

IS IT MORE IMPORTANT TO DO RIGHT OR BE RIGHT?
FAIRVIEW TEXAS CHURCH OF GOD
January 2, 2010

Is it more important to BE right or to DO right?

I know, and have known, many people who feel it is more important to BE right. And, there is scientific evidence that shows why people feel that way.

March 11, 2001 Dallas Morning News Article "Believe it ... or not?"

- Some scientists say people cling to their convictions instinctively, ignoring contrary evidence” by Ira J. Hadnot
 - “... the mind shields human beliefs from outside attacks.”
- ‘People have an ability to hold onto their beliefs even when there is contradictory or compelling evidence that no longer support them,’ says Dr. Gregory Lester, a psychologist at the University of St. Thomas in Houston.
 - That ability, Dr. Lester says, is biological.
 - ‘One could say that everything is biologically determined, and it still would not disprove that God is in the wiring.’
- In a published magazine article titled ‘Why Bad Beliefs Don’t Die,’ Dr. Lester argues that ‘because beliefs are designed to enhance our ability to survive, they are biologically designed to be strongly resistant to change.’
 - Psychologists call this resistance ‘confirmatory bias,’ an ability to absorb information that confirms beliefs and discount things that challenge them.
- ... Dr. Michael Shermer, author of Why People Believe Weird Things and a follow-up book, How We Believe: The Search for God in an Age of Science.
 - ‘We have to believe in something,’ he says. ‘We are a species that connects the dots for survival. We are a pattern-making, story-telling people. The brain has to have some consistency, and beliefs provide that. If you are constantly changing your mind about things, that disrupts this intricate process that was established from the beginning.’
- ... Dr. Lester writes ... ‘If beliefs act as we think they do, then it means they operate independently of sensory data. The beliefs are not supposed to change easily or simply as a response to conflicting evidence...’
 - The trouble with some negative beliefs that are shielded from new information is that they can ‘create more social problems than they solve,’ says Dr. (Jack) Dovidio (a social psychologist at Colgate University). ‘No one person has all the information. We have a piece of it, and that never constitutes the whole truth. It’s unwise to think that the belief we may hold is all the truth there is.’”

What do you believe?

- God is real and is the ultimate creator of all things
- the Bible is the divinely inspired written word of God
- Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the Son of God in the flesh and the Messiah of the Old Testament
- the Ten Commandments are the foundation of all Biblical teaching
- the Sabbath is a perpetual sign between God and His people

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- Seven Holy Days were set apart by God to be observed in three separate seasons each year
- sin is the transgression of God's laws
- Christ will come again to this earth and establish His Kingdom

How did you come to those beliefs?

- some were taught by their parents
- some learned from friends or family
- some from listening or viewing evangelists

Why do you believe what you believe?

Matthew 16:

- 13 When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"
- 14 So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."
- 15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"
- 16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
- 17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

Galatians 1:

- 15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,
- 16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood,

How did you react when you heard the things you now believe for the first time?

- disbelief
- anger
- confusion

Acts 8:

- 1 Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.
- 2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.
- 3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.
 - Saul believed his Jewish teachings and avidly acted on them

Acts 9:

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- 1 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest
- 2 and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.
- 3 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven.
- 4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"
- 5 And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads."
 - Saul fought the knowledge of Jesus
 - Jesus told him that he understood that it was hard to changed his beliefs

Numbers 22:

- 22 Then God's anger was aroused because he went, and the Angel of the LORD took His stand in the way as an adversary against him. And he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him.
- 23 Now the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand, and the donkey turned aside out of the way and went into the field. So Balaam struck the donkey to turn her back onto the road.
- 24 Then the Angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on this side and a wall on that side.
- 25 And when the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD, she pushed herself against the wall and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall; so he struck her again.
- 26 Then the Angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left.
- 27 And when the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam; so Balaam's anger was aroused, and he struck the donkey with his staff.
- 28 Then the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?"
- 29 And Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have abused me. I wish there were a sword in my hand, for now I would kill you!"
- 30 So the donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden, ever since I became yours, to this day? Was I ever disposed to do this to you?" And he said, "No."
- 31 Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face.

Aren't we like Balaam when things happen that we don't understand?

- things that might challenge our core beliefs
- things that don't go the way we believe they 'should' go

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- things go against what we believe is the will of God

How should we react when people do things against us that we don't deserve?

2 Samuel 16:

- 5 Now when King David came to Bahurim, there was a man from the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei the son of Gera, coming from there. He came out, cursing continuously as he came.
- 6 And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David. And all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left.
- 7 Also Shimei said thus when he cursed: "Come out! Come out! You bloodthirsty man, you rogue!"
- 8 "The LORD has brought upon you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the LORD has delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son. So now you are caught in your own evil, because you are a bloodthirsty man!"
- 9 Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Please, let me go over and take off his head!"
- 10 But the king said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse, because the LORD has said to him, 'Curse David.' Who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?'"
- 11 And David said to Abishai and all his servants, "See how my son who came from my own body seeks my life. How much more now may this Benjamite? Let him alone, and let him curse; for so the LORD has ordered him.
- 12 "It may be that the LORD will look on my affliction, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing this day."
- 13 And as David and his men went along the road, Shimei went along the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went, threw stones at him and kicked up dust.
- 14 Now the king and all the people who were with him became weary; so they refreshed themselves there.

How often do we get upset when things don't go the way we believe to be in concert with God's will?

We often do things that make us feel better!

We have plans -- others are inconsiderate of those plans and we get upset because we are right!!

We honestly believe we are doing right -- but we are really more concerned with being right!

Ephesians 4:

- 26 "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath,

In the formative days of radio, television and telephone, well intentioned people thought they knew the will of God -- they knew that these inventions were not meant to replace communications the way they believed they should be done -- people would always prefer to talk one-to-one and to read newspapers and books to get their news and knowledge. These

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inventions were hailed as wonderful scientific advances, but without any practical use for the average person's home. Much the same thing has been said in recent years about the computer.

Human beings are slow to change their beliefs. We are intolerant of others who believe differently than we.

We need to constantly challenge our own beliefs in order to make certain that they are still true.

In the movie "The Blind Side", the young man, Michael Ohre, agreed to go to Ole Miss for college. The NCAA conducted an investigation to determine if he was coerced into choosing this school by alumni who had taken him into their family. Their concern was about inappropriate use of their influence to benefit the college. Michael had a lot to think about. He questioned his own motives and those of his adoptive family. The parents then had a lot to think about. They had to question and to examine their own motives. I will let you see the movie to discover the answer.

Mark 9:

- 30 Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know it.
- 31 For He taught His disciples and said to them, "The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day."
- 32 But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him.
 - The disciples believed that Christ would establish His kingdom immediately
 - They did not comprehend that He had to die and be resurrected first
 - They resisted teachings that did not support this belief
- 33 Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?"
- 34 But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest.
- 35 And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."
- 36 Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them,
- 37 "Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me."
 - Our minds need to be like those of little children
 - We must "unlearn" in order to learn
 - We must be willing to change what we already hold to be true
 - We just might be wrong
- 38 Now John answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us."
- 39 But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me.

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- 40 "For he who is not against us is on our side.
 - We need to be tolerant of those who do not appear to be with us
 - They might be with Christ
 - It is not up to us to judge them

John 13:

- 12 So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?"
- 13 "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am.
- 14 "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.
- 15 "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.
- 16 "Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.
- 17 "If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.
 - Jesus said we should follow His example

John 15:

- 9 ¶ "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.
- 10 "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.
- 11 "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.
- 12 "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.
- 13 "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.
- 14 "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.
- 15 "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.
- 16 "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.
- 17 "These things I command you, that you love one another.

Is it better to BE right or to DO right?

We need to honestly try for both. But, we are not knowledgeable of ALL of the facts.

Ecclesiastes 8:

- 16 When I applied my heart to know wisdom and to see the business that is done on earth, even though one sees no sleep day or night,
- 17 then I saw all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. For though a man labors to discover it, yet he will not find it; moreover, though a wise man attempts to know it, he will not be able to find it.

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Romans 11:

- 33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

Although we would like to know more, we know enough to be held responsible for what we do or fail to do.

1 Corinthians 13:

- 8 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.
- 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part.
- 10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.
- 11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.
- 12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.
 - Paul said he only knew some things but not all
 - In the kingdom, we will know much more
- 13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.
 - We do know that we are commanded to love one another
 - We do know that we are to obey God's commandments
 - We can DO those things

Try to BE right. But when you are in doubt, at the very least DO right!

Sometimes, doing right is more important than being right!!