

## But Can You Defend It?

One of the easiest things in the world is for one to say that he or she believes something. Much more effort is involved in actually defending that belief. The apostle Peter exhorted, "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." (I Peter 3:15).

A person who claims to be a Christian ought to be able to defend his or her belief. Unfortunately, many religious discussions end with a person saying, "Well, I just believe it, that's all," or something like that, and never giving proof to back up what they claim to believe. There are two problems with that. First, we have the ability to know spiritual truth. Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32). God has given us "all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." (II Peter 1:3). We ought to be able to back up our faith. Second, how can one ever lead a lost soul to Christ without presenting the evidence for faith? Acts 1:3 says that Jesus "shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs." The support for the claims of the resurrected Christ was there. We can search the Scriptures and find the evidence that undergirds the faith once delivered (John 5:39; Jude 3). Just saying to a non-Christian, "That's how I feel and that's enough for me" is really NOT enough for that person. The lost can't be led to Christ by human feelings. Everybody knows that feelings can deceive. That's why the "witnessing" and "testifying" that is in vogue in the denominational world is totally ineffective in leading souls to salvation. There is only one source that is inherently powerful enough to bring souls to Christ and that is the Gospel (Romans 1:16). In the New Testament, when Christians lived faithfully to God and then backed up their faith with the pure and simple teaching of that dynamic Gospel, multitudes were saved from their sins (Acts 12:24; 19:20).

You say that you believe in God. Can you defend that belief? You say that you are certain that the Bible is God's written revelation to mankind, completely inspired by God and sufficient to guide mankind to eternal life. What proof do you have of that? You claim that you believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Are you able to back up that claim? You assert that there is only one way to heaven and that is by faithfully abiding in the Word of God. Where is your proof for that?

Somewhere along the centuries of time mankind has developed the idea that faith is equated with blindness. Perhaps it comes from a misunderstanding of Paul's statement in II Corinthians 5:7 that "we walk by faith, not by sight." This concept has led people to elevate feelings to the same status as faith. "I may not be able to give you book, chapter and verse for what I believe, but I just feel that I'm doing the right thing." But why can't you give book, chapter and verse? Is it because God has not given us a solid enough foundation for faith? Could it be because you don't want to put forth the effort to fortify that faith with study of the Word? Could it even be because you really can't find book, chapter and verse for some of the things you believe and practice? The fact is that faith is not blindness. To the contrary, "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1). Faith is substance and evidence, not blindness. Not only do we not have to wander around in spiritual darkness, hoping that we're right, we must not live in that manner. We must seek the deeper faith that comes from studying God's Word (Romans 10:17). We must be able to teach others God's truth so that they can be saved in eternity.

I'd like to challenge all readers to "examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." (II Corinthians 13:5). Know why you believe what you believe and know it based on what God has written in the Bible. If your faith is based on your feelings, the beliefs of your parents or some other human or on a catechism, creed book or manual, is it indeed the faith that God established? Sure you believe it, but can you, in the pages of God's Word, defend it?

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