

Is There a Basis for Your Joy?

by Stan Cox

Do you feel good about yourself? Your relationship with God? Do you feel good about those with whom you have spiritual fellowship? Do you have joy without measure? A peace which passes understanding? Does a smile invariably crease your face when you contemplate your eternal welfare? It does? Good!...Now for the most important question. Upon what do you base all of these positive emotions?

Hopefully, you have a ready answer to this last question. The proper answer would be, "From a study of God's word, I recognize that I have been obedient to His will, and am a partaker of the blessings that are reserved for His children." Now, you might not word it in exactly the same way, but the point is that your good feelings, your emotions, are based upon an intellectual recognition. You know you have been obedient to God. You know that God has promised blessings to those who are obedient. You know that God keeps His promises. Therefore you are happy. However, many experience that same happiness without that intellectual foundation.

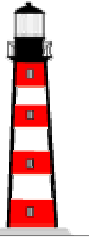
Emotions are peculiar in that respect. You can be happy, sad, peaceful, worried, etc., without a proper foundation. A mother can be worried about the safety of her child, when in reality the child is perfectly safe. A city can sleep peacefully in the sup-

posed safety of its beds, not knowing an earthquake is imminent. A follower of Mohammed can glory in his certainty of an eternal reward, not knowing that salvation is to be found only through Jesus (cf. **John 14:6**). An emotion is valid only if it is based on fact. Worry is appropriate only if there is the potential of harm; a feeling of peacefulness only if there is actual safety; spiritual joy only if a relationship with God actually exists.

Herein resides the problem with the emotionalism prevalent among religious people today. Too many believe themselves saved, not because they have the facts, but rather because they feel good about themselves. We see that it would be unreasonable for a mother to fret about the safety of her child when she sees and knows her child is safe. Why is it so many can not see how unreasonable it is to base their salvation upon a "feeling in my heart." There is a popular notion that the facts don't matter. That we should stop emphasizing the scripture, and just love one another. That we should emphasize the Man instead of the plan. That it does not matter what you believe, so long as you are sincere. This is simply not so.



The Auburn Beacon



Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (**Matthew 5:16**)

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Catechismal Christianity

By Jonathan Perz

Catechisms Become Creeds

Over time, all catechisms become creeds. These creeds usually replace the teaching of God's word and often undermine the very word they are supposed to uphold. For example, many believe that salvation is by faith alone, but after careful consideration are forced to acknowledge that this teaching is not founded in Scripture, but in the creed books of men. Because this catechism is so deeply engrained, those who will not acknowledge the truth believe the lie (**2 Thess. 2:11**). Therefore, their faith is in their creed, not in God's word (**Rom. 10:17**).

Students of God's word are not solely to blame, as teachers of God's word often reinforce the catechism by not speaking as the oracles of God (**1 Pet. 4:11**). Instead of emphasizing Scripture, they emphasize their synopses of Scripture. Instead of quoting the passage and then expounding upon it, they quote their catechism and then buttress it with proof texts. There is a world of difference between the two.

Catechisms Breed Spiritual Weakness

Spiritual strength starts with a depth of knowledge and ends with the application of that knowledge. Consider the babe in Christ (**1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:12-14**). When watered down summaries consistently replace solid, meaty, deep and principled teaching, depth of understanding

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Thoughts to Ponder

..when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. (**1 Thessalonians 2:13**)

Elders
Walker Davis
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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

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Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

News and Notes

- ☒ - Payton Davis' grandmother, Linda Beich, had a good report on her liver and will talk to the surgeon this week about surgery for pancreatic cancer.
- ☒ - Please continue to pray for Sharon May as she recovers from ankle surgery.
- ☒ - Please continue to pray for Orle Cecil's grandfather, Wayne Shockley, who will have scans this week after having a recent stroke.
- ☒ - The Elders would appreciate your prayers as we seek a Hispanic preacher to work here in Auburn.
- ☒ - Abbie Harrison has made good progress since her knee surgery and is to return to Auburn on Thursday!
- ☒ - Please continue to pray for Barbara Weeks as she recovers from her recent fall.
- ☒ - VBS will be Mon-Thurs, July 16-19, 9:30-11:30 a.m. on the life of Joseph. Please register the children who will be attending at www.auchurch.com/vbs ASAP!
- ☒ - Pray for our expectant mothers: Hannah Hinson and Hannah Morris.
- ☒ - All audio is immediately uploaded to www.auchurch.com and Audio CD's placed in the foyer.

Classes This Week

Monday 8:00 PM

Class on Hebrews at 8:00 p.m. Crawford's house

July Birthdays

- 1 - Collins Hanners
- 2 - Josh Gooch
- 5 - Weston Luther
- 8 - Angela Fernandez
- 11 - Chase Winslett
- 11 - Madi White
- 11 - Clay Morris
- 14 - Laurel Jerkins
- 14 - Megan Hester
- 15 - Bradley Seymore
- 16 - Katie Martin
- 16 - Brittany Waddell
- 18 - Hannah Hinson
- 19 - Jay Borden
- 20 - Anna Maxson
- 20 - Josh Maxson
- 21 - Tori Luther
- 21 - Ron Russell
- 22 - Kate Fortenberry
- 24 - Carla Zacarias
- 25 - Betty Bradford
- 25 - Yvette Rouse
- 26 - Brandon Hester

Lisa Carter (Daniel's mother)	Jesse and Martha Godwin (Troy's parents)	Nell Holcomb (Ben's grandmother, Joannetta's aunt)	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's nephew)	Mary Edwards (Sandra Chason's mom)	Kimzey Simpson	Ruth Addison (gmom of April and Julie)
Tory Colvin (sister of Case O'Dell)	Austin Rush (Katie Gentry's cousin)	Barbara Weeks	Brooke Perkins
Joel Black	Emily Thompson (Abbie Harrison's cousin)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	Abbie Harrison
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Arabelle Rich (Joannetta's aunt)	Charles and Jane Hunt (Chuck's parents)	Doug Bailey (Keith's brother)
Gay Ulrich (Emma's mom)	William and Toni Herd	Taina Acuff (Anna's aunt)	Shawn Lauderdale (Larry and Joannetta's son)

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among the general populace of Christianity is nonexistent. This renders false teachers more influential, as there are less vanguards for them to overcome (**Eph 4:14**). False doctrines are then easily assimilated into the mainstream thinking. Besides this, the bar that measures faithfulness (**Rom. 10:17**) is consequently lowered by the mean knowledge of God's people. Those with the most knowledge become the leaders, though their knowledge is often catechismal.

Catechisms Create the Wrong Impression About Christianity

When catechisms are emphasized, some of the most critical aspects of salvation are overlooked and deemphasized. Trying to uphold a statement of faith often results in neglect in areas Jesus said were important. For example, in an effort to be open and affirming, many neglect clear Biblical teaching to repudiate sinful conduct (**Eph. 5:11-12; 2 Cor 6:14-18**). This leaves people to believe that Christians are so loving, that they are not opposed to anything (e.g., homosexuality, adultery, fornication, etc.). In an effort to be kind and trusting, many neglect clear Biblical teaching to be wise and watchful (**Matt. 10:16; Acts 20:29-31**). This often results in Christians being stereotyped as naïve and gullible, rendering us easy prey in a dark and malicious world. Space fails to record the damage done by the emphasis of one doctrinal point over another. Christians must be careful not to strain out the gnats only to swallow a camel (**Matt. 23:23-24**).

Catechisms Eliminate the Struggle of Learning

There are altogether too many lazy students of God's word today (**cf. 2 Tim. 2:15; Phil. 2:12; Acts 17:10-11**). Many want to stand on the shoulders of giants without first learning to stand on their own two feet. Christians want to gain knowledge by inspiration, not perspiration (**1 Tim. 4:13, 15-16**). There is far too much reliance upon preachers and teachers and far too little reliance upon God's word. Most memorize catechisms, not the underlying Scriptures which often disprove their catechisms. This is folly and building on the sand (**Matt. 7:24-29**).

The struggle of learning goes beyond the textbook ... beyond the catechism. While principles and expectations are clearly set forth in Scripture, the lessons God teaches can only be learned by practice and experience. Consider patience (**Jas. 1:2-4**). The caterpillar, if deprived of the struggle of breaking free of its cocoon will soon die, for its wings will not have

the strength to fly.

Catechisms Stifle Healthy, Beneficial Study and Discussion

A spiritual stifling and overbearing environment will inevitably cultivate stagnation and error. When one is apathetic and indifferent to all but their pet catechisms, they will stagnate in other key areas required for growth as a Christian (**cf. 2 Pet. 1:5-11; 3:18**). Catechisms are often insulated from honest investigation, making them perfect harbors for error and false doctrine. Since they are never questioned and examined, they are never seen for what they truly are—erroneous creeds that lead astray.

Furthermore, those who hold dear to catechisms either do not appreciate the benefits of healthy debate or improperly engage in the defense of their catechisms by resorting to unscrupulous tactics and hiding behind debating chicanery. No position or conviction should ever be withheld from honest evaluation. Such criticisms are not only good, they are commanded (**cf. Acts 15; 1 John 4:1; Rom. 12:9**).

Catechisms Produce an Unhealthy Reliance Upon Traditions

Not all traditions are bad, but neither are all good (**cf. 2 Thess. 2:15 and 1 Cor. 11:2 with Matt. 15:6**). Many of the things practiced by Christians are founded in tradition, not in faith. Each and every denomination has those dearly held traditions that are given preeminence, even when their continued exaltation is detrimental to genuine faith. Many abhor lawful practices on principle, simply because they would undermine some long held tradition, regardless if the lawful practice would prove more fruitful and expedient than the long held tradition. The status quo becomes the catechism and anyone who would question the catechism is a change-agent, heretic, and troublemaker. It is not a question of what is authorized, it is a question of what we have always done.

Conclusion

Catechismal Christianity is not conducive to growth, it instead festers decay (**2 Pet. 3:18**). It is not indicative of work, but typical of laziness (**Phil. 2:12**). It does not represent diligence, but it characteristic of indigence (**2 Tim. 2:15—NKJV**). Strict adherence to catechisms is tantamount to wearing a pair of glasses prescribed by Satan himself, they will blind you to the truth, they will never help you to be a disciple of Christ indeed and will never lead you to salvation. Let us determine to know the truth and truly be His disciples (**John 8:31-32**).



Doctrine and Teaching

By Doy Moyer

Pigeonholing is the process of compartmentalizing. By labeling a particular item a certain way, we can categorize it with other items labeled the same, and thus deal with it from a priority base of which items we think are most important. We all try to logically pigeonhole matters by priority. Sometimes, though, that process can become fairly arbitrary, and I believe the phrase “doctrinal issues” tends to fall into this category.

We often look at various questions in terms of being “doctrinal issues” or non-doctrinal issues (and no, I'm not going to “make a list” here). What is usually meant by this is that some matters are significant, if not vital, points of teaching, while others aren't so much. This concept of “doctrinal” fits more along the lines of dogma (a set of doctrines authoritatively affirmed). If the issues do not carry the significance, in our judgment, then we deem them non-doctrinal, and “it is ok to disagree on those issues.” But what exactly is a “doctrinal issue”?

While the Bible uses the term “doctrine” (e.g., **1 Tim. 4:16**), the word “doctrine” has come to have a life of its own. “Doctrine” is often used to refer more to a set of particular dogmas or tenets affirmed by certain groups. While doctrine and teaching mean the same thing in Scripture, a modern definition would include, “something taught as the principles or creed of a religion ... tenets.” In other words, doctrine (as used today) is not just teaching; it is teaching that embodies a set of beliefs peculiar to a particular religious body, the violation of which brings about some kind of negative consequence. The problem is that this is not how we find the term used in Scripture.

Here's a challenge. Show just one passage where the word “doctrine” means anything other than “teaching.” Think about it. Do we give the impression that some matters of “teaching” are “doctrine,” while some other matters of “teaching” are “non-

doctrinal” (i.e., not a part of “our” core tenets)?

The distinctions that need to be made are over the significance of the doctrine itself, not over whether a teaching is actually “doctrinal.” If it is taught in any way, then it is doctrine. How significant will that doctrine be?

Here's the point: anything that is taught is doctrine, including our applications. Teaching – right or wrong, important or not, sound or unsound, in application or not, is doctrine by definition. Vital or not, if it is taught, it is a doctrine.

Here's where it gets more difficult. Some doctrines do not carry the same weight as others (**cf. Matt. 23:23-24**). I teach that a congregation may have a building in which to meet; that is a doctrine I accept. But whether a group owns a building or not is ultimately not eternally im-

portant; it won't condemn or save anyone. This is not on par with a doctrine for which its violation would cause eternal destruction (**2 Pet. 2:1; 3:16-17**). Whether a person eats meats or not is ultimately not going to condemn or save. It is not a doctrine that would lead to condemnation (unless a brother was divisive about it, which seems to be a major point of Romans 14). On the other hand, Jesus said, “unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins” (**John 8:24**). What we believe and teach about Jesus does have eternal consequence.

The distinctions that need to be made are over the significance of the doctrine itself, not over whether a teaching is actually “doctrinal.” If it is taught in any way, then it is doctrine. How significant will that doctrine be? This is why we need to be diligent and careful students.

Let's be careful not to misuse terms. It's too easy to espouse a pet phrase (even if the Bible does not use it like we do), then use it as a measuring stick for everyone else's soundness. If we are concerned about using Bible terms in Bible ways, then we need to think about how we sometimes use the word “doctrine.” Most importantly, let's make sure that our doctrine is sound and that our application is proper (two sides of the same coin). Scripture needs to be taught and applied correctly.

