



Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

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Gene Burgett Promoted To Director of Public Relations

At the December meeting of the Board of Directors of the Florida School of Preaching, Gene Burgett has been appointed to be the Director of Public Relations for the school.

Gene is married, and he and his wife, Cindy, have two children, Tiffany (17) and Drew (12).

Gene is a graduate of the school (1985), and has taught classes under the Board for a number of years. Gene received his A.A. from Palm Beach Junior College. Gene has a BA from American Christian Bible college, 1998 and a MA from American Christian School of Religion, 2000.

Although Gene has recently resigned his preaching position for the High Springs congregation where he has preached for fourteen (14) years, he is continuing to teach an extension class of the Florida School of Preaching that meets in the High Springs building.

It is important that anyone functioning as Director of Public Relations understand the purpose of the institution that he is seeking to promote. Gene, being a graduate of the school, and having taught in the school a number of years, understands the philosophy of the school, and having served a number of years as full-time evangelist enables him to



Gene Burgett

understand the role of a preacher and how the school is seeking to prepare men to serve as evangelists for congregations of the churches of Christ. He will be able to speak from experience about the training he has received from the Florida School of Preaching.

Gene will continue to reside in High Springs, and will also continue teaching classes as time and circumstances permit.

We hope that you (those who may be graduates of the school, and those who have had a long standing interest in the school) will do all you can to help us promote the school and recruit full-time students.

Antwan M. Johnson Completed Studies in December 2002

Antwan makes the sixth person to complete his studies at the Florida School of Preaching in 2002. Five completed their studies in May.

Antwan is married and has four children, two daughters and two sons. Antwan served in the United States Marine Corps from 1988-1992.



Antwan M. Johnson

While attending the Florida School of Preaching, he was a member of the Sixth Street church of Christ in Lakeland, Florida. Before coming to the school he was a member of the Central church of Christ in Macon, Georgia.

Through correspondence courses from Southern Christian University, Antwan plans to further his education. His immediate goal is to find a congregation where he can labor to encourage and be encouraged. His ultimate goal is to one day fill the position of a full-time minister.

"Faith Cannot Rest on Proofs," or Can it?

By

Jackie M. Stearsman

The above quoted statement is from a religious editor of the local paper, The Ledger (10-26-02, D1). In this article the following paragraph (D9) reads: *Faith, after all, cannot rest on proofs, else it would not be faith. It is a kind of certainty without sight. Faith may actually be stronger the less it has to lean on.*

Questions

(1) If the above assertions are accepted as true, how could anything religious be critiqued? (2) If faith has no proof, how could anything be wrong? (3) Since most religious systems have something they term as "faith" that contributes to "salvation," and since faith cannot rest on proofs, will all be saved? (4) Again, if according to the quoted paragraph above,

"Faith may actually be stronger the less it has to lean on," and since the skeptic, has less to lean on, are we to affirm that the skeptic has the strongest faith?

Biblical Faith

Verses Non-biblical Faith

I affirm in this brief treatise that there is a difference between Biblical faith and "faith" that has no biblical basis. Let us provide the following definitions that all may understand our terminology. These definitions are from the Oxford English Dictionary.

(1) Religious superstition is defined as follows: "(superstition >noun 1 excessively credulous [gullible, JMS] belief in the supernatural. 2 a widely held but **irrational belief in supernatural** (emphasis added) influences, especially as bringing good or bad luck)." Biblical faith, as we shall show, is neither irrational nor gullibly accepting assertions.

(2) "(BELIEF >noun 1 a **feeling that something exists or is true, especially one without proof**" (emphasis added). We shall show from the Bible that biblical faith rests upon proof, and that the Bible student is required to put to a test his faith.

(3) "PROOF/PROVE (proof >noun 1 evidence **establishing a fact or the truth of a statement**. 2 the proving of the truth of a statement.) (prove >verb (past part. proved or proven) 1 **demonstrate by evidence or argument the truth or existence of** (Emphasis added). 2 show or be seen to be: the scheme has proved a great success. 3 (prove oneself)

demonstrate ones' abilities or courage).")"

This writer acknowledges that much that is classified as "religious faith" cannot be supported by evidence that is objective and authoritatively binding upon all. Therefore, the dictionary definitions and the religious editor's comments and definitions reflect the convictions of large segments of society. But, do these positions represent the Bible? Will you study with me?

Would you take your Bible and find justification for the following: Special religious services such as "Easter," "Christmas celebrations," "Good Friday," etc. Can you find the justification for Denominational bodies, Mormon Religion, Jehovah's Witness religion, et al?

Would you say that it is possible to have these "faiths" without Biblical authority, but that it is impossible to justify them from the proper handling of the Bible? You see, the dictionary and religious editor's definition of faith will cover these positions and groups, right? Biblical faith is different.

The Harvesters

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TRAINING PREACHERS SINCE 1969

Does the Bible Demand That Faith Be Proven?

The Bible demands that we act with the authority of Christ, does it not? "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17, all quoted verses are from the KJV). How would you explain the following passages "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:21-22). "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2). "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" (Acts 17:11).

To assert that faith is irrational, and without proof, is to assert that the faith being considered is not biblical faith. Biblical faith demands that the person possessing it be required to prove its authenticity. "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" (1 Peter 3:15).

Biblical Faith Defined

Biblical faith contains the

following components:

(1) Fundamental and basic to Biblical faith are the facts and truths that furnish the foundation for certainty in conviction. For example, the fact that people may know truth and that the truth under consideration here are the facts/truths that God is, that the Bible is His word, and that Christ is His Son. Without proof, without evidence of these facts there could be no Biblical faith.

(2) Supporting evidence, testimony. God has provided the rational student with information of these truths (Psalm 19; John 15:26-27; Acts 9:15; 10:36-37).

(3) Hearing, seeing, reading testimony (Rom. 10:9-15). There is no Biblical faith without supporting evidence. The supporting evidence may be sight (John 4:39-42; 20:24-31) or it may be reliable testimony that has been provided. God holds us accountable for the testimony he has provided (Mark 16:9-14).

Civil courts operate daily on the testimony of reliable witnesses. An honorable judge and jury will act, and hold others responsible for acting upon the evidence that has been provided by reliable witnesses.

(4) This leads us to the fourth component, and that is to believe the testimony that has been provided. However, faith may be dead if it does not act (James 2:17, 20, 26). It is possible to believe but, due to other factors, not acknowledge the faith (John 3:1-2; 12:42-43).

(5) In order to have biblical faith that has God's approval, the possessor must act

upon what he has arrived at intellectually from a diligent and faithful study of the Bible (Heb. 11:6).

Conclusion

How strong is your faith? Upon what is it based? Could you prove that your faith is Biblical faith?

Is your faith based upon evidence, or do you believe, feel, think and act in religious matters with no supporting evidence from the Bible (Rom. 10:17; 14:23; Col. 3:17; 2 John 9-11)?

"Negative" Reflections

It was called to my attention recently by a party whom I greatly respect that some feel we are "too negative" in our work at the Florida School of Preaching.

Being the director of the school means that most of that assertion is directed to me and those whom we may have helped to understand the duties of preaching and stabilizing congregations.

To begin with, it is obviously correct to be negative about some things. Even the Lord was negative in giving the Ten Commandments, right? Paul was negative at times, right? "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11).

Even the person/persons who feel that we are negative has no problem with expressing negative opinions about us, even in private they are willing to name us as being "too negative."

The person who informed me of these feelings by others is himself a graduate of the Florida

School of Preaching. Was the negative critic who is criticizing others of being negative including all graduates of being too negative?

My question to the respected graduate was this: What are we "too negative" about. To say too negative without providing me with any way to correct the condemnation is of no service to me or the school.

These negative criticisms toward the school from those who "do not practice" negative criticism(!?) are not new. All we ask is to help us understand where and when we are "too negative" and we will do all within our power to correct it.

James 5:19-20 teaches that we should convert those who are in error. Will our loving critic please explain to us our sin that

we might correct it. Job's friends condemned him but could not justify their condemnation. We who are spiritual have a moral responsibility, do we not? "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden" (Gal. 6:1-5).

Negatives and Pictures

Negatives are used to make pictures. Negative may be

"used to describe photographic film that has been exposed to light." (Microsoft Encarta Reference Library 2003.)

When we do not like the picture that has been made it may be that we unjustly criticize the negative? If the picture presented is a clear representation of things as they are, not even Wal-Mart will fault the negative.

Did Jesus say, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:19-21).
-Editor

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