

General Topics :: Is your faith nothing more than adherence to objective revelation of God's Word?**Is your faith nothing more than adherence to objective revelation of God's Word?, on: 2009/8/2 15:13**

Tozer writes...

Faith is of two kinds: nominal and real. The nominal faith is the faith that accepts what it is told and can quote text after text to prove it. It's amazing how nominal faith and nominal belief can weave these texts into garments, cloaks and curtains for the Church.

But there is another kind of faith; it is faith that depends upon the character of God. You will remember that the Scriptures does not say "Abraham believed the text and it was counted unto him for righteousness." It says "Abraham believed God." (Romans 4:3) It was not what Abraham believed, it was who Abraham believed, that counted. Abraham believed God, and the man of true faith believes God and his faith rests on the character of God. The man who has real faith rather than nominal faith has found a right answer to the question, "what is God like?" There is no question more important. The man of true faith has found an answer to that question by revelation and illumination.

The difficulty with the Church now-even the Bible believing Church-is that we stop with revelation. But revelation is not enough. Revelation is God's given Word. It's an objective thing, not subjective; it's external, not internal. It is God's revelation of truth. A man may believe that and believe that soundly and hold to it to be truth. And yet he will have only an objective revelation of truth that has been objectively revealed. Tozer, A.W The Attributes of God, p 18

Tozer is correct of course. It's why the current state of the church, under its present leadership in all its many forms, is getting ready to be swept away. Objective faith is no faith at all. It's not the externals that make and change a man, it's the internals. The true man of God is a new creature in Christ, this is not an objective truth, it's an internal reality that grows from the inside out. The man who has only objective truth has no illumination and applies his own wisdom to the revelation of God's word and then applies it to his life, trying to change his life from the outside in. It always fails, it cannot work. It ends in total failure or it ends in self-righteousness which is total failure cleaned up and made presentable, even beautiful.....Frank

Re: Is your faith nothing more than adherence to objective revelation of God's Word - posted by Compton (), on: 2009/8/2

A topic of continuing interest to me;)

In recent weeks I have been finding a little solace with a few of the Churches so-called 'mystics.' Thomas A Kempis, St John of the Cross, Augustine, Madame Guyon...and I would include in that list Oswald Chambers and Amy Carmichael. I would say provisionally they are echoing some of the intimacy in the Spirit exhibited by the prophets and apostles who wrote of spiritual truths in the scriptures, like John and Paul. However, their echoes are like all echoes of the real voice, changed and imperfect.

Regarding Tozer; Perhaps we can say he was addressing a false dichotomy...one that nevertheless is very much real in our day.

I say it is false, because if one does indeed hold to God's objective revelation, then they must personally encounter, experience, endure, enjoy, yea even enjoy with the living Spirit of God or they deny the claim of that objective revelation.

Take for instance Philippians 2;

If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies...Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:...For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

These verses explicitly tell of a communion of the Spirit, and it would be incongruent to believe these verses on an objective level without also experiencing them inwardly on a personal intimate level. To claim belief in one without the other is a farce.

Still the farce of fundamentalist doctrinal memorization is alive and well in our churches today. Given this context, insistin

g that a believer must have a "mystical union" with Christ is perhaps a needed distinction for the poor church veteran who knows bible verses, but not Christ himself.

However, if being satisfied with objective adherence is one farce alive and well in our religious age, then being satisfied with subjective experience is another farce that is also alive and well in our New Age. I've seen pitfall after pitfall, where Christians make claims ranging from the silly to the superstitious to the sanctimonious all because they were encouraged to cut the scriptural tether and float away. Men abandoning their familial duties because of high-minded visions, women on the floor convulsing indecently in public as they 'birth' new ministries...

What's more, I find that the personality attracted to the cultivation of mysticism tends to be the creative person, the thoughtful brooding melancholic, the introspective artist. I am that very kind of person myself...which is why I hold an extra wary eye on mysticism. My self-admission tells me two things; one, I should refrain from looking down my nose at less emotive or expressive saints whose testimony seems less mystical, less intimate, less romantically expressive, but more natural and simple. Often these simple men, who seem better suited in the natural world, are more like Christ is in the natural world, then I am when I am living in the mystical world.

And secondly, my self admission puts me on warning, because I know what kind of swirling imaginations I am capable of...and believe I can never allow myself to stray from the light of scripture off on my own quest for spiritual self-realization. At the risk of sounding immodest, my artistic imagination is far too creative, to be allowed to roam free range...that is if I want to see truth established within my mind and built up in my life. Despite my spiritual flights of fancy, I must learn to walk a more humble path and the scriptures are just the thing to keep it real. I do not trust someone who regards the printed word of God as mere elementary teachings...for I know within my indefatigable mind are a thousand tower of Babels kept unrealized and unconstructed by the discipline of that objective Word.

So I feel we can use the word 'mysticism' as a way to describe our living union with Christ only as long as our experiences support the testimony of scriptures, but never supplant them.

I'm paraphrasing I think Dwight Moody when he was asked which is more important: Reading the scriptures (objective life) or prayer (subjective life). He answered with his own question, "Which is more important to a bird, his right wing or his left wing?" Objective and subjective, inward and outward, natural and supernatural...they are both wings on the same bird. To imply that one is more important than the other leads to confusion!

(edit: these are just my loose thoughts on the topic, and certainly not a position I would hold other people to)

MC

Re: , on: 2009/8/2 19:49

Hi brother Compton, can I say that you make some good points. Can I also respectfully say that the points that you make are another subject entirely. In fact, the answer that you give, I believe, is part of the smokescreen that cleverly keeps the subject buried and confused. Now, I say that you do none of this deliberately, and that you are genuine, totally genuine, yet what you have just done is create your own false dichotomy.

Think for a moment who you have cast these "mystics," with. People who roll around the floor? People who are hopelessly "New Age?" It would be an incredible thing to say that people like Tozer or Guyon put little importance on knowing Scripture, when in fact, these and the others you mentioned probably knew Scripture as much as any man or woman who makes the claim to be Christian.

So, the point that Tozer makes still stands. If the "faith," that one has is a mental assent to the objective truth of the Scriptures, it is merely an external thing, its not in internal reality. One only has "an objective revelation of truth that has been objectively revealed." If this is the case, then that one does not "know," and is not "known," and is lost in their sin still and has a destiny other than heaven.....Frank

General Topics :: Is you faith nothing more than adherence to objective revelation of God's Word?

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2009/8/2 20:35

I agree Frank...in hindsight the topic I raised is ultimately separate from the one you were addressing.

Mike

Re: , on: 2009/8/3 18:10

I appreciate that answer brother, very refreshing.....Frank

Re: Is you faith nothing more than adherence to objective revelation of God's Wo, on: 2009/8/4 12:24

Hi Frank, and Compton,

Very interesting that this topic should be posted, because I was thinking of posting a thread of my own entitled 'Is there a place for sharing revelation, or, should one keep it to oneself'?

The reason for my question was a stray comment in another thread (whoever wrote will recognise the comment, but I don't know which thread now), in which they suggested that the repetition (parroting) of truths heard from someone else, indicated some lack on the part of the person who had repeated the revelation someone else had shared with them... as if we all have to have our revelation directly from the Holy Spirit, and one should not trust the witness of the Spirit to another's revelation, or, that the repetition of a revelation indicated that at their heart, the person passing on that revelation, was somehow cheating, being incapable of receiving it from the Holy Spirit personally.

Now, having said all that, I realise that it is possible for revelation to go through a kind of 'Chinese Whispers' transformation, as much as for a person to deal with truth dishonestly, or (for example), to claim it for their own. But, I am very comfortable with 'revelation' to which the Holy Spirit bears witness - whether from scripture or the operation of a gift of the Spirit, whether from personal study, or received when seeking the Lord together with other saints - but I have a lot of trouble knowing how one is supposed to manage *without* the kind of revelation that writers like Tozer, Sparks and Chambers insist are essential for survival (as indeed I have found), or, with the implication that it would be better *not* to communicate one's revelation. I just don't know how I'd get by, if I had to not share the truth I know from experience (whether of receiving a revelation myself, or, of recognising that another saint has received revelation).

MC, I was taken with

Quote:
-----for I know within my indefatigable mind are a thousand tower of Babels kept unrealized and unconstructed by the discipline of that objective Word.

I wouldn't take this away from you. No doubt this is one reason you don't live in country devoid of scripture. However, scripture works like this for your because you do have the Holy Ghost whispering to you from its pages. Yes? I suppose my point is, that the Holy Ghost can whisper to you at all because He recognises you are Christ's - that 'mystical union' again!

I hope I'm not throwing your thread off course, Frank, but I think you're touching on a touchy subject! (Possibly this is what you intended!) Who will be brave enough to state that they've never had a revelation from scripture, or, that they believe God never speaks to them, while at the same time claiming to be a born again son of the Father?

Added: I suppose I'm thinking that without revelation, there is no spiritual food to share around the members of the body - there is nothing truly nurturing, to enable one to keep growing.

Re: , on: 2009/8/5 15:17

Hi Alive to God, no problem with your post. I am not so sure that there are a thousand towers of babel in the minds of those who are transformed creatures. And even the statement that it is the Word of God, the objective Word of God that keeps the discipline, I would have a problem with that. It is not the revelation of the Word that keeps our minds, or renews or minds, or leads us into all truth, it is the illumination of the Word by the Holy Spirit that does all of these things. If it were otherwise, then merely a head knowledge of the Word would suffice and therefore the Pharisees, along with the legalists and religionists, would be sufficient to lead us. Your ability to memorize Scripture, or your level of intelligence would be the measure of your spirituality, when in fact these are not factors. Those who "abide," in the Word, Jesus, those who stay close, those who come into His presence, it is they who can say "imitate me," walk this way. Walk in the paths of humility and surrender and brokenness and come into His presence. Then men will say, are these guys not unlearned? And then others will know that these men have walked with Jesus.....Frank

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2009/8/5 15:44

It's interesting to hear myself through other people's ears;)

Re: , on: 2009/8/5 18:30

Hi brother, I think that we probably agree. Semantics is a killer in these kinds of conversations. Perhaps we do not though? :) I have found a massive amount of confusion when it comes to "The Word." Obviously Jesus is the Word made flesh. It is abiding in Him, He is the vine, we are the branches. I believe that there is as much confusion in the "Protestant," world over this single issue as there is between Catholics and "Protestants," over "eat my flesh and drink my blood." Obviously, as born again Christians we do not believe that the real presence of Jesus is in the Catholic communion, it is merely symbolic and that we break bread in remembrance of what the Lord did for us on Calvary and we take that time to reflect on any sin that we have not dealt with. (please no debate anyone on transubstantiation:) I believe that there is a similar confusion on what the term "The Word," means in Scripture. For maximum confusion, every single genuinely born-again Christian will devour Scripture, it is one of the signs of a truly regenerate soul. Yet a soulless man can devour Scripture and without the aid of illumination which plays into sanctification, will only increase in a head knowledge of the Word which may lead to a virtuous life, at least on the outside, but it will eventually lead to self-righteousness. The carnal man, cannot possibly understand the true meaning of Scripture, it cannot be gleaned by human effort or wisdom or intelligence. Outward actions, good deeds are, in and of themselves, not true indicators of who is truly His, hence 1Cor 13. Imagine, a man can even be a martyr for the cause but if he does not have love in his heart he has nothing. This love, this sermon on the mount love, this supernatural love, especially for the world, can only come supernaturally. So, a leading indicator of the religious man, the carnal man, the man of "nominal faith," as Tozer put it, will be a lack of love for the world. He will rant against the wicked world. He will fear the world, he will be paranoid of the world. Yet, God so loved that very same world, that He gave His only Son to die for it.....Frank

Re: - posted by TaylorOtwell (), on: 2009/8/5 21:23

Greetings Friends,

I agree with the "spirit" of the post - that just because one has a working knowledge of what the Bible teaches does not mean that one has been given a new heart (Ezek 36:26-27).

I know there is a tendency among those who have a lot of learning to look down their noses at those who are not as well trained or knowledgeable. However, I was wondering about the opposite trend. Often I see those who disagree with someone's position and who happen to have a lot of knowledge written off as "cold" and Pharisees. I don't think we should necessarily make a sharp dichotomy between knowledge/learning and true spirituality. They can both co-exist. It is likely that Paul was one of the brightest men of his day, and he was also one of the most godly.

It seems there are dangers on both sides of the coin. On one end, the believer can be suspicious of learning and reject the systematic, careful study of Scripture and theological topics. On the other end, the believer can be very advanced in learning yet reject those less studied.

With care in Christ,
Taylor

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2009/8/5 21:37

Well, Frank I do think we agree. All of us agree that we need both.

Maintaining balance isn't a static act...it's moving back and forth in response to every little lack of balance we perceive. Two people are walking on the same rope. At any given moment one might be leaning a little more to the right, while another is pulling back to the left...in that moment they seem to be moving in opposite directions, but really they are walking forward on the same rope;)

We need both to keep walking.

When I try to say more, I end up making less sense. In fact, it may already be too late. ;)

MC

Re: , on: 2009/8/5 23:10

NO, Mike, I think you said it well :) Taylor makes some good points, all I would say, and I have said it repeatedly on various threads, the genuine man of God will soak up the Scriptures. I have yet to meet what I consider to be, a genuine regenerated soul, who did not soak up the Scriptures. Now, I am not sure about the systematic part. The only system that makes sense to me is how the Holy Spirit taught me and opened up the Scriptures to me. I went to Bible school and it can be a graveyard for the spiritual person. Men's wisdom frequently, not always, but frequently overriding the leadings and teachings of the Holy Spirit. Knowledge held in high esteem, always a new thesis, always a new side to centuries old arguments and so on. It often becomes a battleground of the ego's. I took a class called "Dispensational Pre-millennialism." Now, you should get an A just for being able to say and spell that. The teacher, who only read the Scriptures in Greek (always impressive, always a source of pride;) wrote his thesis on Mat 24, all 339 pages of it.) Now, cmon. Paul was a smart guy, I know that, best school of the day, Ivy league no doubt, but the mystery that was revealed to him, the visions that he saw, the miracles that were wrought through him had nothing to do with his previous training. Everything he ever learned or knew led him to "Oh wretched man that I am." Only after illumination, could Paul be used. Now unlearned fishermen amazed the brightest minds of the day. So we see, the top of the educational heap, to the totally uneducated, God used them all and only God was glorified. This was not by accident, God will share His glory with no man or educational system. No room for pride, nothing that we add, it's all of Him. If every Bible school disappeared tomorrow, Christianity would continue as strong as ever, perhaps even stronger. Teaching, being a gift from God, would still be amongst the Body, and receiving teaching, and learning for ourselves would still be a matter of illumination.....Frank

Re: - posted by ADisciple (), on: 2009/8/5 23:39

Quote:

appolus wrote:

Now unlearned fishermen amazed the brightest minds of the day.

...Because they had learned CHRIST. (Eph. 4.20).

Christ: a totally different dimension of knowledge taught in an entirely different kind of school, the one all true disciples are enrolled in.

AD

Re: , on: 2009/8/6 8:41

Yes, they had walked with Him and been baptized in the Holy Spirit and their "heart." would burn within them as He expounded the Scriptures to them, illuminated the Scriptures to them.....Frank