

General Topics :: Experience vs. Doctrine in Relationship with Christ

Experience vs. Doctrine in Relationship with Christ - posted by flameoffire (), on: 2011/8/29 12:22

One of the current trends in Christendom today is a vocal exaltation of doctrine over experience. This general phrase can be applied on numerous levels within numerous contexts. I've heard numerous reformed believers espousing it as a general principle and using it to rebuke and challenge pentecostal and charismatic doctrine and experience. I've also heard charismatic brothers espouse the principle generally and specifically in instances such as believing that you are healed in spite of experiencing symptoms. Some apply the principle as a compass or a litmus test, evaluating themselves to determine whether their beliefs are truly scriptural or merely based on their understanding as defined by life experiences, while others apply it to others exalting the word and the word alone as the beginning and end of Christian life even decrying stalwart figures of the Reformed movement such as John MacArthur and Paul Washer as mystics because they speak of emotional experiences or encounters with grace. At some general level, almost every christian believes that doctrine trumps experience, our faith in the Word is what overcomes the world and what we see (1 John 5:4), but in the sometimes heated debate, we risk rhetorically undermining our own salvation.

One of the hardest challenges in scripture comes in 1 John 3:6: "No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him." It is an emphatic declaration that a believer's life is identified by holiness, but the phrasing John uses to make the point is significant. It doesn't say that no one who keeps on sinning believes, or that no one who keeps on sinning has false doctrine. It says that no one who keeps on sinning has either seen Him or known Him. One paraphrase could be, no one who keeps on sinning has had an experience with Jesus. We are not saved by affirmation to the correct doctrine. We are saved by grace through faith, by a revelation God provided in His grace which we grasp by faith and leads us to Jesus and the Father. The Bible does not exalt itself as the highest revelation. It exalts Christ Jesus as the Highest revelation (Hebrews 1, Colossians 2:8-10, 1 Timothy 3:16, John 1:1-3).

The Christian life is not a mental assent, trust or even belief in the correct doctrine. It is a relationship with Jesus himself: "that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete" (1 John 1:3-4). The purpose of John's letter, the divine scripture of 1 John and the sound doctrine we esteem was that the readers would have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. Doctrine is meant to lead us into fellowship with God, not just future fellowship in heaven, but current fellowship. John uses the present tense (indeed our fellowship IS with the Father. . .). The Christian life is a relationship and relationships are made of experience. You cannot have fellowship with someone and not experience their person on some level. Our relationship is not with the Bible, but with Jesus, and He is a person with a character and nature that is expressed and that we will experience. Our acknowledgement of that experience leads us into saving faith and onward into greater things in Jesus. Doctrine is meant to lead us into this experience by opening the door for us to believe and receive Jesus for all that He is, in all the ways that He expresses Himself. Doctrine is meant to keep us safe in this experience, guarding us from lies, mistakes, deceptions and the things of this world that don't align themselves with the truth of what Christ has done.

The Bible is not our primary revelation of God, and it is not our primary experience as Christians. It is meant to lead us into greater experience with Christ, guide us into more of Him and protect us from false experience and lies.

I would welcome any discussion or refinement of my opening thinking on this topic.

Re: Experience vs. Doctrine in Relationship with Christ, on: 2011/8/29 12:44

You make some good points that I do not necessarily disagree with. I'm one of those reformed guys, by the way.

However, we do not weigh scripture in the balance of experience. It's the other way around. We weigh experience in the balance of scripture. If our experience contradicts scripture, then it's our experience that needs to be thrown out.

You summarize with this statement:

Quote:
-----The Bible is not our primary revelation of God, and it is not our primary experience as Christians. It is meant to lead us into greater experience with Christ, guide us into more of Him and protect us from false experience and lies.

Maybe I am misunderstanding you, but I would say that scripture (enlightened by the Holy Spirit, our teacher) is the ONLY revelation of God.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work."

What you are proposing is very vague and subjective. There is nothing vague or subjective about the Word of God. Your approach the Bible leaves the door open for all sorts of interpretations. On some things scripture is interpreted differently, to be sure. But when you leave it up to your emotions, experiences or feelings to interpret scripture or to get new revelations... the door is wide open for some very dangerous spiritual pitfalls.

Krispy

Re: Experience vs. Doctrine in Relationship with Christ, on: 2011/8/29 12:52

BIBLIOCENTRIC OR CHRISTOCENTRIC?

John 5:39-40 ..You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life, and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

Jesus is clearly stating that there is no life in the Scriptures. It does not matter whether it is in the Old or the New Testament, there is no life in the Scriptures. If there was life in the words themselves and the knowledge of these words then the Pharisees would be men full of life. Yet what did Jesus say about these men? They were full of dead men's bones, whitewashed tombs. They knew the word but they did not know God.

Words are vehicles for communicating. The word itself is a symbol of what is real. You may read about the truth or even hear about the truth and they may be precursors to life, but they are not life itself. Life comes to those who willingly come to Jesus and meet Him personally. And so the word without Jesus is empty and meaningless to the readers. It is in the person of Jesus that we are saved, and then He illuminates the word. The word of God must never be worshipped, how silly to worship the description rather than what is described. All of the word of God is useful to point us towards God, but it is only in His presence that anything is achieved. A man could read the sermon on the mount and rightly conclude that this was a masterpiece of teaching. Yet, outside of God's presence, outside of His Spirit, all those who try and live by these commands will fail miserably or have some success and become self-righteous. The Bible is a treasure from God, but it is Jesus Himself, of whom the whole Bible testifies, who is the Word. Jesus is the same yesterday today and forever. Heaven and earth will pass away but the Word, Jesus, is eternal.

I was saved knowing virtually nothing of Scripture. Men were saved in the first three hundred years of the church by the declaration of Truth, Jesus being the truth, by the Holy Spirit of the living God. After I was saved I devoured the Scriptures and as I read it I saw my own story in it. All the promises, the new heart, the love, the joy, my Jesus it testified to in all of the word. The Spirit had laid it all on my heart and every page was a confirmation and it was exciting. I had no intellectual battles. My spirit witnessed with the word of God. I read many parts that I did not understand but there was no resistance in my spirit, just a sense that somewhere down the line, if it pleased my Lord, I would understand.

So to have life we must come to Jesus. The word "come" does not mean one time just as the word "abide" is a continuous action verb better stated "keep abiding." So we ought to keep coming to Jesus. Not keep getting saved, but keep seeking Him out. He is a treasure to be sought after, just as the deer pants for the water brooks, then so my soul continually pants after Him. He is my light and I detest the darkness. He is perfect light and I live in shades of gray at best. How could it be otherwise for in my flesh there is no good thing. Until it is raised in incorruption I can only know Him in measure. That is an agony and a despair that can be hard to live with. The only thing that makes it bearable is the measure I receive from Him daily, His blessings are new every morning and His steadfast love never ceases and His grace is sufficient to keep me wanting more. And every so often I am enraptured and filled to capacity, a continual baptism of the Holy Spirit if you like. And I am strengthened and encouraged and changed in the fire of His manifest presence and I move to a different level. Gratefulness and thankfulness keeps me in this place. I have found eternal life in the person and the manifest presence of Jesus and the Scriptures testify to that and there is unity.
.Frank

Re: - posted by flameoffire (), on: 2011/8/29 12:56

I appreciate your response, Krispy. I would say that the focus of what I was saying was not about interpreting scripture, but about living the Christian life in general. We absolutely should not interpret scripture according to our experience; however, scripture can make sense of our experience, validate and confirm it; scripture can also deny our experience and force us to look for deeper explanations in the word than what we initially considered, or even force us to believe beyond what we see and understand.

If you read the scriptures posted after the second paragraph they emphatically and clearly state that the person of Christ is the highest, full, final and ongoing revelation of God. Saying that the Bible is the ONLY revelation of God is downright incorrect. Jesus Himself is our revelation. Stating that the Bible is our only revelation is dry religion. Your parenthetical regarding the Holy Spirit may create a point of agreement for us on this point, however.

Re: - posted by flameoffire (), on: 2011/8/29 13:04

Very eloquent and beautiful response, Frank. I think you opened a door which I didn't when you mentioned the "manifest presence of Jesus." The unity of the Scripture and the Spirit is key. The Holy Spirit bears witness to Christ: He tells us that Jesus is near, enables us to feel His presence, know His desires, His pleasures etc. We know according to the Scripture that Jesus is always present, but there are moments when the Holy Spirit ministers to us and reminds us of His presence in a discernible way: we experience the presence of Jesus. He (the Holy Spirit) works in absolute agreement and conjunction with the Word.

Re: , on: 2011/8/29 13:17

Flame... I can go along with what you said. Thanx. I responded with the hopes that you might clarify a little more. You did!

Krispy

Re: Some thoughts, on: 2011/8/29 15:29

John 1:1

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

Rev.19:13

He has a robe dipped in blood and his name is the Word of God.

The two verses above say Word meaning Jesus Christ not Bible.

The Book makes absolutely no sense until you experience the Author of the Book. This is borne out in Luke 24:32 when Jesus was on the road to Emmaus. The two men saw Jesus and had an experience with Jesus. Their statement was, were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the scriptures to us. They had to have an experience with the Author to understand the Book.

There are stories of Moslems who have seen a vision of Jesus. Sometimes he is referred to as the man in white. But this is experience of Christ, if you call it that, will bring them to the New Testament and to a saving faith in Jesus.

Our fellowship is with a Person and not a Book. Through knowing the Person of Jesus Christ can we really know the Bible.

Submitted in Christ by Blaine Scogin

Re: Never either / or - but Both ~, on: 2011/8/29 15:30

Php 2:16 Holding forth *the word of life*;
that I may rejoice in the day of Christ,
that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

1Jn 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard,
which we have seen with our eyes,
which we have looked upon,

and our hands have handled, of *the Word of life*

The Savior or the Scriptures?

Throughout history men have fallen into one extreme view or another. This is as true in the spiritual realm as in every other realm of life. Instead of maintaining a balance of truth, we follow one truth to the neglect of an equally valid truth. Others, in reaction, may focus their attention on the neglected truth but thereby fail to give proper attention to the truth that others have wrongly made their exclusive concern. Let us explore how a proper balance has been violated in regard to two equally important and vital truths.

Our Focus on Jesus Personally:

The Lord Jesus declared, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). (Unless otherwise noted, the New American Standard Bible is used.) Jesus Himself is the focus of our faith, our life, and our discipleship. Again and again, Christ drew our attention to Himself Personally:

Â· "I am the door of the sheep" (John 10:7).

Â· "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11).

Â· "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25).

Â· "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).

Â· "I am the true vine" (John 15:1).

This focus on the Lord Jesus is clearly revealed in John, chapter 6. Our Lord declared, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst" (v. 35). Throughout this chapter, Jesus emphasized how essential it is to come to Him (vv. 44-45), behold Him (v. 40), and believe in Him (v. 40). We must even "eat His flesh" and "drink His blood" (vv. 53-56). Only through personally appropriating Him or spiritually consuming Him will we "live forever" (vv. 51,58) and "not die" (v. 50). Only through Him can we have life in ourselves (v. 53), an eternal life (v. 54) that issues in the resurrection (v. 54). Through responding to Jesus personally, particularly in His flesh and blood sacrifice, we will abide in Him and He in us (v. 56). Indeed, our entire life now and forever is utterly dependent on our personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ Jesus knows that our spiritual life now and eternally is directly related to Him personally. In the words of the hymn writer, we must cry to the Lord, "Beyond the sacred page I seek Thee, Lord, my spirit pants for Thee, O living Word." word he shall never see death" (8:51). While discussing the truth with His opponents, Jesus showed His entire devotion to God's Word with the statement: "The Scripture cannot be broken" (10:35). Jesus held the Word of God in highest esteem. On the night of His betrayal, Jesus said, in prayer to the Father, "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth" (17:17). Jesus so elevated His words that He could affirm, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

Not only did the Lord Jesus emphasize His Word (which was actually the Word of God), but this same theme is conveyed in the remainder of the New Testament. In the book of Acts, the apostles began to "speak the word with boldness" (4:31) and were careful not to "neglect the word of God" (6:2). The Samaritans and the Gentiles "received the word of God" (8:14; cf. 11:1). Sergius Paulus "sought to hear the word of God" (13:7) and nearly the whole city of Antioch "assembled to hear the word of God" (13:44; cf. v. 46). We also notice that "the word of God kept on spreading" (6:7) and "the word of the Lord continued to grow and be multiplied" (12:24; cf. 19:20). When Paul preached Christ to the Bereans, "they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so" (17:11).

As we continue reading, repeatedly we find references to the Word of God. In Romans, Paul uses the Scriptures, or the written Word of God, as the basis of his reasoning and argument. He frequently quotes it to end all disputes. He asks, "What does the Scripture say?" (Romans 4:3). To Paul, God's Word is inspired or God-breathed and is "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness" and through the written Word "the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The Scriptures give encouragement (Rom. 15:4) and lead to salvation through faith in Christ (2 Tim. 3:15). The Hebrew writer reminds us that "the word of God is living and active" and is "able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (4:12). Peter refers to "the living and abiding word of God" (1 Pet. 1:23-25).

An Unbalanced Focus on Either Christ or Christ's Word

We have noticed how the theme of Christ Jesus Himself and the theme of Christ's word (or God's word) are parallel the

mes that run through the entire New Testament. Both emphases are true and both are essential. We would have no faith in Christ Jesus were it not for the testimony to Him that the Scriptures bear. But we would have no Scriptures were it not for the fact that God inspired them to bear witness to His dear Son. Jesus Christ is the object of our faith and devotion-but so are the Scriptures, the written Word of God. From the time of Christ until the present age, men and women have often emphasized the one while neglecting the other.

Consider a prominent illustration of a nearly exclusive emphasis on the Scriptures alone. Even in the time of His earthly life, we find Jesus interacting with the Pharisees who were intense students of the Scriptures and of the accumulated traditions that were meant to interpret the Scriptures. Yet, very often, all of this devotion to the Scriptures merely involved a dry and academic exercise of the mind that left the Pharisees void of any real devotion to God Himself-the ultimate Author of the Scriptures that they professed to know and obey!

Jesus exposed this hypocrisy by saying to them, "I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves" (John 5:42). He said that they were hypocrites who were outwardly righteous and devoted to God but inwardly they were "full of robbery and self-indulgence . . . of hypocrisy and lawlessness" (Matt. 23:25,28). They worshipped and honored God with their lips but their hearts were far away from Him (Matt. 15:8-9). Although they studied the Scriptures, they did not understand them or the power of God (Matt. 22:29).

The tragedy of the Pharisees was that they seemed to be devoted to the Scriptures but in reality they closed their hearts to God and to His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life" (John 5:39-40). They searched for eternal life in the Scriptures and, in a sense, this is the very source of our knowledge of salvation and Him who gives it (2 Tim. 3:15). But the tragedy is that they went no further than this. They were unwilling to come to Christ Himself, the author and object of Scripture, that they might indeed have eternal life! The example of the Pharisees should be a warning to us of the danger of emphasizing the written Word of God while neglecting a warm and loving relationship with God through Christ Himself!

Others besides the Pharisees have had a misplaced emphasis on the text of Scripture without the needful and corresponding love for the Author of the Scriptures-the very God who inspired them! They too have stressed the importance of knowing the Scriptures. They may spend countless hours reading, studying, and meditating on the written Word of God. All of this is good-and needful. But these same people who seem to be devoted to the Bible may be spiritually dead, void of the Spirit, lacking in a love for Christ, and separated from any deep emotional response to God the Father.

We must acknowledge that most professing Christians plainly do not have a burning desire to know, love, and serve Jesus Himself. They may be like those in Ephesus who left their first love (Rev. 2:4) or they may have allowed their love to "grow cold" (Matt. 24:12). They may be similar to the Laodiceans who were lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, in their devotion to the Lord (Rev. 3:15-16). They make some form of commitment, claiming to be Christians, but their hearts are not ablaze for God! They tragically "profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him" (Tit. 1:16; cf. 1 John. 2:3-6). Although they hold to "a form of godliness," they have "denied its power" (2 Tim. 3:5). Inwardly, like the Pharisees, they are cold and devoid of spiritual life.

However, in addition, we must also observe that most professing Christians do not have a burning desire to search the Scriptures, know the Scriptures, and obey the Scriptures (John 5:39-40; Luke 8:21). They have neglected to read, study, and seek truth in the written Word of God. They have either minimized the importance of the Bible or have become entangled in their "desires for other things" that "enter in and choke the word" so that "it becomes unfruitful" (Mark 4:19). In short, they neither have a fervent devotion to glorify and love Jesus personally nor do they have a firm commitment to His Word or delight in seeking the truth of Scripture."

Christ and His Word

Christ Jesus and His Word are so intimately related and connected that if we rightly emphasize Christ we will necessarily emphasize His Word or teaching. Likewise, the Scriptures are so centered on Christ Jesus that to focus on the Word of God is to focus on Jesus in all of His glory. We cannot divide Christ from His Word that bears witness to Him.

Notice several passages that reveal this relationship quite clearly. Jesus said, "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you" (John 15:7). These two relationships-abiding in Christ Himself

f and His words abiding in us-cannot be divided. It is impossible to abide in Christ if we refuse to allow His words to abide in us. And it is impossible to have Christ's words abide in us if we refuse to abide in Him!

In another place, Jesus said, "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day" (John 12:48). Judgment will come to those who reject Jesus and do not receive His words or teachings. It is not one or the other-but both.

Consider another instance. Jesus declared, "Whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:34). It is not simply being ashamed of Jesus alone but also being ashamed of His words as well. Jesus is so closely related to His words that we must not separate them.

Peter could see this relationship. After the disciples of Jesus walked away from Him because His teaching was too difficult for them (John 6:60,66), Jesus asked the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" (v. 67). Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God" (vv. 68-69). He was convinced that Jesus was the Holy One of God. But he also was convinced that Jesus spoke "words of eternal life." He saw the relationship between Christ and His words-a relationship that we also need to see.

At the conclusion of His "Sermon on the Plain," Jesus said, "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46). Once again we can see that there is a relationship between Jesus and His words. It is one thing to acknowledge that Jesus is Lord and respond to Him personally but this is only genuine if one actually accepts what Jesus has taught and obeys it. One cannot accept the Person of Jesus while rejecting His teachings.

This intimate relationship between Christ and His words is seen very clearly in John 14. Notice how Jesus expresses this: "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me" (v. 21a). We relate to Jesus personally when we are willing to respond to His words. He continues, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word . . . He who does not love Me does not keep My words" (vv. 23a, 24a). It is not simply a matter of loving Jesus and disregarding His words. Nor is it a matter of obeying Jesus' words and neglecting Him. Instead, we must love Him personally as well as respecting and obeying His words.

These passages are sufficient for us to see how Christ and His Word must both be accepted. We are never justified in emphasizing Christ while neglecting His Word nor are we justified in having a preoccupation with His Word while neglecting Him personally.

Similar Descriptions

Has it ever come to your attention that some of the same descriptions are given to both Christ and His Word? Notice several of these:

(a) Christ and His Word give life.

Christ: "The dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live" (John 5:25b).

Word: "The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life" (John 6:63).

(b) Christ and His Word will judge.

Christ: "Not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son" (John 5:22).

Word: "The word I spoke will judge him on the last day" (John 12:48).

(c) Christ and His Word save.

Christ: "Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15).

Word: "In humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls" (James 1 :21b).

(d) Christ and His Word make disciples.

Christ: "Whoever does not carry his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:27).

Word: "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine" (John 8:32b).

(e) Christ and His Word are truth.

Christ: "I am... the truth" (John 14:6).

Word: "I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice" (John 18:37).

(f) Christ and His Word will prevent spiritual death.

Christ: "This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die" (John 6:50).

Word: "If any one keeps My word he will never see death" (John 8:51).

What are we saying by these comparisons? We must conclude that these comparisons may be made because the Word of Christ is an extension of Christ Himself. Christ is revealed or manifested through His Word. Christ is so identified with His own Word that what is affirmed of Him may be affirmed of His Word. Therefore, we must never emphasize Christ to the exclusion of His Word nor must we be so engrossed in His Word that we neglect the One who gave that Word.

Christ as the Word

It is helpful for us to remember that Jesus Himself is called the "Word" (Greek, *logos*). John writes, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). He then identifies this Word: "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (v. 14). The Word became flesh and was born of the virgin Mary in Bethlehem of Judea 2,000 years ago. The Word was God's "personal manifestation." (W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, sv. "Word.") Thus, John could write, "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him" (v. 18). Christ, the "Word" has made the Father known to us (cf. NIV). Therefore, His name is declared to be "the Word of God" (Rev. 19:13), and He is called "the Word of Life" by John (1 John 1:1). He has revealed or manifested or personalized God the Father to us (cf. John 14:9-11).

Christ is the personal, living "Word" of God. But He also speaks the word of God. Jesus said, "The things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world. . . . I speak these things as the Father taught Me" (John 8:26b, 28b; cf. 7:16; 8:38). In prayer to His Father, Jesus said, "Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; for the words which You gave Me I have given to them" (John 17:7-8a). He explains this more fully in this way: "I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me" (John 12:49-50). He said, "The word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me" (John 14:24b; cf. v. 10).

Christ's words were God the Father's words. As we listen to Christ we are listening to God speaking to us! The one who receives Christ is receiving God and the one who receives Christ's words is receiving God's words (cf. Matt. 10:40; John 13:20). The one who rejects Christ is rejecting God and the one who rejects Christ's words is rejecting God's words (cf. Luke 10:16). This shows the sober responsibility of responding to both Christ personally as well as the words of Christ!

What Have We Seen?

We began with the observation that Christ Jesus is the theme of the Scriptures (cf. Luke 24:25-26, 44-47; John 5:38-40). The Gospels reveal His coming to earth to be the Savior of the world and show how, through His sacrificial death and glorious resurrection, Jesus is the only way for people to be reconciled to God. The book of Acts shows us how Christ was preached and people responded to Him for the forgiveness of their sins. The remainder of the New Testament documents show how our faith in Him is to be manifested in our personal lives and in the body of Christ or community of believers.

We also noticed how crucial the Word of God is to our life. Through God's Word we are led to faith in Christ and nourish

ed in our spiritual life. What we know about Christ is what we have learned from the pages of Scripture. We know the will of Christ and of God from what we see in the written Word.

We know that vast numbers of professing Christians have departed from this proper balance regarding Christ and His Word. Some have searched for a rich, deep, and meaningful relationship with Christ but have neglected the written Word of God. They have wandered into mystical experiences, emotional excesses, aberrant theology, and false teaching because they have wandered from their Scriptural moorings and have suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. Perhaps some few others have diligently applied themselves to the Scriptures and academic disciplines in an attempt to please God and know His will. However, they have become lost in intellectualism or tradition or cold and heartless religion. They have failed to find a rich and real relationship with God through Christ in the Holy Spirit. Tragically, most professing Christians have taken neither of these routes. They have neither had mystical experiences through a spiritual quest nor have they become preoccupied with God's will in Scripture. They have been content to remain in a worldly and superficial form of religion.

What does God have planned for us? God our Father has reached down to us in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ, and has made provision for our present and eternal salvation from sin, death, and eternal destruction. Those who come to God through Christ enter into a deep, rich, and fulfilling fellowship with Him and with others who are savingly related to Him as His children. This personal and corporate relationship with God in the Holy Spirit has been created, formed, and sustained by God's written revelation that we know as holy Scripture. Through God's Word we are saved, forgiven, born again, and given new life; through it we grow and are nourished in our new life; and through it we are encouraged to endure to the end. The Word of God is God's divine agent in accomplishing His purposes with men and women. We disrespect God and Christ if we neglect the Scriptures, and we disrespect the Scriptures if we neglect God and Christ who give us their Word in Scripture.

God's "Love Letters"

Let us imagine that a young man loves a girl but must be parted from her for a long period of time. Each day he writes his beloved a letter, explaining his day, aspects of his character, and describing his continued love and devotion for her. What if we discover that the girl continually receives these letters of love and carefully places them on her dresser-without opening them and without reading them? She may profess to love this young man, but we must question whether she really knows the meaning of love. Why? Because the man's letters are extensions of himself; his words reveal his heart, his mind, his character, his plans, and his dreams. His words also reveal his response toward this girl whom he loves. If the girl really loves him and receives his love, she will eagerly read each letter as soon as it arrives. She will open it expectantly, read over it receptively, search out the meaning of his words and expressions, and find deep delight in his words of love toward her! If she does not respond to his words in this way, her profession of love is in vain.

There is a lesson in this illustration for us. Christ loves us and wants us to respond to Him by responding to His Word. If we do genuinely love Christ and are devoted to Him, we will have a delight in reading, studying, discussing, listening to, and meditating on His revealed Word. If we do not respond to Him by believing His Word, loving His Word, and obeying His Word, we thereby demonstrate our lack of devotion to Him personally.

Think of it in this way. Jesus said, "The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart" (Matt. 12:34b). Christ speaks to us from what fills His heart. Therefore, we learn something of the heart and mind of our Savior by being receptive to what He has spoken-whether personally or through His chosen apostles and prophets (cf. 1 Cor. 14:37; 1 Thess. 4:2; 2 Peter 3:2; 1 Thess. 2:13). Since Christ's thoughts and ways are higher than our thoughts and ways (cf. Isa. 55:8-9), the only way we can learn of His mind and heart is through what He has revealed to us. This is why it is so utterly vital that we respond in faith and love to His revealed Word. And this is also why we must respond in humble submission and total obedience to what He has made known to us in Scripture. We respond to Jesus Christ personally by responding to His Word, the Scriptures!

We must never separate what God has joined. We must never seek a relationship with God or with Christ on our own terms-through subjective revelations or mystical experiences. But neither must we fall into a cold and heartless devotion to the Scriptures that leaves us devoid of spiritual life and without a warm and vibrant fellowship with God through Christ. Paul warns, "If anyone advocates a different teaching and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the teaching conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing" (1 Tim. 6:3-4a). We must have an absolute commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and we must have a like commitment to the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ. Anything less than this dishonors both Christ and the Word He has given.

Richard Hollerman

Re: - posted by flameoffire (), on: 2011/8/29 15:57

Jesus-is-God, thanks for the response.

This is a very thoughtful and thorough article on the subject. I'm sure that I agree with more than 95% of it. The detail and attention to the whole of scriptural presentation are very helpful, as is the desire to present a balanced view. My original post was more of a response to excesses than a presentation of a thorough perspective.

I do feel that your article brings up some unanswered questions. The conclusion states, "We must never separate what God has joined. We must never seek a relationship with God or with Christ on our own terms-through subjective revelations or mystical experiences. But neither must we fall into a cold and heartless devotion to the Scriptures that leaves us devoid of spiritual life and without a warm and vibrant fellowship with God through Christ."

Could you specify what experiences make up a warm and vibrant fellowship with God through Christ, but do not fall into what you would define as "subjective revelations or mystical experiences"?

This is beyond the scope of my original post and I certainly did not address this, but your thoroughness leads me to ask the question.

Re: - posted by flameoffire (), on: 2011/8/29 15:59

Jesus-is-God. It seems that you may not have written this article. Sorry. I would still appreciate any answers to the question about the post. Others please feel free to chime in too.

Re: , on: 2011/8/29 16:09

I refuse to read "copy paste" articles on here. If I want to look up an article I will. I come here to hear other posters thoughts.

Krispy

Re: , on: 2011/8/29 19:40

Quote:
-----Could you specify what experiences make up a warm and vibrant fellowship with God through Christ, but do not fall into what you would define as "subjective revelations or mystical experiences"?

Hi flameoffire. I believe we're seeing 'conversions' based upon emotions or experiences more now-a-days than ever before - not being based upon true Biblical commitment and regeneration, but just a response to a fire escape or feel good message.

Counterfeit conversions have been on the rise for some time and Satan will surely give the desired "burning in the chest" or whatever other manifestations that a person is looking for, of "God". Even signs and wonders, as He warned.

Mat 7:21-25 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. 'Therefore' whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

Apparently, the fruit wasn't there because they neglected His Word.

We only love Jesus as much as we love the Word of GOD.

Re: Experience vs. Doctrine in Relationship with Christ - posted by cryinthenite, on: 2011/8/29 20:43

Jesus Christ wants to tare down experience and doctrine and give us revelation of Himself.
He alone is the way the truth the life the bread from heaven.
God does nothing outside of the Son.
He does not give us things, only His Son.
The cross of Christ will teach us this.

Re: "I never knew you" - posted by a-servant, on: 2011/8/29 21:56

I'm all for experience, but this Mat 7:21-25 "I never knew you" wasn't detetcted by the believers despite their practical experiences they had

what makes it one of the deadliest deceptions in scripture

since they had great works in the Lord, what did He mean exactly with the reason given: "ye that work iniquity" ?

They haven't been converted? They tried to bring the gospel to others but have been "Immune" to regeneration themselves?

Still trying to understand the whole picture how that could have happened, because according to modern understanding it cannot happen.

Re: Fellowship with a Person, on: 2011/8/29 23:48

We have to realize we are in fellowship with a person. In this case the person of Jesus. The early disciples walked and talked with the living breathing Son of God. They were not fellowshiping with the Torah but him who fulfilled the Torah. This is why Jesus told the Pharasees and teachers if the law that the scriptures testifies of him. But they would not come to him for life. Again the implication is an invite to a person. Not a system of doctrine.

The sane holds true today. The same Jesus who walked and talked with the disciples lives in us by the person of the Holy Spirit. I know this may upset our Calvinism but the living God of the universe comes into your life when you accept Christ. Does anyone believe that God dwells in them? Do not the scriptures teach this? I think they do but at this hour of the night don't have the time to quote them.

But this may answer Flame's question. The way to cultivate a warm relationship with God is realize he is living in you. Whatever you see, he sees. Whatever you do, he is aware of it. Whatever you think, he knows. God is living in us. If we become aware of this then start talking to him. Just as if your best friend were right there. And should he, Jesus not be your best friend. Carry on a conversation with him through out the day. Even when you read the word invite him to read with you. Ask him what did he mean when you wrote that passage. After all he is the author of the book.

Some may be saying this is mystical or not reverent. Saint this is relationship. You are called into relationship with Jesus not with a book or the five points.

I will close my post with this beautiful quote from a Christmas card I once saw.....

The Word did not become a philosophy, theology, or concept to be discussed, debated, or pondered,

But the Word became a Person to be followed, loved, and enjoyed.

I pray we all may know the beauty of that relationship with Jesus. And the joy that such a relationship brings forth.

Submitted in Jesus,

Blaine

Re: - posted by brothergary, on: 2011/8/30 2:11

a balance is needed

paul said to timothy, to hold fast the doctrine that he gave him. it is actually able to save him and all those who will hear him

biblical doctrine is also revelation

jesus said the words i speak are spirit
jesus also spoke through the apostles

the bible itself is all doctrine, teaching, revelation

and only the living word makes this come alive in our hearts

i found it a little funny, that many people that say the bible is really important, or doesn't have authority, actually quote it like it does have the authority

jesus quoted teaching from the bible to defeat the temptation of the devil

the new birth itself is contained in doctrine
the baptism of the spirit, is contained in bible doctrine

most of what we all know comes from illumination of scriptural doctrine

god uses it for our edification

we are not monks that go into a cave, and receive all our knowledge through meditation

paul instructed that his letters be read and obeyed by the church

you can't separate doctrine and the written word from the living word of god which is sharper than any two edged sword

we are instructed by doctrine to continue in doctrine

the necessity of prayer and fasting is all contained in doctrine, that we are instructed to heed

we aren't gnostics that just rely on inner knowledge

that would be relativism

every man would do what is right in his own so called spiritual eyes

scripture can't be broken, and that scripture is full to overflowing with doctrine

peter said people twist paul's writings like the rest of scripture, put paul's letters on par with scripture

look at john's revelation

last i checked no one has ever had that revelation before

we rely on the living christ, AND the gospel he preached, in person, and the gospel he preached in the spirit to the apostles

the bible said in acts they all continued in the apostles doctrine
we are to continue in this same doctrine

jesus said believe the gospels which is full of doctrine

jesus said go make disciples of all the nations ,TEACHING THEM to observe all the things i have commanded you and lo i will be with you till the end

indoctrinating them to observe all things i commanded

we receive our salvation by believing in a living doctrine that is presented to us about jesus

when someone evangelizes, they use a doctrine about christ's ,of course by his living eternal spirit are we quickened to receive this

for jesus said no man can come to me unless my father draws him

friends we can't separate sound teaching from the great rabbi teacher prophet, eternal son of god ,,,,,,

but i can see the problem when people are abusing doctrine ,using a selective theology ,and denying the power

but i won't throw the baby out with the bath water so to speak

that would hurt the baby

Re: Experience vs. Doctrine in Relationship with Christ - posted by twayneb (), on: 2011/8/30 8:26

flameoffire: I don't really know if I have anything that is so new as to be a gamechanger in this discussion, but I do perhaps have a different way to look at this.

The early church did not have the scripture as we do. The Torah and perhaps the remainder of the old testament books were kept in the local synagogue and read weekly. The common man did not have access to the word of God except at these times and in discussions with others about the scriptures where one remembered scripture. The new testament was not written for a period of time after Christ's ascension. When Paul (for example) went into a city he preached the good news of Christ and the people experienced the regeneration of the spirit and the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Paul would often stay for a period of time teaching and then leave. The church in that city was on its own. Outside of their own experience they had only the traditions that Paul taught them and the ability to go to a Jewish synagogue each week to hear some of the OT read to them. (We find examples that this was also Paul's practice and then he would bring up that the OT scripture pointed to Christ and debate with the Jews.)

So I think the very foundations of the church were in the experience that the believers had with the transforming power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. In fact, having the word personally is a pretty recent development having taken place only in the last few hundred years. Yet somehow the church survived.

But we have been given the written word and we know that the written word is truth and that it is infallible. We know that every subjective experience that is not in agreement with the written word is to be rejected as not of God as His actions will not disagree with His written word.

There is a danger though in rejecting the experience entirely in exchange for an academic sole reliance on the written word. A man who is born again has entered into a relationship with a living, active, and supernatural God. This very fact screams experience. And the man who rejects experience and trades it instead for academic understanding will be dead, lifeless, and will very often go off into error not understanding that the word is a living and active thing.

On the other hand there is also a danger when we unplug from the foundation of the word and simply rely on experience. Men who do this often become flaky, and fast.

To me the proper understanding is not the balancing of two extremes and the harmonizing of two perspectives. To me the word and the Spirit, the written and the experience are like two sides of the same coin. They are inseparable and work together. We cannot isolate one from the other.

Re: Travis, Frank, Cryinthenight, on: 2011/8/30 10:49

I think your post bring a balance or I should I say a harmonizing truth and Spirit. I have tried to draw from such in my own post. I have often wondered how did the early church survive and even thrive without access to a New Testament. Travis I appreciate your insights into that time and agree. I would dare say that the early church had a greater and more intimate relationship with the Spirit than we do today. Could it be that now we who are blessed with access to the word in this age have substituted the written code for the new way if the Spirit?

I find it remarkable that even today in restricted nations where believers do not readily have access to the scriptures the church grows. These saints seem to have a deeper faith walk with Christ than we with our Bibles do. Just an observation.

I am not advocating throwing our Bibles away. A short time ago I opened a thread and asked about the importance of Bible reading in this forum. I praise God we have the scriptures and available in different translations. But again our fellowship is with the person of Jesus and not a book or a system of doctrine.

Submitted in Jesus,

Blaine

Re: , on: 2011/8/30 11:10

Good post Travis. As a classic pentecostalist (I hate to use any label) it is a constant source of irritation to somehow have to defend Charismania. My foundation is upon Christ Himself and His Word. First came Christ, then came His Word. I reject every single thing that is not in Scriptures. Every experience I have had, and there has been many beautiful, majestic, life altering experiences, lines up with the word of God. You simply cannot come into the presence of God and be unchanged. Can I suggest that the true presence of God (experientially) ruins you for everything in this life. The old hymn goes like this

Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in His wonderful face
And the things of earth shall grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace

Now this hymn writer was talking about a real personal Jesus. This was not academics. If one has not experienced His glory and grace, one would have to search their hearts.

Now look at what has happened to many so called experts in the Word (which simply proves that it is the Holy Spirit that leads and guides into all Truth, not one's brain) So many have literally ripped out chapters of the Bible that does not agree with their own personal theology. Cessationists come to mind. This only proves that one can be an expert in the Scriptures, as I am sure that the Scribes and Pharisees were, and get it completely wrong. I love the fact that uneducated fishermen shocked these scribes and Pharisees, they could not understand how these men could speak as 'learned,' men. And of course the answer was that they had walked with Jesus and that the Holy Spirit had come to them. The Word without the Spirit is like a majestic sunset to a blind man..... brother Frank

When the Word of Truth matures into experience by the Spirit., on: 2011/8/30 12:05

"Ephesians 1:12-14

12. "That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ."

13. "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise!"

"The Bible is not our primary revelation of God, and it is not our primary experience as Christians. It is meant to lead us into greater experience with Christ, guide us into more of Him and protect us from false experience and lies."...flameoffire.

Thanks for the post; a very important subject. "Thy Word, Oh Lord...IS Truth." I think that every and all experience can be funneled into the Word...and as you say, protect us. Obviously, though there has arisen much dogma, divisions, and animosity about the interpretation of the Holy Word, and Satan has also used the Holy writ, twisting it slightly here and

there, to destroy God's people, and even the Lord himself in His temptation.

Paul the apostle speaks about teaching the Word to disciples;

20. "And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have TAUGHT you publicly, and from house to house,

21. "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus." Christ."

We must be grounded in the Word, to survive, because experience alone is not enough to stand for everyone. How do we know if a thing taught is perverse or not? We must know the Light to break open the dark.

28. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

29. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

30. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking...!!

..perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

31. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

32. And now, brethren,
!!!....I commend you to God, "AND TO THE WORD OF HIS GRACE!!"

....which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.!

Within the Bible we will find the complete Word of His Grace, and the Holy Spirit will never, ever disagree with it, but always agree. We must believe though, that the Word is Spirit inspired...and realize that "The letter kills; but it is the Spirit that gives Life.

We are observing the tragic throws of the Great Falling Away today...with movements and denominations that have basically abandoned the Word, as written in the Bible, as the one and only anchor to their experience....

This brings death...and a sure Hell awaiting to the deceived.

17."Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."

We narrow our thoughts, experience and life to agree with the Word, by the Spirit, and cling to that path; the only way to Life. Jesus is the living Word and agrees, by conviction on our part, with the Written word.....IF, IF, we have Ears to hear. This is always the indwelling Spirit who is always speaking as He lives in a temple; brother or sister.

Hopefully, Experience and the Word will be one. This is called Holiness unto the Lord. Also, let us remember that there are multiple millions of illiterate brothers and sisters that we will meet in Heaven...that only heard the Word, and believed. The Word is the Spirit of Truth; the Spirit of the Lord Jesus.

Re: Experience vs. Doctrine in Relationship with Christ, on: 2011/8/30 15:21

Flame of fire your post was titled "Experience vs. Doctrine in Relationship with Christ". Here's a real life example of what you're talking about. One night at a Bible study I was discussing a verse in I John 3 with another brother. It wasn't I John 3:6, but I John 3:9. It says:

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Well, I was discussing this verse with a brother and I was confused by it because I did in fact have a habitual sin in my life. This other brother rather arrogantly quoted I John 3:9 to say that my experience didn't line up with the word of God.

I said, "I know but I'm just telling you what has been my experience. I'm just being honest".

Then the other brother replied, "Well if it doesn't line up with the word of God then....."

I forget exactly what he said. It's been over 10 years ago. Basically he was saying that if my experience didn't line up WITH HIS INTERPRETATION of the Word of God, that it wasn't valid. See that's the thing. These guys who stand on the Bible versus try to discredit real life experience by beating you over the head with their Bible and their interpretation of it. Don't the prosperity preachers do this?

"I know you lost your car, but the Bible says beloved I wish above things that thou mayest prosper....."

It's their interpretation of what the Bible is saying. That's where the clash comes with real life experience. I'd be willing to bet my life on one thing, and that is that every man that has just posted in thread has sinned AFTER they became a Christian. Even the most holy KK has even sinned after he became a Christian. Just kidding you KK!

"Yeah but brother the Bible says in I John 3:9 he cannot not sin because he is born of God!!!!" "Your experience doesn't line up with the word of God!"

See what I'm saying?

Do you remember the guys that used to be on Christian radio and you would call in to ask them about any tough questions you had? These guys had an answer for everything and every situation. Sorry, but nobody has a monopoly on truth. The Bible says we know in part and we see in part.

Re: - posted by Veronica226 (), on: 2011/8/30 18:47

Endzone said

Quote:
-----I'd be willing to bet my life on one thing, and that is that every man that has just posted in thread has sinned AFTER they became a Christian.

I don't think anyone on this forum would say they never sinned after they became a Christian. But you are getting sin and HABITUAL sin mixed up. Habitual sin is what God is talking about in 1 John 3. A Christian cannot remain in habitual sin. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit (Matthew 7). That's what Romans 6 is all about. You are dead to sin through Christ. It doesn't have dominion over you anymore. If it does, well your carnally minded and not God's. That's what He says in Romans 8. "5For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

So yeah, actually the guy who told you your experience doesn't line up with the Word of God was right. It doesn't. And you should have repented then and there and been saved.

Quote:

-----Even the most holy KK has even sinned after he became a Christian. Just kidding you KK!

Proverbs 26:18-19 Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death, is the man who deceives his neighbor, and says, "I was only joking!"

Re: , on: 2011/8/30 21:22

Brother Renouncer did a good word study on the verse from 1 John that lines up with your post Veronica.

I'm a pentecostal as well and thoroughly believe in all of the gifts but I'm having trouble with a few things posted to this thread.

The first Church had The Word of GOD coming out of the mouths of the Apostles, that they had deposited into their spirits, where The Spirit of Truth resides.

John 16:13 states that The Spirit of Truth - the Holy Spirit, will not speak of Himself, but whatever He 'hears', that shall He speak.

So what does the Holy Spirit inside of us hear? -- The Word of GOD from The Word of GOD.

Quote:

-----First came Christ, then came His Word.

This is where the confusion comes in.

Christ Jesus 'WAS/IS' The Word of GOD in the flesh.

He retains that Name even now and when He returns we see in Rev 19.

He was The Word of GOD from Eternity past and all that we read from Genesis 1 on is One that we now know as "Jesus" - though He's returning with a New Name... though retaining The Name - The Word of GOD.

We can never think that The Holy Spirit speaks anything other than The Word of GOD. Even in countries with no Bibles - He is speaking The Word of GOD into His Sheep that Know His Voice.

I remember prophesies given at Church by someone who didn't Know their Bible very well yet and when they got home, found out that they had spoken only Scriptures at Church and the impact was intense in the congregation.

The Spirit of Christ is The Spirit of Truth which only speaks The Word of GOD. Maybe not in KJ English though :)

But we will never ever be able to separate Jesus from the Word of GOD Because He IS The Word of GOD and His Spirit of Truth, The Holy Spirit will only speak The Word of GOD.

As far as the question that Brother Flame asked - the first "experiential" proof that we receive as Christians is found in the verses I posted earlier ... the change from the rebellious Adamic nature to obedience to the Spirit of Truth within us. A change in our attitudes toward GOD and those promptings to not do certain things anymore and being led to do others. The witness of The Spirit within is first obedience and an experience of "being changed from within". Most all of us have experienced waking up with that feeling after we got saved - of suddenly loving people we didn't love before, etc. etc.. Another experiential witness is a "feeling" that what we are hearing from whatever source is either true or not true, even before we have any great Scripture knowledge. We just get an uneasy feeling when hearing certain things spoken and know it's the Holy Spirit of Truth witnessing to us that what we're hearing is not Scripturally true -- we find out later that it wasn't as we learn more of the Word.

Those are the first two "experiential" events that happen to true converts.

Any other "mystical experiences" will only magnify The Word of GOD - both written and Him.

We truly need to do a word study on "The Word of GOD"
Psalm 138:2 is a good start.

Jesus and The Word of GOD is/are One and the Same - from eternity until eternity.

It "IS" and does have a Life of it's own - but if a person is not moved by it - it's because their spirits are dead or hardened.
The same Sun that melts ice - hardens clay. That's how The Word of GOD affects - according to the condition of our hearts.
The Pharisees had hardened their hearts against the LORD because Jesus said that they didn't "LOVE" The Father... the First Commandment was where they fell.

The Word of GOD is the Lamp to our feet and the Same Lamps that the wise Virgins carried with that extra oil of The Spirit of Truth.

We can't separate The Spirit of Truth from The Spirit of Christ Jesus Who 'IS' The Word of GOD.
Too much separating goes on in our minds of The Three in One. We need a Divine revelation of the 'Absolute' Co-Equality of the Three in One.
Reading The Old Testament your reading The Word of GOD - out from "the bosom of GOD" - that became flesh and we know, for now, as Jesus.

Jesus is GOD as The Word of GOD. Whether written or from His Spirit - it is representing Him and is Him and any manifestation of His Spirit will always lead us back to The Word of GOD and cause us to love His Word more and more.

Any experience that leads us away from or causes our awareness of our utter need and 'hunger' for His Word is not from The Word of GOD made flesh.
'HIS' mystical experiences always causes the one having those times to worship His Word and desire it more than food itself. That hunger should increase with spiritual age - not decrease and the pure Reverence for The Word of GOD should grow as well as that desire.

His Spirit cannot be separated from Who He is.

In God will I praise His Word: in the LORD will I praise His Word.

Ps 56:10

Re: Experience vs. Doctrine in Relationship with Christ - posted by Lysa (), on: 2011/8/31 6:14

We have to go by our experience at times... I will explain:

I can debate with anyone over the gifts of the Spirit (tongues in particular), but when I receive God's ultimate Gift, the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the gift of tongues; all arguments cease on my part because of my experience.

But those whose theology makes them unbelievers in the gifts being for today see me as trusting only in my "experience" and label me charismatic. There is a fine balance and we can't base what we allow God to do in our life because of a few crazy people or perceived crazy people!

Just my two cents! God bless!
Lisa

General Topics :: Experience vs. Doctrine in Relationship with Christ

Re: , on: 2011/8/31 10:41

Amen Lysa,

You know, I have had people that tell me that Jesus was just a man, that God does not exist, that the Bible is just another book. Now, I have actually met Jesus. He speaks to me. Because of the Holy Spirit His word is alive to me. If someone comes up and tells me that my wife does not exist, how preposterous would that be? Jesus is not a head knowledge. Jesus is not a mental assent to an abstract truth. Jesus is not a philosophy. Jesus is not a historical figure like Napoleon, in the sense that they both actually existed but now are dead. Jesus is alive!!!!

And for me to say that is no mere mental assent. I do not say that because I have never met Him but believe He is alive. I say that because I did meet Him. He changed my whole life. I became a new creature, not in an abstract sense, but an actual new creature. I stopped drinking and smoking pot over night. It took me three days to realize that I did not curse anymore. From a place of despair I was filled with joy. From a place of hopelessness and suicidal thoughts, I was filled with hope eternal. I speak to Him, He speaks to me. All of that is "experience," and all of that is confirmed by the Word of God. The Word of God is a revelation to humanity, but it takes Jesus to illuminate it..... brother Frank

Re: , on: 2011/8/31 12:15

Lisa, that was a great example in the "experience vs. doctrine" debate. How do you personally handle Christian people that go on the attack when your experience doesn't fit their doctrine or their interpretation of the Bible? I've been attacked, and I've seen people attacked, even viciously because their experience didn't fit another believer's doctrine. I wonder how you handle this.

And IMHO I think the "mercy and grace only" message has been perverted to become a doctrine. It has been extremely popular in the church and home groups the past 20 years or more. It fits in perfectly with the prosperity the U.S. has enjoyed at the same time. But, if I were to go to one of these meetings and give my testimony that God brought me into judgment for a habitual sin in my life and that the Lord was angry with this unrepented sin, I'll bet half the people there wouldn't believe me. I would be almost afraid to give my testimony in a group like that.

Re: endzone - posted by Lysa (), on: 2011/8/31 21:42

Quote:
-----Endzone wrote:
How do you personally handle Christian people that go on the attack when your experience doesn't fit their doctrine or their interpretation of the Bible?

I've never really been attacked, now I've had people challenge me but I don't argue with people over the gifts, it just makes them dig their heels in deeper. But when they have said something like, "Tongues is gone and not for today," I would very lovingly just smile at them and say, "That's ok if you don't want any gifts, I just know that I couldn't live without them!"

I live in the Bible belt of East Tennessee and after going to a Fellowship (Baptist) church for awhile, the Lord showed me not to push it on anyone but to let them get to know me and that because they loved me, they would accept the Holy Spirit and His gifts in me.... and they did!!!

God bless you,
Lisa

Re: appolus - posted by Lysa (), on: 2011/8/31 21:47

Quote:
-----appolus wrote:
If someone comes up and tells me that my wife does not exist, how preposterous would that be? Jesus is not a head knowledge. Jesus is not a mental assent to an abstract truth. Jesus is not a philosophy.

nor is he a certain doctrine or theology, imho.

Amen to your quote about your wife! You sleep with her, dine with her, drive with her, talk with her... she is VERY real to you! No one can tell you she's "just an experience"!!

God bless you brother,
Lisa

Re: All, on: 2011/9/1 0:15

I have shared this in times past. It came from a Christmas card I saw years ago.

The Word did not become a philosophy, a theology, or a concept to be discussed, debated, or pondered.

But the Word became a person to be followed, loved, and enjoyed.

One other thing to add. I find it interesting that the old question the Presbyterians would ask is What is the chief end of man? The answer would be to glorify God and enjoy him forever. To me that enjoying him forever speaks of experience. The experience of Christ in our lives.

For the record I do speak in tongues and believe that all the gifts of the Spirit are in operation today. I have been in prayer groups where we have taken authority over hurricanes, tsunamis, tornadoes, etc. and have seen them disappear. For sure God is to be truly praised.

Submitted in Christ,

Blaine Scogin .