



Will He Find Faith?

Part 4: What kind of assemblies best transmit faith?

By Barbara L. Klica, MSW

Undershepherd

Personal Life Coach

www.set-apart-ministries.org

August 2022

Following the examination of the origins of faith and the intended role of community to be a part of passing that legacy on to the next generation, it is important to understand more about what such an assembly is like.

The development of faith is NOT the same thing as the development of a religious lifestyle. Learning to do certain things can well become a pattern for life choices and can be a path toward personal faith but it can also end up in a spiritually dead, constricting type of lifestyle that seeks to please God by personal works or worth. It is usually called "legalism." (What is usually NOT mentioned is the equal and opposite error of "antinomianism" which denies the validity of the Law. A.W. Tozer rightly observed that "The bird of truth has two wings;" which we understand to mean balance is necessary. Salvation and sanctification!)

This is where the leaders and adults in an assembly are so important for their ability to genuinely walk out and live what they believe, not just talk about it. This community surrounding those who haven't yet come to personal faith is their tutor "until faith comes" as was covered in Part 3.

But the Scripture pronounces all things confined by sin, so that by faith in Jesus Christ the promise might be given to those who believe. Before this faith came, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law became our guardian to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith....

Galatians 2:22-24 Berean Study Bible

Reading the following verses in past years, I have thought that these dangers reflected concerns about those who were not in the "church" and that surely is still the case. But it is also true that we can easily find these same characteristics in people who identify as Believers but are not spiritually walking in faith, perhaps exhibiting only a semblance of it.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without

*natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, **highminded**, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; **Having a form of godliness, but denying the power** thereof: from such turn away.*

2 Timothy 3: 1-5 KJV

We really can't just in our own selves conjure up a faith that rests in our ability to do the right things. I used to laugh at the idea that there was such a thing as a "carnal Christian" but as I have matured, it has made more sense to me! Watchman Nee has done an excellent work on what the normal Christian life should be, and it is not powered by our own intelligence, strength or wisdom.

...For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not from yourselves; it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance as our way of life...

Ephesians 2:8-10 Berean Study Bible

*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; **And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.***

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

2 Timothy 3:12-16 KJV

So here is the confirmation that all of the Word is still applicable today according to Paul's letter to Timothy as well as being necessary in order to stand against falsehoods. The only work called "Scripture" at his time was what we call the OT: which consists of the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings. These are the words that our Messiah spoke to His disciples on the road to Emmaus when they didn't at first recognize Him:

Then beginning with Moses and with all the Prophets, He explained to them the things written about Himself in all the Scriptures. Luke 24:27 NASB

*So then faith comes by **hearing**, and hearing by the word of God.*

Romans 10:17 KJV

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

John 17:17 KJV

In all things about a desirable assembly, the Word will be the plumbline.

Whether child or adult, if you are moving from unbelief to belief, you are changing how you think and perceive things which leads to behavior change without having someone else to enforce it. "To hear" in Hebraic understanding carries far more than just the physical act of listening. It includes the sense that hearing means to obey what is heard; to hear is to do; to refocus on His way and not on what we think is right. Though the NT is generally written in Greek, many scholars have confirmed that the majority of the underlying concepts are Hebraic, consistent with the OT, and that the sentence construction is unorthodox in places because it mirrors the normal Hebraic word order. It is NOT what has been called Koine Greek.

Good study structures for all are important. This is helpful because an hour or two of teaching in God's ways does not "sink in" for those who are subjected to 24/7 media hype and worldly focus during school/work hours. Personal affirmation to hear and to obey His commands is traditionally what confirmation or CCD classes were supposed to accomplish but an hour in a week that is otherwise filled with worldly focus is not adequate to make the adjustments to viewing God's directions as our FIRST priority. To our understanding, the adolescent stage in which it is customary to take the time to formalize the spiritual understanding and faith of the teen should NOT be a first introduction to these matters but simply give them an opportunity to personally confirm what they had already been learning and observing as a part of the assembly.

We at Set Apart Ministries also believe that a good assembly to transmit faith would also include teachings on the awareness of the battle between the world, the flesh and the devil to take our soul away from the Living God.

Conversely, we can see how important the Word is when we see the intense long-term struggles to maintain or undermine its credibility among self-identified believers and scholars. There are too many places called churches that have relegated the Word to "a resource" instead of "THE" Source. This is one of the reasons for multiple denominations and independent assemblies, when those who hold the Word in honor break off from an assembly that is not doing so. It is simply fact that current leaders within much of Christianity are no longer teaching from the historical universal perspective that the Scriptures ARE the Word of God. The sheep are listening to their shepherds with the assumption that the leadership in the church, especially those who are seminary trained, are MORE knowledgeable about the Word and faith than they. Few people realize that the leaders may have been influenced by those without personal faith. Being a professor of Hebrew or Greek does NOT guarantee personal faith in Messiah.

The shepherds were influenced by their training which no longer can be relied upon to uphold the historical perspective. This can be traced back to the change over the last 50-100 years during which the denominational seminaries have been teaching what is called the "Higher Criticism" or "Higher Textual" perspective on the Word. Tracing that back, takes one as far back as the 1500's when it was first proposed that the first five books weren't really written by Moses along with other similar statements undermining the credibility of the Word. Essentially, the declaration is that people have the ability to determine what is or isn't of God. Many of those responsible for this approach are on public record as

not believing in the supernatural/miraculous aspect of our faith and even denying belief in Messiah Yeshua/Jesus.

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

1 Corinthians 2:14 NKJV

They actually appear to me to be those who are “high-minded” having only “a form of godliness but denying His power” as Paul warned in his letter to Timothy as referenced earlier. (“High minded” is from Strongs 5187, Typhoo, meaning to “to envelop with smoke, i.e. (figuratively) to inflate with self-conceit:—high-minded, be lifted up with pride, be proud.

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5187/kjv/tr/0-1/>)

They apparently thought that Yeshua/Jesus Himself must not have known what He was talking about when He referred the disciples to Moshe’s Torah which was written about Him! (as above: Luke 24:27)

So, it is now really just the visible fruit of what has been happening for a very long time when confidence in the Word as being from God is waning . Blue Letter Bible study program has published a summary of this series of changes, examining the root and fruit of it; well worth the read.

https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/torrey_ra/fundamentals/01.cfm

**Acknowledging the validity of the Scriptures and applying them
in life choices IS a root and an outcome of faith.**

**An assembly that treats the Word lightly will not be able to
transmit faith successfully to the next generation.**

Once faith has become personal, the Word is written on our hearts. We begin to walk His way because we personally WANT to do so, no longer needing the external tutor. Yet, it IS also true that it is easier to be among those of like mind and heart to be of encouragement to one another as we deal with all that which is NOT in alignment with His ways. (Two wings of truth.)

To rule out a few things: We don’t believe that the type of worship styles is a deciding factor but a personal or cultural preference; unless it involves highly repetitive trance inducing style worship music or even lyrics that do not line up with Scriptures which we would avoid. Worship that appeals only to the emotions can lead to an emotional high that is mistaken for the Presence of the Holy Spirit. His Word says that we are to love Him with all of our heart, mind, and strength. The mind would represent the critical thinking part in which we are aware and evaluating the content of what is being said and sung. Music with lyrics that are consistent with Scripture Truths is important, too, because songs tend to “stay in our heads” and are imparting more information than we may consciously realize.

People often look for convenience when in our understanding, commitment of assembly leaders and members is far more important.

People often try to locate a church family/assembly where the demographics of the group as a whole match their own demographics: single, married, with children of various age groups, retired, and so forth. We believe the assembly that God presents for us is more of one across the generations, allowing those who have matured in faith to be able to mentor those coming up behind them. And to be honest, sometimes the children lead the way for the older people, too.

Next time--Part 5:

- Additional desirable assembly traits
- Word Alone! Faith Alone! Doctrines
- How it came about that there was a division of assemblies that did or did not accept Yeshua/Jesus as Messiah; and impact for today.