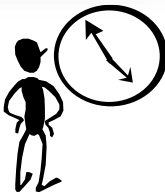


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## Time of Assembly



### Sunday:

Bible Study 9:00 a.m.  
Worship 10:00 a.m.  
(every other week)

Worship 5:00 p.m.

### Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 p. m.

## How Fundamental is Faith to Christianity

By Afolabi Akinyemi (Nigeria)

*“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him”* (Hebrews 11:6).

No other Bible passage describes the importance of faith to Christianity than the one quoted above. The word fundamental is defined as “forming the base, from which everything else develops; more important than anything else”. Faith forms the basis of Christianity and every other principle rests on faith. The Greek word used for faith in this Bible passage is *pistis* which means “belief, or persuasion.” In one sense, to have faith is equivalent to being a Christian. Paul affirms that *“those who are of faith are children of Abraham”* (Galatians 3:7).

There are two important aspects of faith; believing that God is -- He exists, and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him. The Christian faith is not blind as many skeptics allege for the Holy Scriptures tell us *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”* (Hebrews 11:1). “Substance,” as used in Hebrews 11:1, means “an assured impression, a mental realizing,” while evidence is “a trial in order to proof, a proof”. This goes to show that whatever impression we have of God or any other issue for that matter must be subject to trial to prove authenticity. Faith means believing something based on evidence, though we have not seen it.

God does not expect us to believe He exists blindly; the proofs of God’s existence are too numerous to be counted. No wonder King David said, *“The fool has said in his heart ‘There is no God...’* (Psalms 53:1). The evidence for the ex-

istence of God is found in nature, it is found in the creation.

*“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse”* (Romans 1:20).

*“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge”* (Psalms 19:1-2).

Creation does not only prove the existence of God, but it also proves His unlimited power, wisdom, and rulership of the universe, and that He deserves to be worshiped by man (Jeremiah 27:5; Job 9:8-10; Proverbs 3:19-26; Isaiah 40:28; Psalm 139:13-14; Romans 11:36). Please consider some of the evidence for creation.

### *The universe reveals evidence of intelligent design*

All men recognize that when they see order and design, there is a designer or a creator. Cars, houses, televisions, radios, and mobile phones exist because there is someone who designed and made them. Similarly, the order and design of the universe demand a creator. *“For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God”* (Hebrews 3:4). We do not recognize just the existence of intelligence; we recognize the degree of intelligence. The functioning of the sun and the stars, the seasons, the hydrological cycle, etc. proves the existence of a creator. The wonderful features of plants, animals, and human beings require the inevitable conclusion that they were made by a supremely intelligent creator.

Kyle Butt in his debate with Dan Barker on the existence of God has this to say,

“Suppose you are walking on the beach, you look down, and you see something in the sand. You move the sand away. You pick up a laptop computer. You press the on-button; it comes on. You see that this laptop computing device will compute information at the rate of hundreds or millions of bits per second. It has all the latest gadgets and gizmos. It is the most advanced technical computing system you have ever seen in laptop form. Now, you have a question to ask yourself. Number one, “Where did this laptop computer originate?” You know there are only two answers to that question? Number one, it originated by purely naturalistic chance processes over millions of years by random chances, working with some type of selection going on. Or, number two, it was constructed and built by an intelligent designer who purposely put functional complexity into that computing device.

“Let me ask you a very serious, very easy question. Have you ever met anybody who said a laptop computer was not designed by an intelligent person? Never. I've never seen it; never met a person that does. Right now we have a capacity crowd of 550 people in this auditorium tonight. From what I understand, several people had to be turned away, some of them flying or driving

from several hours away. I'm sorry about that. But I'm glad that you have the opportunity to be here personally. Now, in this room, we've got 550 of the most amazing computing devices that have ever been devised—the human brain. The human brain weighs about three pounds in the average adult person. The human brain computes information the likes of which would make any laptop computer look like a kindergartner's toy.

“Let me read to you a quote from a man by the name of Richard Lewin. He is a British anthropologist, and here's what he says: “Ten billion neurons are packed into the brain; each on average has 1,000 links with other neurons, resulting in more than 60,000 miles of wiring. Connectivity on that scale is beyond comprehension. For instance, the fastest computer clocks up a billion or so operations a second, which pales in significance beside the 100 billion operations that occur—in the brain of a fly at rest. To say that the brain is a computer is a truism because what goes on in there is unquestionably computation. But so far, no man-made computer matches the human brain.”

Were you, as a human being, designed? It is an easy question with an easy answer -- ”Human beings were designed by a supremely intelligent designer -- God.“

## *Morality*

Men recognize the existence of morality. A sense of good or evil. This sense of morality separates man from animals. Animals have no morality. Atheists have argued that there are no objective moral values in the universe and that values are based on what is needed to survive and avoid pain.

This is called situational ethics. Essentially this means that it would be justified to commit murder or rape if by doing so one believes he would survive or avoid pain. The flaw in situational ethics is that would be no standard by which a threshold of survival can be determined and who would be qualified to make that determination if it were possible. Each person is then left to determine their standard of morality. A rapist or murderer would not be held accountable if he simply says if raped or murdered to save himself or avoid some form of pain. He cannot be questioned because the standard of judgment differs from person to person. Each man then becomes his own god. This is but a recipe for chaos and anarchy.

In reality, laws are made in all nations to prevent chaos and anarchy and enthrone order and peace. Men are held to a standard of morality by governments and people. The standards of men are not always in conformity with God's standards but the fact that men have standards proves the presence of a higher source of morality to whom all men are accountable. It is necessary to ponder on the origin of morality, the ultimate standard of morality, and the consequence of morality. God is the origin and ultimate standard of morality and He alone determines the consequence of morality. The con-

science of man recognizes the existence of morality hence every person always faces a dilemma in making choices either to act morally or immorally. There are eternal consequences for the actions we take for we shall give an account before God (Romans 14:12; II Corinthians 5:10).

The Bible is God's revelation to mankind, and it reveals all truth about God to us (Isaiah 43:10-13). God has always rewarded those who diligently seek him. From the heroes of faith who received the reward of their faith in the fulfillment of God's promise to them to the Israelites who received the land promised to their fathers and the promise of a peaceful life in that land if they diligently served God (Hebrews 11:4-11; 17-22; Joshua 23:6-16).

The Israelites who rebelled against God did not enter His rest. Their disobedience is called unbelief in Hebrews 3:16-19. The promise of entering His rest is also made to those to have had the gospel and obeyed it. They are urged to be diligent to enter this rest (Hebrew 4:1-11). This rest is eternal life (Hebrews 11:13-15; John 14:1-2). Faith underpins Christianity. God exists and rewards those who diligently seek him.



## Are You Satisfied?

By Bill Pierce

When talking with people concerning religion, I hear this statement, "I'm happy and satisfied with my religion!" It is true that religion is to bring happiness and contentment, but let me raise some questions about this statement that is often made. What is it about "your religion" that gives this satisfaction? Is it because it is in harmony with truth – the Gospel? Is it because you were raised to believe this way and you have accepted it without examination because it is the faith of your parents? Is it because you like the people where you attend and your loyalty to them gives you this satisfaction? Is it because of a certain social status you have where you attend that produces satisfaction?

But you may be thinking "Why are you asking these questions? Isn't one reli-

gion as good as another?" To this question we give a definite NO! The word religion means, "To bind back or again." Religion is for the purpose of binding the sinner back to God – to unite the sinner with God. Only the religion of Christ can do this! The N.T. speaks of "One Faith" or one religion (Eph. 4:4-5). It is the faith or doctrine of Christ, the Gospel, outlined in the N. T. If what you believe is not in harmony with what the N.T. teaches, your faith is vain – useless as far as binding you back to God (Mt. 7:21-23).

But you ask, "Why do I feel so good in what I believe?" Our feelings are based upon what we believe to be true. Our knowledge may be faulty, but if we believe it to be true, it is true and we feel good. We react happily or adversely, by what we believe. An example of this is found in the O.T. When Jacob was told, by his eleven sons, that his favorite son, Joseph, had been killed by a wild beast, he believed it and would not be comforted (Gen. 37:29-36). But all the while, Joseph was alive in Egypt. But to Jacob, Joseph was dead and his faith in this produced the grief he experienced. Paul said, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (Acts 23:1). Yet, he had persecuted and killed Christians before he himself became one. How was it possible for him to have a good conscience while doing what was wrong? Because he acted in harmony with the faith that he had. He said, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." What he believed – thought he should do, he did and as a result he had a good conscience. He later wrote, "I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (1 Tim. 1:13). Jesus told his Apostles that the time would come "that whosoever killeth you WILL THINK that he doeth God service" (John 16:2). Faith in such action would produce a feeling that they were doing God's will, but were they? Solomon said: "There is a way THAT SEEMETH RIGHT unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 16:25). That which may seem right, that produces a good feeling, may lead to eternal condemnation. Yes, you may feel good, you may be completely satisfied with what you believe – and be lost!

But you ask, "How can I know I am a Christian?" Paul wrote, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." (Rom. 8:16). The Spirit, through the Gospel, has revealed what one must do to become a Christian: Faith in Jesus Christ (John 8:24; Heb. 11:6), Repentance from sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 17:30), Confession that Jesus is the Son of God (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10), Baptism (immersion) in water for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16). If you have done this, the Spirit unites with your spirit in declaring you a child of God. If you haven't done this, but followed the teachings of men, you may be satisfied, you may feel good, but you are in a lost state according to the scriptures! Our feeling good and being satisfied is based upon our knowledge of and obedience to truth. (Acts 8:26-39). Feeling good is not a proof of our salvation – but is a result of it! Are you a New Testament Christian?