

Your Faith Is Evidence-Based – Part 2

Faith is not a feeling, but it is accepting evidence and testimony

First Peter 3.13–17

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Scripture Reader and Reading: Carl Peugh – First Peter 3.13–17

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Larry Amberg – Songs on faith

Prelude:

I. Secularists see us as feeling-based and themselves as evidence-based.

- A. They speak of faith or belief as something opposed to reason.
- B. They see themselves as the ones with reason and logic.

II. How do you see faith?

- A. Unfortunately we sometimes speak the same way as unbelievers.
- B. We act as though faith is nothing more than a mere feeling or a hunch.
 - 1. This especially happens when we get into a discussion with
 - a) an atheist or
 - b) an evolution and
 - 2. they silence us.
 - a) We do not know what to say or do.
 - b) So we might say something like,
 - (1) I just feel in my heart that God exists.
 - (2) I just feel that the Bible is His word.
 - c) This only adds to our opponent's thinking that he has the superior part.

III. Let me show you that the Lord wants us to base our faith on evidence.

- A. Do not let the opponent tell you what evidence is.
- B. He claims that the only evidence he will accept is to see God.
 - 1. Do we always have to see something to know that it is real?
 - 2. If so, how do the blind know that anything exists?
 - a) Last week I showed you that

b) God expects us to use reason to come to our faith.

Persuasion:

I. God Expects Us to Examine the Evidence

A. He does not want

1. blind followers,
2. ignorant followers, or
3. mere emotional followers.

B. Matthew 22 shows that a lawyer asked Jesus for the greatest commandment.

1. Jesus quoted to the lawyer from one of three places in Deuteronomy,

37 “You shall love the LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’ 38 This is the first and great commandment” (Matthew 22.37–38).

2. Yes, love God with all your heart.

3. Yes, love Him with all your soul.

a) And be sure to love Him with all your mind.

b) What is the function of the mind?

(1) The mind is for thinking.

(2) God wants you to think as you love Him.

C. Romans 14 discusses eating meat and not eating meat.

1. Paul also discussed the observation or non-observation of various days.

2. He gave some guidelines, then

a) he said this,

5 One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind (Romans 14.5).

b) Whatever you do concerning what you observe and do not observe,

- (1) just be sure that you are convinced in your own mind
- (2) that what you are doing is fully harmonious with the Lord.

3. Use your mind to come to your conclusion.

D. First Thessalonians 5 shows the Spirit knows

1. that we shall come across various teachings and works.
2. However, rather than rejecting or accepting everything,
 - a) the Spirit told us to do something,

21 Test all things (1 Thessalonians 5.19–21).

- b) You cannot test all things
 - (1) until you know the standard against which to test all things.
 - (2) First, test His word then you can test all things.

E. First John 4 says something similar.

1. For you see, Christians are not supposed to be gullible.
2. Think!

1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world (1 John 4.1).

3. I can test the spirits against God's word.
4. I have examined His word and
 - a) when someone comes along claiming to come from Him,
 - b) I can use the word of God to test that person.
5. God Himself is the standard.
 - a) Therefore, anyone claiming to come from Him
 - b) I must compare with Him and with what He has revealed.
6. To do as John teaches,

- a) God expects us to know and to believe that He exists.
- b) You have examined nature and His word and concluded
 - (1) that He exists and
 - (2) that He is the Author of the Scriptures.

II. God Expects Us to Have an Evidence-Based Faith

A. Acts 1 states

1. that Jesus appeared to the apostles,
2. persuading them that He had risen from the dead.
 - a) They needed to know it was Him and
 - b) not an imposter.
 - (1) Therefore, Luke wrote,

3 ...to [the apostles] [Jesus] also presented Himself alive after His suffering by *many infallible proofs*, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God (Acts 1.3).

- (2) This changed those men
 - (a) who then devoted their lives to preaching Jesus.
 - (b) Here is the thing: He expected them to have evidence.

B. Acts 17 shows Paul going into a synagogue in Thessalonica.

1. However, notice how he taught the Jews there.
2. He used reason, explanation, and demonstration to make his point,

2 Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ" (Acts 17.2–3).

- a) Reasoning is not feeling the faith.
- b) Explaining is not feeling your way through the instruction.

- c) Demonstrating is not feeling a path to where you want to be.
 - (1) Reason think logically about what the Scriptures present.
 - (2) Explanation makes something clear so that others can see the truth.
 - (3) Demonstration shows the existence of something by evidence.
- 3. That is the kind of faith God wants from us.
- C. Acts 17 quotes Paul speaking to the Athenian philosophers,
 - 1. warning them of a great Day
 - 2. when God will judge the world, and
 - a) Paul added that God did something
 - b) to assure us that such an event will happen,

30 “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead” (Acts 17.30–31).

- (1) The Gospel Accounts present evidence for the resurrection.
- (2) Jesus rose from the dead
 - (a) to assure mankind of the coming Judgment Day and
 - (b) to prepare mankind for that Day, and
 - i) that is why we must repent,
 - ii) changing our lives so that our lives will harmonize
 - (1) with the life of Jesus and
 - (2) He will invite us into heaven on that Day.

III. God Expects Us to Make the Case for Our Faith

- A. If God Expects Us to Use Reason to come to our faith,
 - 1. if God Expects Us to Examine the Evidence for our faith,
 - 2. if God Expects Us to Have an Evidence-Based Faith,

3. then First Peter 3 shows

- a) that God Expects Us to Make the Case for Our Faith.
- b) We cannot just expect our feelings to tell us the validity of our faith,
- c) nor can we expect people to accept our feelings about the faith.

B. In First Peter 3, Peter reasoned

1. that we should not return evil for evil, but
2. we should bless others.
 - a) He quoted from Psalms 34
 - b) that if we want to see good days
 - (1) we should not do evil, but
 - (2) we should seek peace and pursue it.

C. He then reasoned with us like this,

13 And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a *reason* for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; 16 having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. 17 For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil (1 Peter 3.13–17).

1. People have a tendency not to harm you
2. if you follow what is good.
 - a) Yet, some people will still persecute us.
 - b) Rather than fearing them,
 - (1) Peter said that we should prepare to defend what we believe.
 - (2) People will ask us for a reason for our hope.
 - (a) Use your mind and provide them with answers.

- (b) Do not fear them, because
 - i) if you do,
 - ii) you will stumble in your answer.
 - (1) Just be calm and
 - (2) explain why you believe?

Exhortation:

I. However, what should you do when someone has silenced you?

- A. Do not say, Well, I believe in my heart that this is true.
- B. Do not say, Well, I feel like it is the truth.

II. Say: I do not know, but I will find out.

- A. Then go look for the answers.
- B. Think of what you would do if someone challenged you to prove
 - 1. that George Washington existed and
 - 2. that he was our first president.
 - a) Everyone accepts his existence and
 - b) that he was America's first president.
 - (1) Why do they?
 - (2) No one alive today has seen him or heard him.
 - (a) Why do they and you believe he existed as our first president?
 - (b) Ask yourself that question and
 - i) challenge the one who has questioned
 - (1) God's existence,
 - (2) the Divine Sonship of Jesus, and
 - (3) the Bible as the word of God.
 - ii) You will then begin to find your way into biblical truth.

III. For those who have already arrived there...