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Feelings, Faith & the Bible

Many times we get emails from those who claim to know that they are right because they feel it or just know because they say God lets them know through a feeling in their heart. The Bible has some things to say about feelings, faith, facts and the reality of the Truth in and about the Word of God. There is nothing more damaging and dangerous for a Christian today than to simply equate “biblical faith” with “emotions and feelings” and proceed to offer this to the world or other believers as the proof of why they believe. Feelings have their place in the life of a Christian. They are both necessary and important. A Christian is not an emotionless entity. We are to be joyful. The problem comes when we make emotions and feelings a basis for decisions. The door is opened for a plethora of error to be introduced. The basis for evaluating Truth cannot be feelings.

A person may “feel” saved, totally forgiven and have utmost confidence in the Bible one day and feel just the opposite the next. A person’s salvation and the truth of the word of God are not based on how a person feels from day to day. It is based on the eternal truth of the Bible. Different things inspire different emotions in individuals. If an emotional response judges truth then there is truly no basis for discerning truth. Mormonism uses this as a basis for discerning the truth. In Moroni 10:3-5, part of verse 4 states, *“I would exhort you that you would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if you shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.”* The Mormon missionary will then pair this with the following statement from the book of Doctrine and Covenants 9:8 *“Behold I say unto you that you must study it out in your own mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it be right I will cause your bosom to burn within you; therefore you shall feel that it is right.”* According to this, one can have a “feeling” of truth by consuming too much pizza, ice cream and habanero peppers before going to bed. Truth and Biblical faith are not mere feelings.

Humans are emotional beings, however, humans are more than emotional beings.

Psalm 139:14 *I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.*

The issue that some Christians do not come to terms with is that their relationship with Christ and a partaker in the Religion of true Christianity is not just a system of feelings. The life of a Christian is one of total devotion in all aspects of the believer’s life in all facets. There are physical, emotional, intellectual, and many other facets to humans. We are as the Bible says, “fearfully and wonderfully made.” One of the most damaging things to a Christian is to not live in the realization of this and try to live a compartmentalized life. There are those who never cultivate their mind for Christ while those on the other end of the spectrum never cultivate any emotional growth and maturity in their relationship with Christ. Neither scenario is desirable. Neither is the Biblical model of a Believer. Emotions are not to be substituted for the mind and visa versa.

When emotions over-shadowed facts...

Jeremiah 17:9 *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (The heart, feelings and emotions are no basis for determining the Truth.)*

Genesis 3:6 *And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*

Numbers 11:4-6 *And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.*

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2 Samuel 11:3-4 *And David sent and inquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.*

Love is a decision not just a feeling.

God loves the nation of Israel. This was a volitional choice that He made.

Isaiah 41:8 *But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.*

Serving God is a mental (mind) and emotional (heart) decision:

Mark 1:15 *And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel. (mind and emotion)*

Psalm 119: 30 *I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me.*

Psalm 119:173 *Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts.*

Romans 6:1-13 *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know (mind) ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing (mind) this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe (mind and emotions) that we shall also live with him: Knowing (mind) that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise consider (mind) ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts (emotions) thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God (mind and emotions)*

That you may know...

Luke 5:24 *But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.*

John 10:38 *But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.*

Ephesians 1:18 *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*

1 John 5:13 *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

Paul and the Bereans ...

Acts 17:11 *These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word*

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with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Notice the Bereans did not feel that Paul was right. They researched, studied and came to this conclusion. They were called noble for doing so. Some believers maintain that the Holy Spirit reveals things to them and that it is not necessary for them to study. To this I must draw the conclusion that either the Holy Spirit was in error when He inspired verses such as 2 Timothy 2:15 and 3:16 as well as the aforementioned example or, the one's who hold this opinion are in error. You can't have it both ways.

The mind ...

Isaiah 26:3 *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace (emotional state), whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.*

Romans 12:2 *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove (research, intellectual evaluation, research) what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

1 Peter 1:13-14 *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:*

1 Peter 3:15 *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:*

Matthew 22:37 *Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*

2 Timothy 2:15 *Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

Thessalonians 5:21 *Prove all things; hold to the things found to be good.*

Philippians 1:9-10(NIV) *And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ*

Hebrews 5: 14 *But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

Admittedly there are many issues that are still being debated in the realm of Conservative, Orthodox Christianity. The sad thing is that many people are weighing in with opinions on many subjects that they have not cared to take the time, energy, or discipline to address as responsible Christians.

As the world looks at us, they at times get a distorted view that Christianity is a religion that only a mindless person could accept because the great many people that are thinking with their emotions in clear violation of 2 Timothy 2:15 and Thessalonians 5:21. The Bible tells us to be able to give a reason for our hope in 1 Peter 3:15 and we are commanded to judge and discern things in 1 Corinthians 2:14. Christianity is a living relationship with a living Savior. God wants all of you ... Romans 12: 12:1-2 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind,*

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that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

For further consideration on this subject see the following articles:

<http://www.christianarsenal.com/Apologetics/Discernment.htm>

<http://www.christianarsenal.com/Apologetics/CompChristian.htm>

<http://www.christianarsenal.com/Apologetics/Ministryoflove.htm>