

We Walk By Faith, Not By Sight 2 Corinthians 5:7

Introduction

1. Grace, faith, and works are greatly confused.
2. 2 Corinthians 5:7 has been used by some (perhaps unintentionally) to weaken the substance of faith.
 - a. Clarke (below) gives a classic view of Paul's words.
 - b. This verse should not be used to suggest that faith is blind or a leap in the dark. Faith is based on evidence.

Faith In The Life Of A Christian

- ✓ We Walk By Faith-2 Corinthians 5:7
- ✓ We Stand In Faith-2 Corinthians 1:24
- ✓ Paul Lived In The Faith-Galatians 2:20
- ✓ The Just Shall Live By Faith-Hebrews 10:38
- ✓ Moses Forsook Egypt By Faith-Hebrews 11:27
- ✓ We Resist In The Faith-1 Peter 5:9
- ✓ Paul Kept The Faith-1 Timothy 4:8

Jeremiah 10:23 = 2 Corinthians 5:7

1. Paul (in 2 Corinthians 5:7) is not saying that there are facts of life and godliness that we must accept without evidence.
 - a. In 2 Corinthians 4:18 and 1 Corinthians 13:12 (in principle), Paul acknowledges that our knowledge depends upon God's Revelation.
 - b. Paul no where states that we should blindly accept anything (see Acts 17:11; Romans 1:20).
2. The way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.
 - a. These words of Jeremiah are parallel to Paul's statement to the Corinthians.
 - b. Man does not guide his own steps is another way of saying, "For we walk by [the] faith, not by sight."
 - (1) Many times Bible writers reference **the** faith.
 - (2) Other times this must be inferred by the reader (i.e. Romans 1:17).

Conclusion

1. It may help to think of 2 Corinthians 5:7 as the New Testament update of Jeremiah 10:23.
2. Read Colossians 3:17.

2Co 5:7 -

For we walk - To walk, in the Scriptures often denotes to live, to act, to conduct in a certain way; see the notes on [Romans 4:12](#); [Romans 6:4](#). It has reference to the fact that life is a journey, or a pilgrimage, and that the Christian is traveling to another country. The sense here is, that we conduct ourselves in our course of life with reference to the things which are unseen, and not with reference to the things which are seen (Barnes).

The evidence of things not seen -

Of the existence of God; of heaven; of angels; of the glories of the world suited for the redeemed. The word rendered "evidence" - ἔλεγχος elengchos - occurs in the New Testament only in this place and in [2Timothy 3:16](#), where it is rendered "reproof." It means properly proof, or means of proving, to wit, evidence; then proof which convinces another of error or guilt; then vindication, or defense...(Barnes on Hebrews 11:1).

2Co 5:7 -

For we walk by faith - While we are in the present state faith supplies the place of direct vision. In the future world we shall have sight - the utmost evidence of spiritual and eternal things; as we shall be present with them, and live in them. Here we have the testimony of God, and believe in their reality, because we cannot doubt his word. And to make this more convincing he gives us the earnest of his Spirit, which is a foretaste of glory (Clarke).
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Is Evidence Related to Faith?

by Wayne Jackson

Christian Courier: Questions

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Is there a valid connection between evidence and faith? Or is "faith" a wispy, feel-good emotion that simply "leaps" into the dark, and believes based upon a sort of "holy hunch"? Read this article and see where the "evidence" lies.

One of our readers complains that a friend tells him that in order to have faith in Christ, he must examine certain evidence. He objects, suggesting that if he has to have "evidence" to believe, his faith really would not be faith at all? He says, for instance, that Christ's resurrection is something that must be accepted by faith alone. He contends there is no real evidence for such. In this connection he contends that the Gospel accounts are nothing more than hearsay, and no physical evidence is available.

With all due respect, this complaint reveals more about the "mind set" of its author than anything else. First, it demonstrates that the gentleman does not understand the nature of "belief," the value of "evidence," or even the essence of human "reason." Second, it demonstrates a bias against the New Testament documents as valid pieces of evidence.

Evidence

The gathering of evidence is a process that is involved in almost every endeavor of human activity. It is a part of the way the human mind was designed to operate. Evidence is collected; then it is analyzed; finally, logical conclusions are drawn, which allows action to be implemented.

The word "evidence" derives from the Latin, *evidentia*, signifying "that which is clear, evident." Without evidence the auto mechanic cannot determine how to repair an automobile. Without evidence the physician cannot diagnose and remedy an illness. Without evidence a criminal cannot be convicted of a crime.

Is it reasonable to believe that the greatest question of human existence – *how do I get to heaven?* – is void of any evidential support? Such a conclusion is illogical, much less is it scriptural.

One definition of "evidence," as given in **Webster's Unabridged Dictionary**, is this: "something that tends to prove; ground for belief." Evidence and belief compliment one another; they are not mutually exclusive. Evidence prepares the way for belief; belief does not exist independent of evidence. Let us consider the following examples.

There Is No Excuse for Ignoring Evidence

Paul argued that belief in the existence of God is grounded in observable evidence. To the saints in Rome he affirmed: "For the invisible things of [God] since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse: because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened" (Rom. 1:20-21).

This passage declares that the ancient pagans were "without excuse" due to the fact that they refused to apprehend certain evidence available to them by means of sense perception. Note:

- a. They did not use their "perception" (the verb is *noeo*, which denotes analytical reasoning) in analyzing the data of the observable universe. As E. Wurthwein observes: "From visible things we can and should work back (in an intellectual process) to the invisible reality of the Creator" (**Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Abridged**, G.W. Bromiley, Ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985, p. 636).
- b. These heathen are described as "senseless" (*asunetos* – the negative form of a term historically suggesting "to bring together," hence, "to understand." They refused to use their minds logically, to consider the evidence at their disposal.
- c. They were "vain" (*mataioo* – "void of result") in their "reasonings" (*dialogismos* – lit. "to bring together," then "to question, doubt"), i.e., they were bereft of "the proper use of reason and logic" (Jack Cottrell, **Romans**, Joplin, MO: College Press, 1996, p. 145). J.B. Lightfoot characterized this sort of disposition as "intellectual rebellion against God" (**Paul's Epistle to the Philippians**, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1953, p. 117).

These expressions, and many others employed in the New Testament, clearly demonstrate that the use of evidence, in concert with valid reasoning, is the correct process in coming to a knowledge of divine truth.

Conclusion

Biblical "faith," therefore, is not a wispy, leap-in-the-dark, existential experience. It is a quiet confidence, based upon the evidence that relates to the case, appeals to the reasonable mind, and results in trust and obedience.

For a more thorough consideration of this matter, see Appendix (V), "The Use of 'Believe' In Acts," in our commentary, **The Acts of the Apostles from Jerusalem to Rome** (Stockton, CA: Courier Publications, 2000, pp. 463-66).