
Words of Truth

Let's Not Use The Phrase "I Believe" Loosely

By: Brian A. Yeager

People throw around the statement "I believe" very loosely. Even supposed Christians use the term "believe" in a very loose manner. For example, one erring Christian said: "I believe we are in the worst of times in the history of mankind." When I asked what evidence that statement was based upon, the answer was something like, "just look at how bad things are". Does the statement "I believe" mean that something is true? It should mean that. We are Christians. What we say rightfully carries weight with people (Matthew 5:14-16, Ephesians 5:8-10, and Philippians 2:15-16). Yet, what this erring Christian believed concerning the condition of the world, at this time, is not true.

The Bible teaches us about a time when the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (Genesis 6:5). That is when the Lord destroyed the earth with the flood (Genesis 6-8). At that time, there were only eight people on earth that were saved (I Peter 3:20-21). I know more than eight people today that are saved. Thus, I can say with all certainty, that times today are not the worst ever. Moreover, I can read about times when God's people had fallen so far away that they even sacrificed their own children to false gods in the Lord's house (Jeremiah 32:34-35). Many more biblical examples could be cited that prove that times have been worse than they are now. Moreover, I can tell you now that the things we see people doing are not new things (Ecclesiastes 1:9 and Ecclesiastes 3:15). This is what I believe because I can find it in God's word.

We cannot form opinions and then state those things as facts by misusing the word "believe". Real faith is based upon evidence (Hebrews 11:1). Therefore, for me to be a Christian and believe something, I am going to have to have tried evidence to base my faith upon. There is a pattern, given by God, which we should apply to things before we believe them.

A Godly Pattern To Follow

In a prayer to God the Father, Jesus said this: "*For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me*" (John 17:8). What do we know about how the disciples received what Jesus taught? Did they just like Jesus and choose to believe everything He said? Were the disciples just caught up in some emotional movement by a charismatic speaker?

We know that Jesus proved who He was (John 3:1-2, John 5:36, and Acts 2:22). We know that God the Father approved of what Jesus was teaching (Matthew 17:1-5). If you add what the prophets wrote to what God the Father said in the presence of the Apostles, you have sure evidence that Jesus was to be heard. Notice how Peter summed this up: "*For we have not followed cunningly devised*

fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:16-21).

The disciples are an example of a godly pattern to follow in believing something. They saw evidence, heard the truth, and knew surely before believing. Saying "I believe" is the equivalent of saying "I know". If I believe something I must be fully persuaded of it (II Timothy 1:12). Even the Samaritans got this point. Notice what they said: "*And said unto the woman, **Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world***" (John 4:42). You have to remove all doubts, by thoroughly testing things, before you believe them.

Remove All Doubt

If you believe something there should be NOTHING that could sway you from that belief. Notice this concerning Abraham: "*(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being **fully persuaded** that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness*" (Romans 4:17-22). Having faith is being FULLY PERSUADED.

Before I do something or believe something I have to remove all doubts concerning whether or not that thing is true and right (Romans 14:23). We are commanded of God not to be of doubtful minds (Luke 12:29). Even my prayers are to be offered without doubts (I Timothy 2:8). God wants us to test all things, only holding to that which is good (I Thessalonians 5:21). You should only believe that which you have tested to the point wherein you've removed all doubts.

Conclusion

Before we speak, we'd better truly believe what we are about to say (II Corinthians 4:13). Our speech must be befitting of sound doctrine (Titus 2:1). For something to be sound, it must be without corruption (cf. Ephesians 4:29). Brethren, let's be sure not to use the phrase "I believe" loosely. Let's show others that this phrase is powerful as it is intended to be. In fact, the phrase "I believe" is so powerful that it is a doorway leading unto salvation (Acts 8:35-38; cf. Romans 10:10). Let's not dilute this powerful phrase by using it loosely. When we preface something by saying "I believe" we are saying that we have proven out that particular thing.