

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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CONFIDENCE

The apostle Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength." The language of faith resembles in form the language of boastful presumption. But there is a difference. The braggart boasts of his own resources while the man of faith has a wholesome self-respect for the potential within him and a firm belief that God will strengthen him for the task at hand.

A major problem in today's world is a lack of confidence: a lack of self-confidence and a lack of confidence in God. Every person has a self-concept, and every successful person knows the vital role his self-concept (or self-image) plays in the achievement of success. In fact, it has been said that between every person as he is and what he is capable of becoming, is an invisible barrier. This invisible barrier is his self-image, and every decision, which he makes, is influenced by this concept.

Let us consider this as it is applied to the success formula, which Jesus gave. He said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matthew 7:7-8). But the person who is burdened with doubt refuses to ask because he believes it will not be given to him; he will not seek because he believes he cannot find it; and he will not knock because he expects no one to open unto him. On the other hand, a person who believes in his ability to perform as an individual will make a request by asking, he will press his request by seeking, and he persists in his request by knocking.

Twelve spies returned from their mission in Canaan to their camp and reported that Canaan was indeed a fertile land. But ten of the spies declared that it was beyond the strength of Israel to possess the land. The other two spies said, "We are able." The people listened to the ten and their fate is a matter of history. The Hebrew writer said, "They entered not in because of unbelief." But history reveals another interesting fact: The two spies who said, "We can enter the land" were among those who at last possessed the land. Those who said, "We cannot!" – didn't! Those who said, "We can!" – did!

- Mason Harris, via Truth Magazine, August 16, 1973

The Believer

The early Greeks and Romans believed in heavenly powers — some even claim they originally believed in one God. But in later years the concept degenerated. Philosophers gave lip service to the gods, but clearly indicated a lack of faith in them. Drama and poetry depicted ridiculous supermen gods, with passions, unfaithful marriages and buffoonery. God-respect became more political than religious, as temples became symbols of national glory rather than marks of genuine respect for deity.

In such a clime, a believer was a throw-back to the dark ages. When Paul declared the true God to be Spirit, Creator, Absolute, with power over death; some mocked (Acts 17). A true Believer faces mockery and ridicule today for much the same reason.

The Jews believed in God, but had a distorted and materialistic concept of the awaited Messiah. With Solomon and David as their ideals of greatness, they had come to expect wealth and military power from a Savior. Even Nathaniel had asked, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46). The officers who were impressed by Jesus' words (John 7:45-49) were asked, "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?" (Implying, No Big-Shots would accept him.) To further intimidate they added, "But this people who knoweth not the law" (are not learned theologians), "are cursed." A Believer, then and now, is often classed with the ignorant.

But perhaps the hardest obstacle to faith in Jesus Christ was, and is, the denial of self — the admission of sin, and need for salvation. The Jerusalem Jews did not lack evidence (Acts 2:22), they lacked the will to believe. Peter offered no compromise (Acts 3:13-f). "God . . . hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, . . . and desired a murderer . . . And killed the Prince of life." If they were to accept Jesus as the Christ they must acknowledge their awful deeds. In a broader view, since He died for all sins, in accepting Jesus as my redeemer I also acknowledge that I am lost and undone without Him. Pride could keep me from believing.

We must recognize, therefore, that Believer is a noble designation indeed, and should not be carelessly applied. It was used by inspiration to denote the saints of God. "All that believed were together", "them that believed were of one heart and of one soul", "Believers were the more added to the Lord" (Acts 2:44; 4:32; 5:14).

Today's believer must live above the ridicule of atheists who regard his faith as superstition of the unlearned. He must not be taken in by the theists who would make God an impersonal power only, without word or authority for final judgment. He stands out sharply against modernists who make God identical with revelation subjectively

determined; who therefore make man the source of God. He is no kin of the existentialists and their vague leap of faith in blind despair. His is a confident acceptance of evidence. He is taught, he learns, and he comes to God (John 6:45). He is the most noble example of God's creatures, made in His image.

- Robert F. Turner, via *Plain Talk*, February, 1977

Share a Quote ...

"Our own accurate understanding of kingdom righteousness should not produce in us a spirit of harsh, censorious judgment toward those who are having a struggle of it. Men need to be helped to see the nature of true righteousness, but not by an uncaring and self-righteous hypocrite who is more concerned with the sins of others than his own. If the sermon is first applied rigorously at home, we will easily find the compassion and humility to treat the sins of others (Matthew 7:1-5)."

- Paul Earnhart, via *Christianity Magazine*, May, 1987

The Black Type in the Red-Letter Edition of the New Testament

Of course it is extremely disturbing to read or hear destructive criticisms toward the Holy Bible as unbelievers state disparaging comments regarding the reliability of the God-breathed writings (2 Timothy 3:16; cf. 2 Peter 1:16-21; 1 Corinthians 2:12-13). But even among Christians there are some who seek to diminish the authority of the apostles of Christ and the other inspired New Testament writers. They say things to indicate that the words spoken directly by Christ (highlighted by the introduction of the Red Letter Edition of the Bible in 1899) are more authoritative and more important than words written by Paul, Peter, or John.

Christians and other Bible students must remember the words of the Lord Jesus that speak directly to this issue. This is what Jesus said to His specially chosen apostles: "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come." (John 16:12). [These words are in red!] In the Lord's wisdom, He did not disclose the sum total of all truth that His Father would impart to the world prior to His leaving (His ascension). The Master Teacher imparts truths to His disciples only as they are able to receive it. This He had done during His personal ministry (example: the forecast of His

crucifixion) with the promise that such would continue, following His departure, through the heavenly agent, the Holy Spirit. Additional revelations would be given to them as they were prepared to receive them and go deeper and deeper into divine knowledge. Heaven's plan for the church that Jesus would build in the days ahead would need additional details in order to be established and function according to God's eternal plan (cf. Ephesians 3:8-12). The Holy Spirit sent from God would supply what was needed when it was needed (cf. Luke 12:11-12).

Our Lord was not foolish in thinking that people would not devise schemes to discredit and reject parts of His doctrine. Men who love evil love the darkness rather than the Light; they hate the Light because it exposes their evil deeds (John 3:19-20). Adding to or taking from the doctrine of Christ is evil. The motives for altering the truth are evil. The wrath of God will fall upon one who perverts the truth (See 2 John 9-11; cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:3-12; Revelation 22:18-19). The truths taught by the apostles of Christ cannot be rejected without rejecting Christ and His Father! This principle was taught by Jesus when He sent the seventy out to preach (Luke 10:16), again in red letters.

The apostle Paul was a man of integrity; he would not deceive people. Note carefully what he wrote by inspiration: "If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized." (1 Corinthians 14:37-38). Note carefully what he declared to the Thessalonian Christians: "For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 4:2). After giving further instructions, he said, "So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you." (1 Thessalonians 4:8). Further, note that the apostle John powerfully emphasized this truth: "We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." (1 John 4:6). One is in error when he rejects what the apostles and inspired writers wrote in the New Testament.

These brave writers were ambassadors of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20), and as such they were entrusted with the "utterances of God" (1 Peter 4:11). These they wrote and spoke, Jesus being with them and the Holy Spirit's words delivered to them according to the Lord's promise (Matthew 28:20; John 14:25-26; 16:7-15). The Lord Jesus is certainly a promise keeper! And the gift of the Holy Spirit prevented them from forgetting what they had been taught or adding things from their own fallible judgments.

Friend, we cannot reject any words in the New Testament without rejecting the teaching of Christ Himself. We cannot reject the ambassadors of Christ, those specially chosen by

Him for His divine purpose, without rejecting Christ! We best not tamper with God's divine truth!

- Gary Smalley

- * "The world doesn't need a definition of Christianity as badly as it needs a demonstration!"
 - * "Everywhere that Paul went, he made some people GLAD, some people SAD, and some people MAD!"
 - * "The smallest good deed is better than the grandest intention!"
 - * "A consistent Christian life is the best interpretation and proof of the Gospel!"
 - * "An empty tomb proves Christianity. An empty church building denies it!"
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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)