

The Bulletin

Meeks St. Church of Christ

1201 Meeks St. Corinth, Ms. 38834

Phone – (662) 808-7777

Visit Our Website at:
MeeksstretchurchofChrist.com

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“Genuine Faith”

By Jefferson David Tant

The topic of “faith” is often discussed and often misunderstood. Skeptics accuse Christians of having “blind faith,” or taking a “leap of faith,” meaning that there is no basis for what we believe. Thus our faith in God’s existence is no different than what I have encountered in South Africa, i.e. the practice of ancestor worship. It is believed that if one does not properly respect one’s ancestors, that they will inflict harm on you.



Even modern dictionaries lend credence to the matter of blind faith. *Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* claims faith “is a firm belief in something for which there is no proof” (1998).

The American Heritage Dictionary similarly states “belief that does not rest on logical or material evidence” (2000, p. 636). Such definitions are totally absurd. I have faith that when I flip the light switch, the bulb will be illuminated. That faith is based on years of evidence that it really does work.

Now, some may argue that this is not faith, but knowledge. To a point, that is true. But sometimes the light doesn’t come on. The bulb may have burned out, power lines may be down; the lamp might be unplugged, or the switch itself may have malfunctioned. But I do have faith that is based on solid evidence.

I believe the sun is 93 million miles from earth. I haven’t been there, nor conducted experiments to ascertain this for myself. But I have faith in the evidence science has presented. I have faith that I have a heart. I have never seen it, but the evidence that I have one is quite conclusive. Otherwise, I would not be writing these lines.

Atheists are rather dismissive of Christians, claiming that our faith is based on emotions and some sort of generic warm fuzzy feeling. I am not sure how they establish their non-belief. Do they have knowledge that there is no god? Knowledge is based on facts, and I have never seen the facts that prove their claim.

The noted atheist, Richard Dawkins states, “Christianity, just as much as Islam, teaches children that unquestioned faith is a virtue. You don’t have to make the case for what you believe” (*The God Delusion*, p.306). That is so far removed from logic and reason that it is difficult that an intelligent man could state that. One might say he is “delusional.”

The evidence for a creator is beyond logical dispute. Oh, I know many deny God’s existence, but their faith is more like that “warm, fuzzy feeling.” Suppose I was in some African jungle and dropped my watch. Some native might find it and wonder what it was, as he had never seen one before. Would he imagine that this device made itself and just appeared? Who would think that? He might have no idea what its purpose was, but I think all would agree that he would understand that someone made it.

How much more complicated are the workings of our universe, yea, even the human body. And all this just made itself? Who can believe it? Well, there are some who can believe it, and such people have been around for a long time.

Nearly 2,000 years ago, a learned scholar wrote these words about unbelievers in his day: “... *that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools*” (Paul, Romans 1:19-22).

In ancient Lystra, Paul declared, “*In the generations gone by He 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 14:16-17). Note the statement that God “*did not leave Himself without witness.*”

Yes, God gives us free will. We can deny his existence if we wish, but that's what we call "wishful thinking." If I have cancer, I can wish it away all I want. But my "wishful thinking" will not alter reality. That ignores the evidence.

Now, back to the title. Just what is "genuine faith?" Genuine faith is faith that is based on evidence. "*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*" (Hebrews 11:1, KJV). Consider some of the words. "Substance" is from the Greek *hypostasis* ("a setting under, support). "Evidence" is from *elegchos* ("proof, conviction: -- evidence, reproof").

Among other things, the resurrection of Christ from the dead is one of the most provable events of history. The evidence is overwhelming. "... *the firm foundation of God stands*" (II Timothy 2:19). I believe I'll accept the Bible's definition of faith rather than Webster's or Dawkin's.

"Encouragement To Parents"

By Jarrod M. Jacobs

Editor's Note:

As a parent, I have always enjoyed reading things that will help me be a better parent. I am not perfect and need to learn from others' experiences, whether through oral teaching, written advice, or just watching others' examples (Matt. 5:16).

I especially love learning from the Biblical examples of parents who "got it right" through their faithfulness to the Lord and their faithful teaching of God's word to their children (Gen. 18:19). I look for such examples in Scripture and have tried to model what I do after them. One such example of parents who I think "got it right" is Eunice and Lois, grandmother and mother to Timothy. I believe that they gave Timothy great instruction while growing up (II Tim. 1:5, 3:15).

In connection with these thoughts, please read the paragraph below. I gained much from this and thought it would be something that others could use as well.

This paragraph is reprinted from an old Bible study series entitled "Elam's Notes." Brother H. Leo Boles wrote this class book in 1930. He took over the work after bro. Elam passed away.

"Timothy had known the word of God from a youth. Paul says that *'from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.'*

Timothy's greatest blessing was his mother and grandmother's training; the greatest blessing that anyone can receive is to be taught the Bible from childhood up. Parents can do no more significant thing for their children than to teach them the word of God. The richest legacy that parents can leave their children is the inheritance of a good name and an unwavering faith in God; the wisest thing that children can do is receive the training of father and mother in the *'chastening and admonition of the Lord.'*

A Christian home can have a greater influence on children than anything else. Parents should feel the obligation to teach the word of God diligently to their children, and the children should be taught early in life to receive the word of God into their hearts."

[H. Leo Boles, Elam's Notes, 1930, p. 327]

Memory Verse of the Week:

Ephesians 6:1 (NKJB)

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."



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“Responsibilities, Duties, & Obligations...”

Lesson Text: **Titus 2:1-9.**

I. To Their Own Self.

- A. Genuinely Serving God in Good Works Titus 2:1-9 (Esp. 10-14).**
- B. Keep themselves Unspotted from the World James 1:27; 2 Cor. 7:1.**
 - 1. How does the world make that duty very difficult to perform?
- C. Save Their Own Self and Others.... Acts 2:40; Phil. 2:12; 1 Tim. 4:16.**

II. To Their Family.

- A. Love- Titus 2:4; Ephesians 5:25-28; Timothy 3:1-3.**
- B. Support/Provide- 2 Thessalonians 3:10-11;**
- C. Guide/Train- Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:1-4; 2 Timothy 3:15.**

III. To Their Neighbor.

- A. Love- Romans 13:8-10.**
- B. Teach- Romans 15:2; Matthew 28:19-20.**
- C. Do Good- Galatians 6:10; Luke 10:25-37.**

IV. To Their Enemy.

- A. Love- Matthew 5:43-44.**
- B. Forgive- Matthew 6:14-15.**
- C. Do Good- Romans 12:17-18.**

V. To Their Government.

- A. Pray For- 1 Timothy 2:1-2.**
- B. Pay Our Taxes- Matthew 22:15-22; Romans 13:6-7.**
- C. Obey the Laws of the land- Romans 13:1-2.**

VI. To Their Local Church.

- A. Assemble with the Saints- Acts 2:41-42.**
- B. Worship Collectively- Colossians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 11:23-33; 16:1-2.**
- C. Be a Good Example- 1 Timothy 4:12.**

News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Debbie Keplinger, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Betty Hurst, Peggy Harville (cancer), Clois Wright, Dan & Linda Hunt, Mollie Harris, David Taylor, Randy Beaty, Sam Johnson, Sherry Doles, Steve Switcher, Roy Robinson, Danny Cottrell (Dan's Dad).

Those Who Serve:

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| Announcements: | Jerry Kennemur |
| Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading: | Russell Briggs <i>Titus 2:1-5</i> |
| Song Leader: | Paul Busby |
| Lord's Supper: | Fred Johnson |
| Preaching: | Brian Meade |
| Sermon: | <i>"Responsibilities, Duties, & Obligations..."</i> |
| Closing Prayer: | Tim Harris Jr. |