

An Explanatory Context for an Understanding of Faith, Love and Hope

Introduction

A. The Biblical exhortations to exercise faith, love and hope are often very difficult to implement in our daily life. One reason for this, beyond the fact that we often do not want to obey God, is due to the inner confusion we experience when we attempt to trust, love and hope.

B. Once the believer is led into an understanding of this confusion and how to evaluate his inner experience then it is much easier to make the decisions of faith, love and hope which are so essential to the successful Christian life.

I. The Principles Related to Creation.

				Thinking
		W		
Person		I		Emotions
		L		
		L		Bodily Desires

A. God created us as a person and He was central in our daily life and the source of all authority. Genesis 1:26; 2:16-25

B. God created us with the capacity to receive His revelation. This came to us primarily through our ability to think. Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10

C. In our original creation all our functions were under our control. Our inner experience was one of unity and harmony. Genesis 1:31; 2:7,16-25

D. It is important that we recognize the difference between our persons and our functions. Romans 1:21-32; 6:16-22; I Cor. 9:27; Eph. 4:21-32

II. The Principles Related to the Fall.

A. In the Fall we transferred the authority for life from God to ourselves. We became the controlling factor at the center of life and our own authority.

B. We also transferred the source of authority from our thinking to our emotions. As sinners we became more controlled by our emotions than what we knew to be true or to be false. Romans 1:21-32; Eph. 4:17-19

C. We lost control of our functions in the Fall. We became vulnerable to manipulation and control from the fleshly patterns of sin, from the world culture about us, from people, and from Satan. Eph. 2:2,3; Gal. 5:16-21

D. Our inner consciousness of ourselves became confused. We lost the certainty of right and wrong, in misunderstanding the goals of life we became obsessed with false goals and priorities and were frustrated and disappointed because of the lack of fulfillment. Eph. 2:12; 4:17-19; Phil. 3:19; Col. 1:21

III. The Principles Related to Redemption.

A. Through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ, and the new birth, the bondage of sin was broken in our lives and were legally reinstated in a relationship with God where He was central in our daily life and our final authority.

- B. In this new relationship we can again receive a knowledge of the truth through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures. Through all of this we can regain control of our functions. I Cor. 2:9-16; 9:27; II Cor. 10:4,5
- C. However, unless we are taught and live Biblically, the practical experience of this relationship, with all its freedom, joy, assurance, certainty, power and fruitfulness may be greatly limited. Romans 7:11-25; I Cor. 3:1-4
- D. Even though we know the truths of redemption it is possible to regress to giving our functions, and primarily our emotions, a place of authority in our daily life. This results in conflict, doubt, fear, anxiety, frustration, disappointment and confusion. The pattern of thought and action which we once had before salvation, or living as an immature Christian, may cause us a great deal of difficulty. II Cor. 6:14-7:1; Eph. 1:21-32; Col. 3:5-10

IV. The Principles Related to Sanctification.

- A. To live correctly means to grow in the experience and application of what it means to have Jesus Christ at the center of one's life and to understand how He is our authority in all the areas of life. All of this is implemented in decisions of faith, love and hope. I Peter 2:2; II Peter 1:3-9
- B. The following eight suggestions may be helpful.
 1. Recognize the Biblical basis for faith, love and hope to be in God and His Word. This is the only foundation for life. Rom. 4:17-24; II Tim. 3:16,17
 2. Recognize that you are a person - that you have, as a believer, the ability to make choices, and you need not do so on the basis of the demands from your functions or from the "outside". II Cor. 7:1; Romans 8:14-17
 3. Recognize the distinction between yourself and your functions. Thoughts, feelings and desires may or may not indicate the kind of a person you are. Genesis 3:1-6; Matthew 4:1-11; II Cor. 10:4,5
 4. Recognize that you can "take charge" of your functions and thereby of your life. You have the ability to say "yes" or "no" to your functions. Galatians. 5:22,23
 5. Recognize the key in all of this is your use of the will in choosing in harmony with the blueprint of the Bible. You can make a genuine choice of faith, love and hope even though your feelings may seem to contradict your decision. Romans 1:17-21; Psalm 56:3; Psalm 13:5-11
 6. Recognize the absolute necessity of rejecting whatever is contradictory to the Bible - in your thinking, emotions and bodily desires. All non-Biblical patterns of actions must be broken. Eph. 1:22; Col. 3:5-9; Titus 2:11,12
 7. Recognize the absolute necessity of choosing to respond to God in decisions of faith, love and hope - by daily obedience. Learn to think and act on the basis of the Bible in spite of how you think, feel, or desire. Acts 27:25
 8. Recognize that practicing the truth will result in freedom. This will bring cleansing, a re-patterning of your functions, and the fruit of the Spirit. John 8:32; Titus 2:11-14; Phil. 2:12-16

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