized by John, "went up out of the water" (Matthew 3:16). When Philip baptized the Eunuch they both went down into the water and then came up out of the water (Acts 8:38-39). Only a qualified believer, one who has complied with the previous requirements, can be scripturally baptized. Jesus commanded baptism and forever linked it to salvation (Mark 16:15-16). The act of baptism puts us in contact with the blood of Christ and washes our sins away (Acts 22:16). Baptism is an essential part of salvation, man cannot be saved without it (1 Peter 3:21).

**God's Plan of Salvation.** God's grace is available to all, but God has set the conditions to access His grace. Man must meet those conditions in order to obtain salvation. Each condition within God's plan of salvation was given for a purpose. Hearing the gospel brings about belief. Belief or faith changes the heart. Repentance changes the life. Confession announces a change of allegiance. Baptism changes one's relationship by putting one in Christ (Galatians 3:27), the place where God put salvation (2 Timothy 2:10).

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# CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

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Fellowship is a volatile issue these days for several reasons and one seems obvious: the lines of fellowship are being consciously and purposely blurred and redefined. Another reason is not so obvious: people have not studied how the Bible defines and uses the term “fellowship.” Hence, what God intended to be a source of joy for Christian living has become a line in the sand, defining a church’s mission.

Unrestricted Fellowship. We must understand that from the open-armed, minimally-restrictive fellowship some “Christians” claim to have with religions of every stripe to the hyper-tolerance of non-denominational, community churches, the doors of so-called “Christian” fellowship have been thrown wide open to embrace any and every person who nominally claims some kinship with or affiliation to Jesus. Fellowship is being extended in spite of unchanged lives, unrepentant indulgences in perversions of every sort, and the encouragement of a general, willful ignorance that substitutes entertainment for worship and pop psychology for God’s Word.

Yet, people have begun to notice that the blind euphoria of ecumenicalism has serious flaws. For example, when the parachurch organization Promise Keepers claimed catholic connections with all “Christians,” eyebrows were raised when Catholics (who regard the Pope as Christ’s vicar on earth) and Jews (who do not regard Christ as God’s Son) wanted to join the band. They sing a song that strains the PK harmony. Seriously, would prayers to “The Virgin Mary” be acceptable? Are prayers to God better prayed without using “in Jesus’ Name” at their conclusion? Just how “open” does this fellowship get? Most thinking people will concede quickly, religious ecumenicalism might sound good in theory but like so much of the liberal theology we are deluged with these days, it is impossible to live consistently in the real world. There must be lines.

Drawing Lines. Where should we draw lines? Or, perhaps the better question is: Do *we* have authority to draw lines? Who are we, so tiny in God’s creation, to saddle ourselves with such a burden? What manner of arrogance does it take to assume such divine determinations? This point is critical to any study on Christian fellowship: God draws the lines. Therefore, the real question is this: do we know where God has drawn them, and then, will we recognize and respect them? If we cannot know where God draws lines of fellowship, the very notion of “fellowship” itself is a moot point. Therefore, we must know where God draws His lines of fellowship (cf. John 8:31).

The difficulty in recognizing divine lines of fellowship is usually complicated by personal considerations that cloud

clear thinking, and objective truth is often sacrificed on the altar of family or friendly ties. Whereas God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), people tend to employ a double standard, raising the bar with attendant emotionalism. “But, it’s my Mom were talking about here,” or “I’ve known him all my life and there’s no better person,” etc., suddenly become coherent, reasonable arguments against the simple statements of the Bible (Matthew 10:34-38). Therefore, the controversial nature of fellowship and the urge to compromise in this arena is no greater in any other area of Christian living.

Defining Fellowship. Perhaps clarifying the ground upon which fellowship is based would serve us best in the battle to define fellowship. “Fellowship” cannot be predicated upon our agreeing to disagree, choosing to ignore each other’s faults, or emphasizing our similar opinions. The prophet of old asks an interesting, rhetorical question: “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3). What is it upon which we must agree? Christian fellowship is not a matter of Christians determining issues upon which that will all agree to agree upon but upon their relationship to God; we must agree with God. Hence, John would state: “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). Here is the foundation of fellowship: our Christian fellowship is based entirely upon our relationship with God; our fellowship with each other is a blessed byproduct of being right with God. Except we walk as Christ walked, in total submission to God, having acquired from Jesus the blood-cleansing salvation, we have no Christian fellowship. Therefore, those who have not been bought by the blood of the Lamb (1 Corinthians 6:15-20), have not had their sins remitted (Acts 2:38), and have not become new creatures (cf. Romans 6:1-6; 2 Corinthians 5:17) are simply not within the God-ordained boundaries of Christian fellowship.

The popular trend of inviting the world into the church under the pretense of attempting to positively influence them is an experiment that has backfired in every church where it has been practiced. We cannot invite the world in for fellowship, we must invite the world to get out in order to have fellowship (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Unchanged, unrepentant, unwashed souls are not in fellowship with God (Isaiah 59:1-2) and, therefore, cannot be in fellowship with the faithful Christian.

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# BIBLICAL FAITH

Michael Light

It would be hard to say exactly which biblical doctrine has been the most abused since the giving of the gospel. But I would have to place faith in the top five. The general view held by most people (religious and secular alike) is a monstrous perversion of what is actually taught in the scriptures.

One common miscomprehension is that faith is all one needs. This doctrine has been styled by some as "faith only." The notion is that as long as one has some sort of mental affirmation concerning Jesus, then he/she is saved. The Bible never taught this. In James 2:17 we read, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." While it is distasteful to some, the Bible does affirm the necessity of works of obedience if one is to be saved (James 2:19, 24; Luke 6:46; et al.). It is true that we must have faith, but it takes plus adherence to the will of heaven to be saved.

Faith and a Leap in the Dark. Many seem to define faith as a leap in the dark. Faith is something, according to them, that you have (believe), in spite of the facts. The Bible knows nothing of this type of "faith." Faith is not some sort of religious guesswork. It is simply taking what God has said, examining it (proving, testing it) and then coming to the correct conclusion that God is its author. Once this conclusion is reached, the only reasonable reaction is to have complete confidence (trust, faith) in the divine message.

Notice the way the Bible speaks of faith, and our attitude toward truth. Jesus affirmed, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). In fact in the same chapter verse 24, we find, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."

The Lord not only affirmed that we have to know the truth (biblical faith, absolute trust in the evidence God has given). We also must realize that salvation awaits only those who come to such a point of knowledge. In Hebrews 11:6 the Spirit records, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Faith and Evidence. The Hebrew writer speaks of faith being based on the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). God has filled our world full of proofs of His existence. The Bible stands as a witness to the nature of God, His will for us, and our need to obey the gospel. Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

On a personal level we are to have faith, trust in God. Our faith is the result of our understanding of the word of God almighty. In Romans 10:17 we read, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Many who claim to have great faith in God while displaying great ignorance of what the Bible actually teaches, are woefully mistaken concerning their religious condition.

We cannot be both biblically ignorant and saved. Hosea 4:6 affirms, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." I am constantly amazed at the lack of biblical understanding displayed by many so-called "Christians." We cannot have faith in what God has said if we do not know what He has said.

Faith and Salvation. The Bible affirms, concerning salvation matters, that the word of God is all that we need. Note the words of the apostle Paul in Acts 20:32 where he exhorts us, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

The only way the word of God can be assimilated into our hearts is through our determined, and consistent study of it. In 2 Timothy 2:15 we find, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." We must not only read it, we must come to a place in our life that we are willing to believe what it says. Notice Hebrews 4:2, "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."

One of our primary goals in writing this paper is to encourage our readers to continue and increase in their study of the Bible. The primary motivation for this is the fact that only through such pursuits can faith be gained and increased. Let us always be diligent in making sure that the things we believe in religion are in harmony with what the Bible actually teaches.

This point flows from the idea found in 1 John 4:1, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." We must test our faith (beliefs) in light of the faith (truth) that has been given to us from heaven.

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