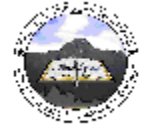




# On The Frontier



“For The Glory of God and the furtherance of the Gospel”

Vol XIV No.3

September/October 2006

## Editors Note#

This issue of “On The Frontier” contains a compilation of articles written for our local newspaper “The Frontiersman.” By doing this we wish to give you, the reader, an idea of how news-media may be utilized to further the Gospel. Hopefully this will inspire you to pursue your local resources for the same purpose.

## Faith & Practice Part One

The seeker must have a center of reference outside of himself if he is to learn anything. This is a basic tenet for the acquisition of knowledge. While it is true that we have a host of inherited characteristics, all that pertains to life in practice must be learned. An infant begins this learning process in contact with mother. Initially, the main center for learning is mother but as the child grows so do the number of reference centers. Children may act as though they already know everything, but every parent knows the fallacy of that thinking. Frankly, none of us know anything until taught or learned. Which brings me to the computer jargon of yesteryear. GIGO! Garbage in, garbage out. A computer fed false information will arrive at erroneous conclusions. In like fashion, your conclusions are only as sound as the information you have been given. Men search their hearts in vain, for all knowledge must come from a source outside of the searcher.

Proverbs 18:2

A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself.

The best approach is:

Proverbs 9:10

The fear [reverence, respect] of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy *is* understanding

Psalms 111:10

The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do *his commandments*: his praise endureth for ever.

World philosophy denies the above, but that does not make world philosophy correct. When you take all the trappings off, all world philosophies break down into two basic groups.

1. Epicurean - the eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we may die attitude. From Epicurus the philosopher founder of the Epicurean sect.

And

2. Stoic - the virtue and clean living will see to our goodness both now and eternally mentality. The author, Zeno of Citium, taught this at Athens.

All world philosophies have their basis in one of these two thinking trends. Both are wrong as both seek that which originates from the mind. Such notions bring about questions that man

cannot answer. Why? Because man lacks the wherewithal to produce information without input. No input, no output.

Philosophy asks such questions as: What is knowledge? What is the nature of reality? Is there a God? Do we exist, and does the world exist, and if so, how do we prove it? How do we find truth (I can sure help with that one)? What is the meaning of life (better ask Monty Python about that)? Lest we forget, there's the age old unanswerable question of . . . “If a tree falls in the forest and there's nobody around to hear it, does it make a sound?” Better still, “If a man speaks in the forest and there's no woman around to hear it, is he still wrong?”

Kidding aside, this is serious business as all of us are impacted by these approaches to learning. How is that? All of us have had some schooling. All our educators have been exposed to philosophy courses or a professor who advocates philosophy over logic. When I say logic, I mean deducing a conclusion based upon previously known facts as opposed to a prediction based upon premise that can only support opinion and never ensure truth. There are some who would argue this but truth is not subject to debate as it only requires a witness.

Jeremiah 10:23

O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

The above verse is hard to swallow but it is the truth.

Having established the need for a center of reference, we now realize that neither opinion nor experience guarantee truth. Both are extremely varied and have a marked propensity toward contradiction. Thus, the seeker with multiple reference centers is confused. Topical examples are; diet, exercise and nutrition. You can have ten equally intelligent people with ten different opinions on the same topic. Pick one center for reference on a given topic and avoid confusion. As for me, my ONLY rule for faith and practice is the Bible. Right or wrong, I am NEVER confused. If the Bible is right, I'm right. If it's wrong, I'm wrong. But the Bible is not wrong and I have no turmoil in decision making as confusion is not an issue.

Every discipline in life has rules, from the practice of medicine to sports and government. Shouldn't a Christian minister be required to abandon opinion and preach the Bible for faith and practice?

Romans 10:17  
So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Faith & Practice Part Two

As noted previously, those seeking knowledge must have a center for learning outside themselves. Since our concern is faith and practice we submit the Bible as the best and only rule! This is understood in light of being Christian. When I speak of faith and practice I am doing so from a perspective unique to scripture. It should be understood that The Scripture is Divinely inspired and we will continually reflect that point of view.

II Timothy 3:16  
Every Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for convincing, for correction of error, and for instruction in right doing; (1912 Weymouth NT)

Faith is having trust and confidence in some one or something. When it comes to practice, faith is having unwavering trust and confidence in information received to the end of acting (believing) on that information. It is accepted that the source of the information has been taken into account. Since there must be a source from which to glean information, the phrase "blind faith" becomes erroneous. Consider the following:

Romans 10:13-17  
For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

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?

And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (1769 Authorized Version)

To have faith in God, one must have the Word of God else their "faith" is groundless. For instance, God gave His Word to Abraham and Abraham accepted it to be the truth to the end that he acted upon (believed) it.

Galatians 3:6-9  
Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. (1769 AV)

God gave Abraham His Word. Abraham had faith in God and therefore believed. That is, Abraham had trust and confidence in God and the Word spoken to the end that he was obedient (acted on it, believed).

Thus, Abraham's believing was reckoned unto him for righteousness. For Abraham, faith and practice were based solely upon hearing from God, i.e. God's Word was his only rule for faith and practice. Not faith alone, but action predicated upon trust and confidence in information received as well as an acknowledgment of the source's reliability.

James 2:17-24  
So also faith, if it is unaccompanied by obedience, has no life in it—so long as it stands alone.

Nay, some one will say, "You have faith, I have actions: prove to me your faith apart from corresponding actions and I will prove mine to you by my actions.

You believe that God is one, and you are quite right: evil spirits also believe this, and shudder."

But, idle boaster, are you willing to be taught how it is that faith apart from obedience is worthless? Take the case of Abraham our forefather.

Was it, or was it not, because of his actions that he was declared to be righteous as the result of his having offered up his son Isaac upon the altar?

You notice that his faith was co-operating with his actions, and that by his actions his faith was perfected;

and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, <"And Abraham believed God, and his faith was placed to his credit as righteousness,"> and he received the name of 'God's friend.'

You all see that it is because of actions that a man is pronounced righteous, and not simply because of faith. (1912 Weymouth)

For the Christian, the only credible source for faith and practice is the Bible. Opinion and experience are the subjective rambling of arrogant men who presume to know more than God Himself. They are therefore unacceptable when set forth as a basis for faith and practice.

If your Christian "minister" does not rely on the Bible as their only rule for faith, practice and preaching, perhaps you should seek one that does!

To be continued:

## Faith & Practice Part Three

It's never a question of, "Do you believe?" The issue is, "Who or what do you believe?" Even atheists believe. They believe there is no God. Thus, they live their lives that way. The opposite is true for the Christian. The Bible promises the return of God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is called the Christians Hope!

I John 3:1-3

1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons (*teknon* = children) of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

Beloved, now are we the sons (*teknon* = children) of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he (Jesus Christ) shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. (1769 AV)

We want to be less like the world and more like the Lord. Because, when he shall appear we shall be like him. A person without this Hope, has no expectation beyond the grave. They tend to live life in a self-gratifying way. The absence of hope leaves them in a vacuum, one swiftly filled with despair.

I Thessalonians 4:13-18

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep (*koimao* = dead), that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Wherefore comfort one another with these words. (1769 AV)

Our Hope is the Return of Jesus Christ! The worldly man has only the hope of gain, which holds no promise beyond the grave. Men without hope live life much differently from those with hope.

I Corinthians 15:32b

. . . what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die. (1769 AV)

Men without the Hope of Christ's Return burning in their soul live as the above verse suggests. They have a faith which they practice, but in the end they come to realize the futility of their efforts. Sadly, clarity arrives too late for them to appreciate and embrace the things of true importance..

Psalms 49:6-15

6 Even of those whose faith is in their wealth, and whose hearts are lifted up because of their stores.

Truly, no man may get back his soul for a price, or give to God the payment for himself;

(Because it takes a great price to keep his soul from death, and man is not able to give it.)

So that he might have eternal life, and never see the underworld.

For he sees that wise men come to their end, and foolish persons of low behaviour come to destruction together, letting their wealth go to others.

The place of the dead is their house for ever, and their resting-place through all generations; those who come after them give their names to their lands.

But man, like the animals, does not go on for ever; he comes to an end like the beasts.

This is the way of the foolish; their silver is for those who come after them, and their children get the pleasure of their gold. (Selah.)

Death will give them their food like sheep; the underworld is their fate and they will go down into it; their flesh is food for worms; their form is wasted away; the underworld is their resting-place for ever.

But God will get back my soul; for he will take me from the power of death. (Selah.) (1965 Bible in Basic English)

Don't live a life of misplaced trust. Give your all for the God of glory and take Him at His Word.

Galatians 5:5

“For we, by [the] Spirit, on the principle of faith, await the hope of righteousness.” (1884 Darby Version)

To be continued:

\*\*\*\*\*

### Faith & Practice Conclusion

In this final contribution to our consideration of Christian faith and practice, a brief recap shall serve us well. Fundamental to our understanding is the acknowledgment that acquisition of knowledge must be from a source outside ourselves. We've determined to avoid the confusion which comes from contradictory sources by selecting only one center for reference. The obvious choice being the Bible. Thus our ONLY rule for faith and practice is the Word of God. It should also be understood that a study of scripture is required to be sure that we have the inspired Word of God. No version of the Bible can rightly be called "THE" Word of God and no translation is word for word, so we must continue to study. It is imperative we separate man's word from God's. We DO NOT want the word of man as our rule for faith and practice.

2 Timothy 2:15

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (1769 AV)

This is not based solely upon language and version. Sadly, translators have inserted their personal beliefs and denominational leanings in the renderings of the Bible they have been entrusted with. Some of this being unintentional, some deliberate. The

latter little more than forgery. If we are to have a sound and reliable rule for faith and practice we must avoid philosophy, opinion, experience, denominational and political biases.

It is only the Word of God that is truth. There may be true facts but we must recognize the difference between fact and truth. Facts change, truth does not. Truth is unalterable! This I say fully aware of those who deny the existence of absolute truth.

Jesus said:

John 17:17

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. (1769 AV)

John 8:31 and 32

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed;

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (1769 AV)

Note: Hearing the Word is not sufficient, there must be a continuing (practice) therein. It's the Word, the Word and nothing but the Word that we are after!

That's why I make every effort to document, not paraphrase, the verses consulted AND the version from which I took them. This gives you a way of checking to see if what I've written is so. You should be as the Bereans. Please do not take my word for it, read it for yourself.

Acts 17:11

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. (1769 AV)

Too many writers and preachers are vague as to the source of their assertions. They neglect to provide documentation and often mislead the reader, leading them to believe that their presumptions are statements of truth. They may quote this person or that, but fail to say when or where this was said. Furthermore, they set forth these individuals as though they truly hold a place of spiritual significance. They make it seem as if man's words are as valuable as God's. They would revoke the Living Word, if they could. Some make discrediting the source central to their agenda. Some day they will find they really aren't as wise as God after all.

My approach to the Bible is simple. I believe it is God breathed! It did not come by the will of man but was given when holy men of God spoke as they were moved by holy spirit. If a man makes statements which he cannot back up, he should shut up. If a preacher does not believe the Bible, he should step off the podium. That would be the honest thing to do. Or change and believe, which would be better.

The last thing to consider in the practice of Christian faith is the Hope of Christ's Return. This is the Pole Star by which a Christian navigates their life. Jesus Christ is going to come back and when he does it shall be as KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. He is coming back to set things straight, once and for all. A person who believes this will live life much differently from one who does not. This is perhaps the fulcrum point of our practice because of its great significance.

A man is measured by his reverence for God and His Word. And his obedience to both.

**Psalms 119:11**

**In my heart, have I treasured what thou hast said, to the end I may not sin against thee.**

**(1902 ROTHERHAM)**

\*\*\*\*\*

NOTES