

GOOD NEWS
for the unsaved
WORLD!

(#89)
Faith – Definitions matter!

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FAITH

WHAT is it?

We ask because:

DEFINITIONS MATTER!

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DEFINITIONS FORM THE FOUNDATION FOR OUR THINKING!

- False religions have been invented by simply redefining words and concepts.
 - When Bible terms are redefined, the false teaching sounds good to the unsuspecting – those who are not familiar with what Scripture actually says.
 - The more a person's definitions are changed, the easier it becomes to make further changes to one's perspective. In the end, a person may accept concepts he would have once rejected as entirely false.
- WHEN IT COMES TO THE BIBLE:** False definitions of reality result in false "hopes" of salvation.

[Paul's letters... which] the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they also do to the rest of the scriptures.

2 Peter 3:16b (NET)

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THE WORLD HAS REDEFINED JUST ABOUT EVERY MAJOR CONCEPT FOUND IN THE BIBLE.

(There are some concepts that the world would rather just ignore. An example could be the concept of *repentance*.)

TYPICAL EXAMPLE: LOVE.

- The world tends to reduce this concept to mere sensual impulses, including sensual gratification and/or depraved sexual practices.
- The world also tends to treat it as the opposite of "speaking the truth," when the truth is something they don't want to hear. (They would claim that it's "unloving" to say it!)

ANOTHER TYPICAL EXAMPLE: SIN AND WICKEDNESS.

- The world often uses these concepts as though they were a depiction of something good or desirable.

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TO ACCURATELY UNDERSTAND SCRIPTURE:
A person needs to learn how the Bible uses these concepts (including how the various terms relate to each other).

⇒ Bible dictionaries may help... but: 📖

⇒ Simply reading Scripture and paying attention to how the words are used will teach us a lot!

EXAMPLE, using the word LOVE:

- By observing verses that use this word, we discover that the Bible's "love" has little resemblance to what the world offers.
- We can also observe that the Bible connects "love" and "speaking the truth" – quite unlike the world, which often opposes truth by calling it "unloving."

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As we've seen in past studies:

- God has revealed himself, both in Scripture and in creation.
- The issue is NOT the absence of clear revelation, but its suppression.
- People will downplay the accuracy of Scripture, as well as the ability to understand it; but Scripture always says it's the people at fault, not the Bible!

By nature, people hate the truth, because it condemns their sin.

Even so, an awareness of the truth is embedded within the hearts of people. *It will testify against them on the Day of Judgment.*

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Typical Scripture passages on this issue:

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

Romans 1:18-20 (NIV)

They show that the work of the law is written in their hearts, as their conscience bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or else defend them, ...

Romans 2:15 (NET)

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But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourselves in the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment is revealed!

Romans 2:5 (NET)

"Yet, by doing good, [God] has given evidence of his existence. He gives you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons. He fills you with food and your lives with happiness."

Acts 14:17 (GW)

"[God] commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."

Acts 17:30b-31 (NIV)

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What about the concept of "faith / believing"?

The WORLD normally views "faith / believing" in ways that are incompatible with the Bible.

Here are some of the prevailing views about faith...

- ✓ It's not a matter of facts, but the opposite of facts – and inferior to them.
- ✓ It's often related to feelings and emotions (as contrasted with facts).
- ✓ It may refer to self-chosen "guiding principles" for living.
- ✓ It's unprovable, and often irrational.
- ✓ It's a person's opinion, speculation, wishful thinking... and sometimes completely pretend, imaginary, "make-believe."

✱ This type of faith cannot save. ✱

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The WORLD wants to restrict the expression of faith.

★ This is applied mostly to people who hold to the "faith" of the Bible. ★

Here are some typical restrictions the world would like to put on our expression of faith...

- ✓ We should treat it as personal and private, something to be kept to ourselves. (Don't try to get others to accept your "faith view"!)
- ✓ We should consider our own beliefs as no better than anyone else's beliefs. (All people's beliefs should be treated as equally valid.)
- ✓ Don't let your beliefs have any influence on the way society is run. (They will accuse you of "pushing your views on society.")

✱ This type of faith is of no value. ✱

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The WORLD is not "neutral" about faith. It wants to treat Scripture as equal to man-made religions...

Much of this push is from atheists and other groups that want to treat them as all equal... which basically reduces them all to being equally meaningless.

ALL YOU RELIGIONS NEED TO FOCUS ON THE THINGS YOU HAVE IN COMMON!

THEN YOU CAN ALL PEACEFULLY

WE SUPPORT "FAITH-BASED" ORGANIZATIONS, REGARDLESS OF WHAT THEY MAY BELIEVE!

Coexist!

✱ This type of faith is totally meaningless. ✱

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The WORLD's end-goal is to suppress the "faith" of the Bible.

☀ Because that's the end-goal of the one who rules the world. ☀

... the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

1 John 5:19b (NIV)

- ✓ **The world has been saying:** "You are free to choose your own views, but wrong to push them on others."

The goal here was to lower Biblical faith to the level of the many "faiths" that people have invented... and to silence you (if you have been telling others about Jesus).

- ✓ **But this is fast changing.** Ultimately, they will claim it is wrong for you to even have views that agree with Scripture.

As the world continues to redefine issues, hostility toward God, his Word, and his people will increase.

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The **WORLD'S** "faith" needs to be **opposed** and **replaced** by the "faith" of the Bible.

THE PROBLEM:

- If we read the *world's* definitions into Scripture, it changes the meaning. Then it no longer communicates to us what it actually says.
- It's not that the Bible can't be understood, but that we've changed the meanings of the words.

THE SOLUTION:

- We need the "renewed mind" that Romans 12:2 tells us about, in order to understand "faith" the way Scripture uses the term.
- Only to the degree that our thinking is influenced by Scripture, will our perception of this concept be different from the world's.
- Even if we accept Scripture's view of "faith," thinking correctly about it may require continued effort. All our lives, the world has been bombarding us with its views of "faith" and "believing."

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WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE "FAITH" OF SCRIPTURE?

- It is *fact based* (not opinion, speculation, or irrational contrary-to-fact viewpoints).
- It must influence all of life, including one's interactions with other people.
- It is opposed to all other "faiths" – for they are all of human origin.

Moreover:

- All people are commanded (by God) to accept it – and we must communicate this fact.

- This FAITH is based on the FACTS of Scripture – which the world deliberately suppresses. So any "faith" that is NOT built on the foundation of Scripture is *false* – a *lie*.
- The world may claim to be "neutral," but it's "neutrality" is a rejection of facts and a clinging to pretension.

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As we explore the topic of "faith" in Scripture, we will discover that it is:

FACT-BASED

- Founded on truth/facts.
- Birthed in repentance.

LIVING

- Expressed in life: values, living, faithfulness, obedience.

(We have already observed some of these things, when looking at other issues.)

IN MOST PASSAGES: The concepts of *faith*, *believe* and *trust* will be interchangeable. (They all come from the same group of New Testament Greek words.)

Even "*accept as true*" will sometimes be a legitimate way to translate the concept.

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Typical ways the "believe/faith" concept is used:

We **accept/trust** → someone/something that has proven to be reliable... (and then we respond in an appropriate manner).

We **accept/believe** → the truth.

We **trust/have faith in** → Jesus, because he has been proven to be the one Scripture said would come.

"The **faith**" = the *facts* of Scripture.

❖ ALL OF THESE "BELIEF" CONCEPTS...

- focus on something that is factual, provable, reliable, etc.
- imply an appropriate response – a response that could very well be visible in public.

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Your MISSION this week:

Get some practice looking for ways the world has been redefining words and concepts.



Even non-Biblical concepts have been getting redefined... and if you can't recognize it, you will end up following the ways of the world... *and never even know it!*

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Credits

SCRIPTURE

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