

Do You Know: Who Has Faith That Saves?

David Halbrook

Faith cannot exist without hearing God's word (Rom. 10:17; 1 Thess. 2:13). Of those who hear and have faith--who has *saving* faith?

James 2:19 says that the demons have faith—clearly not a saving faith.

In John 12:42, some believed in Jesus but would not confess Him—clearly not saving faith.

James 2:26 says those who have faith alone (“faith only”) have a dead faith—clearly not saving faith.

James 2:26 implies that faith with works is alive—a saving faith! Jesus taught this when He said to labor (work) “for the food which endures to everlasting life” (Jn. 6:27). An active faith does not earn salvation, but obeys God's instructions to accept the gift. “What instructions?” you might ask. Visit our website today to read next week's article (WWW.QVCOC.COM). Call or write us with your comments or questions.

-- *Editor's Note:* This begins a series of five articles on the basic principles of conversion. Most people you know who read the Bible do not know what the Bible teaches on this subject. Surely each of us realizes that we will meet someone this week who needs to learn these basic truths. Will you help them learn? If these articles in *Arkansas Weekly* will help them to learn then pray for the lost, cut this article out of the paper, find someone to hand it to, and then pray again for that person. Be a doer of the word!

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

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WHAT DO I BRING TO WORSHIP?

David Halbrook

A common complaint among disgruntled Christians is “I don't get anything out of worship.” Thus, they are sporadic in their presence, preparation, or participation in bible classes, the public assembly, and other activities of the local church forcing Christ's body to compensate for what they are not providing (Eph. 4:16).

Worship's primary purpose is to “give” not to “get,” but there is no denying that God intended for us to “get something” from the time we spend in worship to Him. What we “get” is typically the product of what we “give.” So if our deepest desire is to “get something” from worship, then we need to take inventory of what we bring and give when we come to worship God.

Myself Bringing myself to worship God includes two things: my body and my spirit. Bringing my body can be a challenge, when I am tired or have only a mild physical illness (stuffy nose, mild cough, etc.). If we are motivated to work and play with these physical hindrances, then bringing our body to worship should be no problem. But, do you always bring your spirit to worship? Is your mind always with you or do let it wander elsewhere?

Intentional sporadic attendance not only separates us from God, it also affects us on the occasions that we are present to worship. If I struggle to want to be present, then songs like “Oh How I Love Jesus” can't come from the heart, so I mumble as I “sing,” I am bored as I sing, or I don't sing at all. And when my spirit is not engaged as I worship, then its vanity is known to God and myself (Jn. 4:24). It is true that we will “get nothing” out of worship if both our body and spirit are not present.

Appetite If songs, scriptures, and prayers rarely pass through our minds and lips on “non-assembly” days, then it is no surprise that our gatherings to worship leave us less than satisfied. If we find ourselves generally content without spiritual thoughts

for five days of the week, why would we expect two days a week to be any different? Why do we expect to be “filled” if we don’t hunger and thirst (Matt. 5:6)?

Prepared mind A few general indicators that someone has come prepared to worship include a Bible, prepared study material, and a joyful disposition.

Bringing our Bible typically indicates that we are using it during the week (Acts 17:11) and thus being familiar with it, know that we can find the appropriate texts quickly, allowing us to focus on the text instead of spending time flipping through an unfamiliar Bible.

Bringing study material to class typically indicates that we are intent on being at class, we know what the topic of study is, and we are prepared to listen and participate.

A joyful disposition typically indicates that, no matter what trials of life may burden us, we rely on God and are thankful for another opportunity to express our gratitude to Him and to be with His people (Ps. 122:1). While we sometimes have different ways of outwardly expressing joy, I believe that smiling is common to all people. When is the last time that you smiled while singing a spiritual song like “Count Your Many Blessings”? If you are happy to worship God, does anyone else know?

Others When Cornelius knew that Peter was coming he gathered his family and friends (Acts 10:24). It is unlikely that this was the only time that Cornelius had talked to these concerning spiritual things but this was just one of many ways that Cornelius could influence these to serve the God whom he served. When we overcome the fear of being mocked or rejected, then we will invite others to study the Bible with us and when opportunities arise, we will invite them to come with us to worship God. We should be regularly looking to extend both invitations.

There can be exceptions. Sometimes no matter how active, involved, and enthused we are in the Lord’s work, we find ourselves surrounded by others who lack that interest and that can become burdensome. However, if to the best of our ability, we regularly bring these things to worship then we will most certainly “get something” from the time we spend “giving something” to God and our brethren when we assemble to worship.

"LET THERE BE NO STRIFE"

Steve Klein

When contention arose between the herdsmen of Lot and the herdsmen of Abram, "Abram said to Lot, 'Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between

my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren'" (Genesis 13:8). God's friend Abraham knew that brotherhood demands the cessation of strife. I fear that some brethren today believe that brotherhood demands incessant strife.

Some practical measures for keeping peace include the following:

1. DO NOT START A QUARREL! Proverbs 17:14 says, "The beginning of strife is like releasing water; Therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts." While it is true that there are principles of truth that must be defended, argued and contended for (Jude 3, Philippians 1:17), MANY quarrels among brethren are over things that have not even been revealed in Scripture. Others involve judging hearts and motives by appearance, instead of judging with righteous judgment (as Jesus instructed in John 7:24). This kind of strife should be nipped in the bud! We must simply "avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife" (2 Timothy 2:23).

2. DO NOT SPREAD TALES! Nothing fans the flames of strife more effectively than gossip. Conversation that is seemingly well meant can provide fuel to a fire that would otherwise die out. When a brother begins a conversation (or e-mail message) by asking, "Do you know what brother so-and-so said about you?" he may mean well, but what follows is usually combustible! "Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is no talebearer, strife ceases" (Proverbs 26:20).

3. LOVE YOUR BROTHER. "Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins." (Proverbs 10:12). It is amazing how easy it is for folks to tolerate the faults of their loved ones, family, longtime friends, etc., while at the same time refusing to tolerate similar or lesser faults in those outside their circle of friends. If we could learn to show love, without prejudice or partiality, we might find a lot less to pick at in others (cf. 1 Timothy 5:21).

4. FORBEAR. The instructions given in Ephesians 4:1-3 for "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace " include "forbearing one another in love" (KJV). According to Strong's Dictionary "forbearing" means to "put up with, bear with, endure, suffer". Some have the idea that they "don't have to put up with" anything from a brother in Christ. Nothing could be further from the truth. Even if you are being unjustly mistreated, "putting up with it" and taking it patiently is one of the truest marks of a follower of Christ (cf. 1 Peter 2:20-21). Suffering real or imagined injustice from a brother is a sad excuse for causing strife. It's an excuse Abram would not use, and neither should we. We might learn to be more forbearing if we would stop and realize how much we need others to "put up with" us! "Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them." (Matthew 7:12).