

Making Faith Your Own

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Introduction: It is a common problem for Christians to accept things as true without really testing them, that is to make them part of their own faith.

- A. More and more I am hearing of Christians who go to a denomination or become involved with new movements under the name "church of Christ."
 - 1. It is not uncommon to hear those make comments that "I used to believe this, but I never was challenged to test it."
 - 2. The problem is one that is more prevalent amongst young people, but I am finding more adults making drastic changes because they were never grounded.
 - 3. The real tragedy comes when they accept something else just because it is different and still are unwilling to have the openness to have that new belief tested as well!
- B. There is only one kind of heart that will find God's truth and be saved. (**Jn 3:19-21**)
 - 1. Jesus challenged the Jews to test themselves and find the truth. (**Jn 8:32; 7:17**)
 - 2. Truth has not changed nor the way to find it.
 - 3. Satan also has deceitfully placed deadly error before Christians for centuries and called it truth. He, however, does not want it to be tested at all. (**2 Cor 11:14-15; 1 Jn 4:1**)
 - 4. It is crucial that each one be grounded in the truth of God. (**Eph 4:14-15**)

I. How to know when you have made faith your own.

- A. It can be defended. (**1 Pt 3:15; Jude 3**)
 - 1. How many have avoided talking to their friends about the Bible?
 - 2. In that isolation you may never be tested! When we share the gospel with others, we are benefited too. (Ex. Young people study on Calvinism.)
- B. We base our lives upon it. (**2 Cor 1:24; 1 Jn 5:4**)
 - 1. It is the wisdom and the warnings from God's word that blesses us. (**1 Jn 5:3**)
 - 2. When others misrepresent what we stand for as "traditional" or "blindly following church of Christ opinions," we know better!
- C. We will stand for it. (**1 Cor 16:13**)
 - 1. Some of the strongest attacks will come because you will not have fellowship with those who have gone beyond the scriptures. (Ex. My father and instrumental music)
 - 2. Even as a non-Christian I knew that if I could get someone who claimed to be a Christian to go along with me, that he really had no convictions, just talk.
- D. It becomes a part of us! (**2 Cor 4:13-14**)

II. Why some people have problems developing their personal faith.

- A. Because of the natural doubts that go from being a child to being an adult.
 - 1. As a child we believe certain things because our parents taught us. (Ex. Is there a God?)
 - 2. It is not uncommon when one is faced with others who have a different belief to conclude that everyone is influenced by their upbringing and there is no "absolute truth."

3. It is possible to have a genuine faith given by godly parents and also wrong views given by parents. **(2 Tim 1:5; Mt 10:34-38)**
 4. If truth is the issue, then what is right can be found.
- B. Because of the guilt associated with doubts.
1. Sadly we may reinforce this guilt by our impatience. (Ex. They have been in church for years and should know this!")
 2. The Pharisees used pride and intimidation to line others up with them. **(Jn 7:45-52)**
 3. We know far less than we think. It is high time for us to be honest and let our guilt lead us to seek for the truth. Do you fear questions?
- C. Because we have never learned to trust God.
1. This is the first step in coming to know anything else! **(Heb 11:6; 1 Cor 8:1-3)**
 2. Many have sought out answers to issues before ever yielding their hearts to God. What does it mean to trust God?

III. Things to remember while making faith your own.

- A. Avoid the emotional response to run and hide.
1. Some when they decide what is right will often run and hide from others who may have a different view.
 2. Remember that truth can be examined. Why should you refuse to discuss it?
 3. The false teacher will actively work to subvert your faith and then cut you off from those who may disagree. Satan is pleased with this kind of "faith." **(Gal 4:16-17)**
- B. Do not make sweeping generalizations.
1. There are two wrong reactions when you find yourself in error.
 - a. To blindly accept everything another tells you.
 - b. To blindly set aside everything you have learned.
 2. Do not in pride think you are the first to discover new truths and that everyone else in the church is blind. **(1 Cor 8:1-3)**
 3. We need to learn patience with ourselves and with others. **(Jas 5:9-11)**
- C. Do not flee from the struggle for truth. **(Rom 12:1-2)**
1. The struggle for truth is a daily one. If for no other reason than the danger of my heart becoming corrupted and I then become self-deceived. **(Mt 13:13-15)**
 2. I need the wisdom to find godly counsel. **(Prov 24:5-6)** (This does not mean that you follow them blindly)
- D. Pray to God for wisdom and serve Him with the knowledge you have. **(Jas 1:5-8)**
1. Always serve God vigorously while seeking His will. It is folly to sit and study and do nothing else.
 2. Wisdom takes time. There are great truths that you keep learning throughout life. **(Eph 3:16-19)**

Conclusion: Where is your faith?

- A. If we could humbly see where we really are then God can do something with us. **(Mk 9:23-24)**
- B. It is best to know so that we may powerfully serve God.