

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; in *all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: Ephesians 5:6-11 “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.”

Quote: I John 3:7 “Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.”

The nature of faith that reconciles individuals to God involves far more than mere knowledge. A case in point is Charles Templeton who was esteemed as one of the greatest evangelists of his generation. He preached the gospel to thousands while privately struggling with doubts until he realized that he was living a lie. He stopped preaching and declared that he no longer was a believer. The last book that he wrote was titled Farewell to God. He once said this tragic and contradictory statement— “There’s a profound sense of loss when anyone abandons a belief system they’ve held since childhood. I was a teenager when I became a Christian, and I wasn’t equipped to challenge the ideas of my friends and mentors. At first I accepted the beliefs of the people around me. But, slowly, and against my will, my doubts deepened until my faith languished and died. Those years of indecision were the most troubling and trying of my life. I found myself rethinking the story of Jesus of Nazareth, and for all its intrinsic fascination, it just wasn’t the same. It was as if someone I loved had died. You grieve the loss because no one in history has touched the hearts of men and women the way Jesus did. He had the highest moral standard and the greatest compassion of any person I’ve ever heard of. And His wisdom was unsurpassed. Everything good and decent and pure that I know, I learned from Jesus. And if I may put it this way...I miss Him.”

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of being

Templeton’s faith in a *belief system* “died” because it was spurious—“outwardly similar or corresponding to something without having its *genuine qualities*; of a deceitful nature.” Spurious faith can be religious in nature and yet *self-deceived like that of Simon the sorcerer*.¹ It involves a measure of knowledge; however, it is devoid of the heart change that can only come with a God-given understanding of the Gospel that brings with it conviction of sin and trust in Christ alone.

Templeton praised Jesus for His impact upon history, high moral standards, unparalleled compassion and unsurpassed wisdom, but therein lies a problem. *Jesus claimed to be the way, the truth and the life* through which all must be reconciled to the Father. He is either God the Son or a fraud! He demands that people embrace Him exclusively and entirely as Savior and proclaim Him as Lord!³ Christianity is not one of many “belief-system options!” It is a radical reformation at the heart level that *evidences itself for the glory of God*.

Perhaps the following will offer insights into the need to BE a Christian and not merely profess “belief” in Christ. A certain female gynecologist has all of the characteristics of being a healthy woman. In addition to common knowledge about being a woman, she has an advanced degree in how the reproductive system of the female body works. She knows all of the facts about conception, pre-natal care and childbirth. She has delivered the babies of hundreds of women. Yet, with all of this “emersion” into the factual aspects of motherhood, she cannot say that she knows experientially what it means to BE a mother. Motherhood is not a matter of specializing in facts. This woman will never know the reality of motherhood until she IS one. Likewise, people can know a great deal about the Bible without knowing experientially what it really means to BE a Christian. Their “Christian experience” may be like the seeds that fell by the wayside, or on stony ground, or among the thorns in the parable of the sower; it is but a fleeting shallow profession with no hope of a harvest.⁵

1 Acts 8:9-24 2 Matt.26:20-25 3 Mark 8:34-38; Acts 2:36; Rom.5:11; 6:23 4 John 10:27-29; 17:9-12; I Peter 1:3-5 5 Matt.13; Col.2:6-7