

Lovers of God, Part Two

By

Ginny Menard

Lovers of God, peace be with you! Many books and articles have been written, and many sermons and homilies have been given on the subject of faith. In this article we will share a “layman’s” look at faith according to the Scriptures.

According to Scriptures in Hebrews 11:8, “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” In verse two we read that “through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear.”

In order to begin to understand the above quotation, one must be able to answer this question first: “What is man?” Many intellectuals in ages past and in our age today have tried, and are still trying, to come up with convenient secular answers. We will share what we found in Scriptures concerning man’s nature. In 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Scriptures say: “Man has a spirit, is a soul, and lives with a body.” Some will certainly ask, “Isn’t the soul and the spirit than same thing?” If one were to take a close look at Hebrews 4:12, Genesis 2:7, and other related verses, the answer is a plain and emphatic NO. The Scriptures say: “For the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the life [psuche] and the spirit.” (Man has two dimensions, not three. Man is body and the breath of life which made him a living being [psuche]. However, there is in reality a third dimension of a man’s life—the spirit of Christ, which man must ‘put on’ to have that dimension. Editor.)

The spirit of man is what it is: God’s breath. The soul (psuche), on the other hand, is simply man himself. [See Genesis 2:7, compare Genesis 1:20 and 24—Sea creatures, birds of the air, all creatures of the land, including man, are said to be “living ‘souls’ with the “breath of life” in them. Editor.] In order to know what we are, who we are, and where we are going, we must first understand our spiritual nature. So often we start backwards: i.e., the body. Why? Because the body is the most immediate disseminator of information via the feelings or senses. “We’ve go to know right now.” Then follows the perceptual and conceptual processes of one’s life/mind/intellect. Judgments are made about everything that is experienced and all, it seems, are “made” to fit into a “logical pattern” and then acted on accordingly. Most people stop at this point. The spirit does not even receive an honorable mention. The spirit gets “tucked” away or “masked-over” with garbage. “It is a ‘bother’ and interferes with ‘my logic’.” Our spiritual nature requires much more than just “feeling” or “logic.” The spiritual deals with the “whole person.” The spirit is the “is-ness of is,” the “essence of being.” Man cannot function to his full capacity without allowing his spiritual nature to have dominion over his life.

The next question to consider is: “Is the spirit of man in line with God’s spirit or does the body and the intellect rule over the spirit or even rule the spirit out altogether?” If one were to take a close look at 1 Corinthians 3:16, it says: “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and the Spirit of God dwells in you?” [Said to Christians.] And then in 2 Corinthians 6:16: “And what union can then be between God’s temple and idols? For

you are God's temple, the home of the living God, and God has said of you: 'I will live in them and walk among them and I will be their God and they shall be my people'."

Paul was not talking about buildings, he was talking about man's spirit nature as God's house. When God's spirit is allowed to dwell within our spiritual nature, this is how God talks and walks with us. Some may ask, "Where does the conscience fit into all of this?" The conscience simply stated, is the voice of the human spirit. It is interesting to go through the Epistles [letters] Paul wrote to the churches and see what he said about his conscience. He always obeyed it. There is one important point to bring up however, it is important to know whether one's conscience is a safe guide. How does one know this? The conscience is a safe guide if the spirit of man becomes a "new person" in Christ. When one allows his spiritual nature or one becomes "spirit conscious," and allows the Lord to take it over, these three things take place in the human spirit: (2 Corinthians 5:17.)

- 1) One becomes a "new creature" in Christ.
- 2) Old things begin to pass away—habits, faults, etc.
- 3) All things have become new.

On the other hand, a person whose spirit is not in line with God, could not follow the voice of his spirit. His spirit is not regenerated [It is called "dead."]. Therefore, his conscience would permit him to do anything. 1 Corinthians 3:18–23 says: "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seems to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written: 'He takes the wise in their own craftiness.' And again, 'The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise that they are vain.' Therefore, let no man glory in man. For all things are yours, and you belong to Christ and Christ is God's."

Deception is one of the worst "masks" that anyone can hide behind. We are our worst enemy and Satan really does not have to push us hard in his favor. We often confuse things by the way we talk. We say "I feel God's presence." No we don't! We sense "spiritually" his presence. Use the word 'feeling' advisedly; it leaves the wrong impression that God's presence is a physical feeling. Below is a guide that helped us to understand how the nature of man functions.

FEELING IS THE VOICE OF THE BODY.

REASON IS THE VOICE OF LIFE/INTELLECT/MIND.

CONSCIENCE IS THE VOICE OF THE SPIRIT.

Consider these questions: Do you often find yourself in a mood in which you fine yourself "up" one day and "down" the next day? Do you find yourself tired, confused and frustrated, and cannot figure out why? Do you always go by your own humanistic efforts in trying to solve problems? If you have answered "yes" to any of these questions, consider these statements: Not enough time is given to my spiritual nature" to grow healthy in the shadow of God's spirit. How can this be overcome? The answer—by diligent meditation and study of God's word. Too much reliance is placed upon one's own logic and feelings to solve one's problems, and when things do not go right one feels

tired, confused, and frustrated, and do not know why. How can this be overcome? The answer: by practicing/doing what the word of God says; by giving the word of God first place, and by obeying one's "new spirit" in the faith grounded in Christ Jesus. Nothing will go right and nothing will make any sense until the Lord has been allowed to "lock-in" his spirit into man's spirit. Romans 8:16 says that "The spirit of God testifies to our spirit that we are God's children."

Once a person understands his/her own human nature, and once a person allows God's spirit to dwell in one's being, then one can begin to understand what faith is and how to obtain and utilize the gifts God gives to the one's who love Him. Faith can then take on a possible definition similar to this: "Faith is taking 100 percent stock (with no trace of doubt or fear) in the substance of things hoped for (even though the intellect and senses cannot perceive what God has in store for us). But the "new" spirit nature of a man or woman "bound in Christ," says that it is "ok" to obtain what is sought.

Faith demands total trust in God guiding the spirit in those situations when the intellect and the body say that it is hopeless. How does one obtain faith? According to Romans 10:8–17, Acts 16:30, 32, and James 1:22 simply stated: "Faith comes from HEARING the word of God; BELIEVING what God's word says; and DOING what God's word says." According to Hebrews 11:6, when we do not have faith, we cannot please God. To blame God for our lack of faith is spiritual ignorance because we are told in His word how to obtain it! Read all of Hebrew, chapter 11. It records "men and women of faith," whom we can take example from and learn. Look up the report and testimony of how these people lived by faith in the Old Testament. Note in all instances it was their faith in God that brought them through what seemed to be "impossible odds." Our Father will always provide us the means to deal with every situation, if we have faith in what He has revealed.

In Christ Jesus' ministry, it was not Jesus' initial powers that saved or healed the people. It was by their faith! In our search of the New Testament, we found in those situations involving a matter of faith this pattern was taking place. As Jesus talked with the crowds or as he talked to them on a "one-to-one" basis, it was upon the HEARING of His words that the people came to BELIEVE, to REPENT, to ACCEPT Jesus in their hearts, and to DO what was said or revealed to them through His words. Many spiritual, mental, and bodily healings took place; some took place right away, some took a period of time. Many people who were not present at the hearing of Jesus' words were healed, simply because a friend who had accepted Jesus as Lord, interceded for them in His name. Recall in Mark, chapter 5, the Roman soldier who approached Jesus in faith to ask healing for his dying servant. Jesus publicly acknowledged this soldier's faith. By the time the soldier reached home he found that his dying servant had been healed at the very hour of time that Jesus spoke!

In closing, we have stated that "faith is the confident, positive expectation of things or situations hoped for when all indications seemed hopeless, but total trust in Jesus, makes it all possible." We stated the problems of intellectual faith versus spiritual faith. As a self-study, we suggest that one reads John 20:24–29 and Romans 4:17–21, and compare for yourself the faith of Abraham versus the faith of "doubting" Thomas. The central truth that we wanted to bring out is that it takes a positive "now faith" to get positive results, and that by continually searching, reading, and meditating on His word under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, faith has the answer!

We would like to cover many other elements that go along with the “faith walk,” but we are limited to space in this article, so we will use a multiple of these articles to get the point across to those who say they are “Lovers of God.” In the next few articles we will cover man’s relation ship to god, the call to righteousness/justification, sanctification, and holiness. Our prayer for our readers is this: the best gift that we can give to you is the Good News of Jesus the Christ, and we pray that you will meditate on the word of God, practice this word of God, give the word of God first place in you life, and begin to obey your “new” spirit” in Christ Jesus!

.....
Copyright © 1981 by Christ For Catholics. This article may be copied freely for wider distribution, providing that the source from which it is taken is suitably acknowledged. (Acknowledgment: Christ For Catholics, Volume 1, Number 3, 1981; published by Christ For Catholics, Farmington, MN.) This notice must remain with the article.
.....