

**"I've got
issues..."**



Questions

**...with
Christianity"**

A quote

The words on the cover were recently spoken to me by an intelligent young person whom we will call Emily. They went like this: "I've got issues with Christianity. I mean, I guess I believe there is a God; but the whole Christianity thing is full of stuff that just doesn't make any sense. It seems insane to believe some of the stuff Christianity teaches. And nobody I ask ever seems to have a good answer to some obvious problems! It's always just, 'Oh you just have to have faith'! Well, I am not 'just believing' in stuff that is unreasonable."

Maybe these are words you have spoken yourself. Perhaps you have heard them spoken by others. You are not alone. And I understand your frustration! But is Christianity really unreasonable and foolish? The "idea market" has been flooded with bad ideas and drained of good information about all the issues of Christianity.

The watch test

Think of it like this: If there are five real Rolex watches in town and somebody comes along and gives away 400 fake Rolexes, soon it is going to be tough for the average person to know which Rolex watch they see is real and which is not. The real watches are still there! They still have value. The trouble is that a person looking for the real thing would have to do some investigation and carefully examine the watches he sees.

Let's imagine that the bad ideas about Christianity are the fake watches and the truths about Christianity are the real watches. What can we do? There are far too many bad ideas about Christianity in town to examine all of them here, but let's examine some of the most common ones to see if they are worth keeping or throwing away. This will help us to examine other ideas that come our way daily.

Blind faith

Who ever said real, Christian faith is 'blind faith' anyway? That is what many think. But is it true? Some people accuse Christians of having 'blind faith', but what do they mean when they say that? Blind faith means that a person does not have any real proof or good reason for believing what he believes. Does Christianity require 'blind faith'?

Our culture speaks of religious groups as 'faith-based' organizations. An organization is simply a group of people doing certain things. If there are groups of people who are based on faith, are there groups of people without faith?



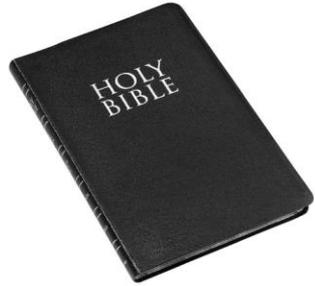
Faith is simply a belief in something. In Bible Christianity, faith is a firm belief in Jesus Christ and what He has said in His Word, the Bible. Christianity does not require 'blind faith'. It calls 'blind faith' foolishness and superstition! Christianity is a knowledge-based religion that requires belief in real facts and in a very real God who has shown himself to man in very real ways such as in the Bible and in all Creation.

Emily might say that she doesn't have faith. She just trusts in what she sees and experiences with her five senses. But everyone has faith of some kind in various things. Emily loves her mother. She must believe love exists to believe she loves her mother. Remember she can't see love or touch it! It's an idea. She believes I should not hurt her mother. But she must believe that hurting her mother would be wrong. She believes the sun will rise again. Why? Because it always has? Is she foolish or silly or weak because she has faith in something?

Often, when someone has a problem with Christian faith in what the Bible teaches, it is simply because they do not like what the Bible teaches. It is not because faith is something only foolish, weak Christians do. Even the 'atheist' has faith. He believes God will not be waiting for him to judge him when he dies!

A book by men

I was once told by a young man named Shaun that he believed God existed and that the Bible was written about Him. He did not believe the Bible was actually the Word of God and that it was without errors. He said, "It's a book written by men! How could it be perfect anyway? Everybody knows that it has errors and contradicts itself." But does 'everybody' really know this?



Was the Bible written by men? Yes. Was it written by God? Yes. How is this possible? The Bible teaches that men were used (similar to an instrument) to record what God intended to say to mankind. He delivered His truth to various men with the exact words to use to record it. Many people find this thought incredible and unbelievable. The problem is that they think they must be able to completely explain it or else it didn't happen. Does your mind cease to exist because I can't explain exactly how it works? Here is a question! Who made the soul, the mind and heart; and where do great ideas come from? If the answer is the Christian God, then isn't it reasonable to believe that the same God could use that soul in different human beings He created to record thoughts for us exactly like He wanted them to be recorded? Yes. Could He do it without error or contradiction? Have you tried to create a soul lately! Of course, this doesn't mean that some Bible versions we have are without real 'issues'.

What I mean is this: Christianity teaches that the Word of God is perfect in the language in which it was delivered to men by God. The men God used to record His Word did not speak English. If you have ever tried to translate an idea from one language to another, you will know that the result can sometimes be unclear or lose some of its original meaning if the translator is not careful and wise. Sadly, some Bible translations are not the work of careful or wise translators. That doesn't mean that all Bibles are not trustworthy. In fact, there are completely accurate translations that have been carefully compared to the original languages.

But what about all the ‘problems’ in the Bible, even in the original languages? Although we can’t do it here, it can be shown that the Bible has no real ‘problems’ as some men think. For example, you might point to the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) where the events of Jesus’ earthly ministry and crucifixion are recorded. Sometimes, one Gospel records an event differently than another Gospel – it will give or leave out details that make it appear to conflict with another Gospel. If the time is taken to read the text carefully, you will find that there is no error or contradiction. They are records of events recorded by different men for different purposes. It is reasonable that they would not be all exactly identical. Think of it like this: If you witnessed a terrible multi-car wreck in front of your house and your friend witnessed the same wreck from a helicopter nearby and you both had to tell about it, would your accounts have exactly the same details in them? What if you had to tell the story to a middle school class and then to the police? Would you include all of the exact same details in both accounts? Of course not. But variations like this in Bible records are often mistaken as ‘errors’.

Bible scholars have shown many times how all the errors and contradictions that supposedly exist in the Bible can be easily explained for people who actually take the time to examine them. Have you done this? Or have you just dismissed the Bible as a book by men because you don’t want it to be true?

Think about this. Did you realize that the Bible is composed of 66 books that were written over a period of about 1,600 years? All of



the books have one theme and the events and facts all tie together without contradiction. Yet, it was written by men from different cultures, of different ages, with different education levels, and in different social positions! They didn’t have email or digital libraries to leave records for each other to make sure the story never changed over all those years. Does it seem likely that men could do that by themselves? Can you show me another book like that? The Christian knows this is evidence that God did, in fact, give His Word to men through men over many years, just like He says in the Bible.

That's just your opinion

One of the things Christians hear often is that their beliefs are 'just their opinion'. They are told that those things 'may be truth for them but that doesn't make them truth for someone else'. They are told that they can believe however they want to, but that doesn't make what they believe true. Of course, something is not true simply because we believe it. A child may really believe that a pink dragon lives in his closet. That doesn't make it true. The question is, "Is it actually true or not?" So, what is a person saying when he says these things about Christian beliefs?

They are suggesting that truth is relative. In other words, they are saying that something can be actually true for the Christian that is not actually true for them. They are saying that each person may believe things that are 'true' that totally contradict each other. But is this possible? No. Something is either true, or it is not. Either the claims of the Bible are true, or they are not. It is not a matter of opinion. The sun is hot. That may not be true to you, but it doesn't change the facts. It is not possible for me to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and you believe that He is not and, yet, we both are right. One of us has to be wrong.

Some people are even more unreasonable when they say, "Well, actually, nobody is right! We can't really know truth. We just spend our lives searching for truth." What a hopeless idea! If no one really has any truth, then whom can we trust? Why is the world not in complete chaos? Besides, if you say that no one has truth, didn't you just say something that you believe is truth? If it is true, then you have proven yourself wrong. The fact is, there is real truth in life; and we can find it. It starts with God's Word, because He is the source of all truth.

Fantasy and myth

What about miracles? Surely miracles prove that the Bible can't really be trusted! We live in an enlightened age where science has proven that old religion is myth and fantasy. Everybody knows that miracles can't happen like the Bible says. So, Bible Christianity must be foolish. Right?

But think about this. Can we say that miracles can't happen like the Bible says without proving that the Bible is false? Can we say that without proving first that God doesn't exist? What if God does exist? What if the Bible is true when it says the things about God that it says? If the Bible is trustworthy, then wouldn't that mean that the miracles it records could have happened? Yes! Besides, how can a person say what is possible and what is not possible? Who says what is possible and what is not? Just because a person doesn't have enough evidence to see how something is possible, does that make it impossible? No.

God is cruel

One of the biggest problems that Emily had with the God of the Bible was the 'problem of evil'. "If the Bible is true and that God exists, how can there be all the suffering and evil in the world?" she asked. Let me say immediately that I agree with Emily about some things. There is much evil and pain in the world, and it is very sad and very serious. We ought to be upset about it.

But we must not be so emotionally upset that we stop using our heads carefully. Emily made a fatal mistake when she began to attack a God in whom she doesn't really believe, spoken of in a Bible that she doesn't believe is true. If we throw the law of God in the Bible out and say there is no God, then who says there is evil? How do we know something is bad? You? Me? Wouldn't that just be our opinion? If there is no God, good is whatever I want it to be!

The Christian's response to this issue is simple. "I am not God. If evil and pain exist, God must have a good reason for allowing it."

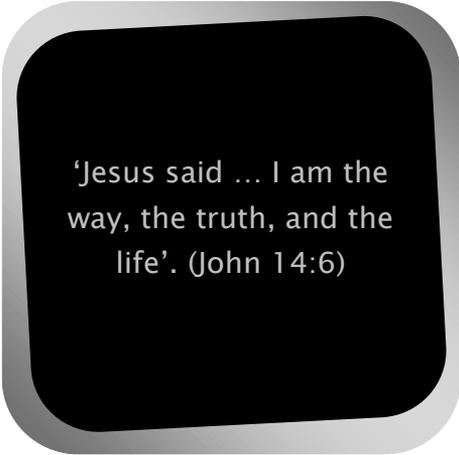
Dear Reader,

If you have struggled with some of the issues addressed in this booklet, I hope we have been of some help to you. The Bible teaches that unless you have a personal relationship of faith with Jesus Christ, you will never fully accept the claims of the Bible or of biblical Christianity. We have simply attempted here to partially demonstrate how anything outside of faith in Christ and full acceptance of the Bible's claims is ultimately unreasonable.

It is our prayer that you have a saving relationship with Christ. The Bible teaches that you may have salvation by repentance (turning from your sin) and by faith in Jesus Christ. Faith in Christ means simply to trust in the obedience and shed blood of Christ to cover your sins.

If this booklet has been used by God to bless your life, please let us know so that we may rejoice with you and pray for you in the days ahead.

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'Jesus said ... I am the way, the truth, and the life'. (John 14:6)