



Seek The Old Paths

“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein”
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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WHY I LEFT THE MORMON CHURCH #1

Nathan Franson

Seldom is anyone led out of a denomination or religious affiliation quickly and without contemplation. Most of the time it involves a process in which one begins to question certain aspects, arriving at a conclusion and eventually leading to a final decision. It was no different for me.

As a youth growing up in Salt Lake City, Utah, I was excited to be part of something my mother and those adults surrounding me encouraged. I was baptized at the age of eight years old. I became a Deacon at the age of twelve and received the Aaronic Priesthood. “Passing the Sacrament” (assisting on the Lord’s table) was an honor. Every first Sunday of the month was the tradition of “Fast Sunday” in which we would go without two meals that day. It was also the worship service in which members had the opportunity to stand in front of the congregation and “bare their testimony,” or give an account of what they were thankful for and what God had done in their lives.

I was baptized for the dead. Eventually, I had the privilege of baptizing my younger brother. Social gatherings were a regular occurrence. It was a time of anticipating the age when we would be able to participate in a two-year mission, unknown where we would go until assigned by Church headquarters. Then things began to change.

Questions I had about different subjects and topics were answered

with inconclusive, ambiguous, or simply unsatisfying replies. Some of it was kept concealed. I did not understand why others were not questioning the same matters or just accepted a vague response from teachers and the Bishop. Soon, the doubt set in as the more I studied and sought clarification, the more I felt disconnected. At the same time, I played the part of the rebellious teenager and about the age of twenty, I finally decided it was time to leave.

Through the course of events, I lost the friendship of some, while simply falling out of touch with others. Some attempted (unsuccessfully) to lure me back. There was never an angry criticism by anyone, nor was there a hostile attitude (at least to me). They simply stopped communicating. When I first started questioning their faith, I was eighteen years old and ready to graduate high school. That same summer I left the state to attend a trade school that padded the resentment felt. Around the same time, I had some religious friends who were not members of the Lord’s church but were a source to discuss what I was feeling and questioning.

My mother took it the hardest. She questioned herself as to why she did not do an adequate job raising me. Our discussions would often morph into arguments. Being young and inexperienced, trying to reason through a subject as delicate as this, I see that my approach probably could have been better. However, I

knew Mormonism would no longer be a part of my life. After leaving Mormonism, there were occasions where I was either non-religious altogether or grasping for some form of Bible understanding of which to make sense.

Several years passed before I started attending an Independent Baptist Church. While there, I started dating a girl whose uncle was a member of the Lord’s church. At first I was apprehensive but started questioning the church of Christ. He invited us to attend a service. The obvious exclusion of musical instruments caught my attention. When I started to ask questions, he stopped me and asked if I would be willing to read the book of Acts. He advised me to read it without anyone’s outside thoughts or commentary and to just compare it to what I had been hearing. It was astounding how easy it was to comprehend and how different it was to everything I had ever been taught.

It was not too long after that I was baptized into Christ. The relationship with the girl did not work out and I soon moved to California, working as a Special Makeup Effects artist in film, television and theater. It was a field of which I loved and worked in for years. While there, I had an experience that caused me to reevaluate my priorities. I was working on a film called “Passion of the

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Why I Left The Mormon Church...



Editorial...

FAITHFUL IN THE LORD #1

Garland M. Robinson

Being faithful to the Lord is not simply a “mental” or “verbal” action, it involves “life” action.

After leaving Athens, Paul preached in Corinth “and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized” (Acts 18:8). Years later in writing First Corinthians, Paul said they had received the Gospel he preached, were continuing to stand in it and would be saved eternally IF they kept it in their memory.

Notice the words of First Corinthians 15:1-4, “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; ²By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. ³For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; ⁴And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.”

In this three part series, we want to call attention to the phrase “if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you.”

To keep the word of God in their memory meant far more than holding it in their minds. It meant they would keep it in the action of their lives. They would perform the doing of it. Our brethren at Corinth had to live faithful to the Lord every single day (24/7). Otherwise, their belief (faith) would be in vain (v.2). If we want to be saved, we must receive God’s word into our heart and obey it in our lives.

One of the most beloved songs we often sing is titled “Trust and Obey.” Trust is faith. Obey is faith in action. One is useless without the other. Faith is useless without obedience and obedience is useless without faith. James tells us to be “doers of

the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22). To do otherwise is to deceive ourselves. He makes clear that “faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone” (James 2:17, 20, 26). “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (James 2:24).

There is no way one can obey the Gospel and expect to be saved in the end without living a faithful Christian life. It’s far more than a mental thought in your mind. It’s of value only if it’s obeyed in doing God’s will. John worded it this way, “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but **in deed and in truth**” (1 John 3:18). The point is, being faithful to the Lord is not simply a “mental” or “verbal” action, it involves “life” action. It involves activity, deeds, work — faithfulness.

To obey the Gospel involves **faith in Jesus** (John 8:24; Mark 16:16; Heb. 11:6), **repenting** of sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 17:30), **confession of faith** in Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of the world (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33) and being **immersed in water** (baptism) for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-18; 1 Peter 3:21). One’s obedience to the Gospel in dying to sin (repenting), being buried in water baptism and being raised from the water to live a new life (Rom. 6:4), is in keeping with the Lord’s death, burial and resurrection.

The Gospel is the good news of salvation. The God of heaven and earth has made a way for sinful man to be saved from the penalty of his sins. It is founded (based) in the fact that Jesus the Christ, the only begotten Son of God, the redeemer and Savior, “...died for our sins according to the Scriptures. ⁴And that he was buried, and that he rose again the

third day according to the scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3-4).

God demands Christians be faithful — faithful unto death. We are faithful because:

God is faithful. Upon entering into the land of Canaan, the Israelites were told, “Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he [is] God, the **faithful God**, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and **keep his commandments** to a thousand generations” (Deut. 7:9). In the New Testament we are told, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but **God [is] faithful**, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear [it]” (1 Cor. 10:13). “**God [is] faithful**, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:9). “If we confess our sins, **he is faithful** and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

God requires us to be faithful just as he is faithful. He will accept nothing less than our best. Haphazard service to the Lord won’t get us to heaven. John wrote to the brethren in the church at Pergamos, “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast [some] of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: **be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life**” (Rev. 2:10). “Faithful unto death” means even if it costs us our life.

God’s Word is faithful. Elders are admonished: “**Holding fast the faithful word** as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9). “And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these **words are true and faithful**” (Rev. 21:5). “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matt. 24:35). “This [is] a **faithful saying**, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (1 Tim. 1:15). We can trust it, depend on it. It is guaranteed by the bank of heaven where there is no default.

Faithfulness to the Lord is taught throughout the Word.

“Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2). “His lord said unto him, Well done, [thou] good and faithful ser-

vant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Matt. 25:21,23). “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is

unjust in the least is unjust also in much” (Luke 16:10). “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2).

Why I Left The Mormon Church...

(Continued from page 1)

Christ” directed by Mel Gibson when I was involved in several discussions with other crew members. Most of them had a confused understanding about the life of Christ and it was at that point when it became evident how lost those in the world could be, especially about a subject most Christians consider so fundamental.

My wife and I had ties to the Memphis School of Preaching through friends and acquaintances, but being a Gospel preacher was still not being contemplated. We knew Keith Mosher, who once said something to me that made no sense at the time: “Do not be a preacher unless you absolutely have to.” At first, I thought it was a poor way of trying to talk me into attending the school (in my opinion), but after pondering it, I started to realize how profound it was. I had to preach. My wife was supportive when approaching her, almost to the point that she knew this was the decision I would make but did not say anything until I was ready. She saw something I did not.

For a long time, I had animosity towards the Mormon faith. In my mind, if that was not the true church, then nothing could be, which is a common response from those who have left. Several years passed before I was finally at a place in my life where I could discuss my background without allowing emotions to direct the conversation.

The upcoming series of articles will explain much of what was studied from living as a member of the Mormon religion. It will also provide a further inspection of what they teach on various issues. Many have questions and inquiries about something they hear or read and seek clarification. Some are simply curious.

Keep in mind that when

approaching Mormonism and studying with its members, it is essential to make them define their terms. While some of their responses and teaching may appear to be the same as how the Bible words it, their definition may be considerably different.

THE “ARTICLES OF FAITH”

The **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints** is driven largely by their “Articles of Faith” — a creed of thirteen statements that outline their fundamental beliefs. Youths were encouraged to memorize them. Adults were encouraged to teach them. Addressing each one will be the objective of this series. The Articles of Faith are:

1. We believe in God the Eternal Father, and in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.
2. We believe that men will be punished for their own sins and not for Adam’s transgression.
3. We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.
4. We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.
5. We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.
6. We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth.
7. We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, and so forth.

8. We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.

9. We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

10. We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.

11. We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.

12. We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.

13. We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul — We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.

It is with prayer and hope that the upcoming examination of these articles of faith will be able to reach not only those who may be studying with Mormons, but those in the Mormon faith themselves who may be struggling with answers or are curious as to why someone would choose to leave.

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Elder's COLUMN

How Much Do We Believe Without Having Any Evidence?

Roger D. Campbell

“Daddy, why do we believe that Jesus is God’s Son? And, Daddy, how come all of our elders are men instead of women?” If our answer is, “Honey, that’s just the way we believe,” such an answer is not going to get the job done! It may “work” when the child is seven years old, but it will not work when he is seventeen or twenty-seven! Young people need proof, proof, and more proof. Parents, grandparents, and Bible class teachers need to get with it and give children real evidence for what we believe and practice, or else somewhere down the road we will be weeping together over their choices!

What Christians believe to be true has nothing to do with one’s personal feelings. To declare to my cousin that I believe in God because I can feel Him at work in my life may just cause him to respond by saying, “That’s funny. The reason that I do not believe in God is because I cannot feel Him at work in my life.” In this case, whose “feeling” would be more convincing? The truth is, my feeling would not prove that God exists, and at the same time, my cousin’s feeling of God’s non-existence would not be evidence that there is no God. God’s people need to learn this truth, and learn it well: convictions that are based merely on feelings do not jive with what the Bible says about genuine faith. Faith and feelings are not the same.

See if the following concept sounds familiar: “Faith is when you believe in something when you do not have any proof for it. If there is evidence, then it is not faith.” This distorted idea about faith and evidence is that when you have one, you cannot have the other. Thus, faith and proof are supposedly mutually exclusive. The Bible says, “*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*” (Heb. 11:1). Did you notice “faith” and “evidence” used together, and that evidence is the basis of faith?! The Book of John was written that its readers might

believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (John 20:30,31). Is that faith without evidence? Not at all. Rather, it is faith produced by the proof of Jesus’ Deity that is provided in John’s account.

Some say, “If you can know something is true, then there is no faith. Faith means you believe even though you are not really sure it is right.” Again, this false notion is that knowledge and faith are mutually exclusive: you supposedly cannot have knowledge and faith at the same time on the same subject. Wait a minute. Notice what some Samaritans said about Jesus: “Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and *know* that this is indeed the Christ...” (John 4:42; emphasis in all quotes mine, rdc). Did those folks believe in Jesus, or know that He was the Christ? Both! Later, Jesus prayed for believers to be united in order that “the world may *believe*” that the Father sent Him. Then He turned around and prayed for unity in order that “the world may *know*” that the Father sent Him (John 17:21,23). It is clear that in Bible language one can both believe and know at the same time. In fact, as we have emphasized, genuine faith is based on proof — on evidence.

Some say, “If you can see it, then it’s not faith. Faith is believing in something when you can’t see it.” Some folks need to stop parroting what they have heard others say and investigate what the Bible says. Some of Jesus’ earliest disciples accompanied Him to a wedding feast in Cana of Galilee where He performed His first earthly miracle. When His disciples, who already believed in Him, saw His water-to-wine miracle, they “believed on Him” (John 2:11), meaning that their faith was strengthened. Did those disciples: 1) see Jesus, 2) see Jesus’ miracle, or 3) “believe” on Him? They did all three, proving that “seeing it” and “believing it” can go hand in hand.

There were also Samaritans who came to where Jesus was, they saw

Him, heard Him teach, and saw His action. Then, based on what they saw and heard, they said, “Now we believe...” (John 4:40-42). Did they see our Lord, or did they believe in Him? Again, they did both. Later, when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, “Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had *seen* the things which Jesus did, *believed* on him” (John 11:45). The fact that they saw Him did not eliminate the possibility of believing in Him, and, as always, their true faith was based on the evidence they were presented.

Some say, “Okay. But if those people did not believe until they saw Jesus, how can a person really believe in heaven if he has not seen it?” Great question. First, consider this. Not every first-century believer in the Christ saw him with his/her own eyes. In 1 Peter 1:8, we read of Christians that had not seen Jesus, yet they believed in Him and loved Him. If they did it then, then we can do it in our generation also. How? Our faith is based on the evidence that the Bible provides (John 20:30,31).

Believing in heaven is really an evidence question. Here is our reasoning. We may not always say it or think it through like this in every instance, but proper reasoning goes like this: 1) The evidence proves that God exists (Psa. 19:1-3); 2) The evidence proves that the Bible is the word of God (2 Tim. 3:16,17); 3) Because the Bible is from the always-truthful God (Titus 1:2), then everything God tells us in His word, including what He says about heaven, is true. Question, Why do we believe that Jesus rose from the dead? Because of the Bible’s reliability and the evidence it provides.

“How much do you and I believe without having any evidence?” The answer is, biblically speaking, we accept and believe only those things for which there is adequate evidence. Genuine faith is always based on reliable proof.

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A MESSAGE FROM A PRESIDENT TO THE YOUTH OF HIS NATION

How long has it been since you heard a president of the USA make a speech encouraging our youth to abstain from sex until they are married?

When have you heard a president of the USA encourage our youth not to smoke or drink and to avoid “living a loose life?” What US President recently has encouraged the youth of our nation to “lead a life of prayer?”

While visiting in Uganda recently on a mission trip, I picked up a local newspaper called “New Vision.” Uganda’s president is Mr. Yoweri Museveni. Under the heading “Museveni Cautions Youth Against Loose Life,” the following was printed:

“President Yoweri Museveni has cautioned the youth against sexual promiscuity, instead exhorting them to make “the fear of God” a cornerstone of their journey through life.

Museveni said many vices like smoking, binge drinking and “living a loose life”, which tend to ruin many youths, with some dying well before time, can be avoided by leading a life of prayer.

Drawing examples from his own life, a jovial Museveni told hundreds of youths during the Scripture Union golden jubilee celebration on Friday how fruitful the fear of God can be to one’s life.

Reminiscing about his formative years at Ntare School, where he was a chairperson of the Scripture Union, Museveni extolled the organization for shaping his character and helping him avoid taking on vices that have ruined and enslaved many.

The President likened the fear of God to “an internal Policeman who restrains you from doing evil like greed, selfishness and harming others.”

“I am so grateful that I associated myself with Scripture Union, which I joined in 1961,” the President said as he admonished the youth to lead “purposeful lives” and avoid “sampling sex” until they get married upon completion of their studies.

“I have no time for alcohol,” Museveni said in reference to vices likely to be picked up by purposeless

youth, including smoking that he labeled as “burning one’s lungs.”

Drawing parallels between drunkenness and slipping into a coma, Museveni mused: “Why do I budget to get into a coma every day?”

He urged his young audience to avoid the pitfall of misinterpreting the Bible, which has bred laziness and a section of people producing many children they are incapable of caring for.

“The birds in the air neither sow nor reap, but God cares for them.” Museveni said, quoting a verse in the Bible that highlights God’s enduring mercy, adding: “Life is all about work and mastering technology to subdue the earth.”

The National Chairman of Born Again Pentecostal Churches in Uganda, Joshua Lwere, lauded the Scripture Union for “50 years of shaping lives of young people.” “The more people have the fear of God in their lives, the fewer criminals we are likely to deal with in society”, Lwere explained.” (New Vision Newspaper, article by: Moses Walubiri, Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2013, Vol. 28 No. 221, Kampala, Uganda)

I copied the whole article as it appeared in the newspaper. I do not know what political party Mr. Museveni belongs to nor do I know much about his presidency. However, I do know he has something that many Americans wish our president had; and that is moral fiber. How long has it been since you heard a president of the USA make a speech encouraging our youth to abstain from sex until they are married? When have you heard a president of the USA encourage our youth not to smoke or drink and to avoid “living a loose life?” What US President

recently has encouraged the youth of our nation to “lead a life of prayer?”

I am ashamed to say what we hear from our president is “let’s keep abortion safe and legal.” Our president is in favor of the “morning after pill” for young girls and without parental knowledge! Our president pushes same sex marriage whenever he can!

Many Americans refer to nations like Uganda as “third world nations.” May God help us to one day rise to the morals of many “third world nations!”

Psa. 33:12, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his inheritance.”

Psa. 43:1, “Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.”

Prov. 14:34, “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.”

Isa. 1:4, “Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy one of Israel to anger; they are gone away backward.”

Jer. 5:9, “Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?”

Jer. 12:17, “But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, saith the Lord.”

It is later that we think! What will it take to turn this nation back toward God?

Ronald D. Gilbert
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OVERCOMING DEPRESSION: CHEMICAL IMBALANCE ONLY?

Tom Wacaster

If you are depressed, discouraged, disappointed, or simply down and out, take some time to mediate on the word of God. Therein is the power for overcoming depression.

It has been a few months since I wrote an article entitled, “Overcoming Depression.” A portion of that article included the following: “I wonder how often we allow the circumstances around us to chip away at our faith and lead us down the path into depression. If you are suffering from depression, may I make a couple of suggestions? Unplug your TV for 30 days. Dwell on things that are good, things that are of good report, and things that will restore your confidence in God and His providential watch care over us. Focus on that wonderful promise in Hebrews 13:5: ‘Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee.’ There are no less than four keys contained within that passage for defeating depression. First, ‘Be free from the love of money.’ Mammon is not your master; Christ is! Second, be content with such things as ye have. The mad race for things has destroyed the faith of many a man and plunged him into despair and destruction. Third, remember that God will not fail thee. This speaks of our Father’s power and ability to care for us. Finally, remember that God will not forsake thee. This speaks of His will to care for you. If you are depressed, discouraged, disappointed, or simply down and out, take some time to mediate on the word of God. Therein is the power for overcoming depression.”

It is a well known fact that statements, sentences, words, and thoughts must all be kept in context in order to properly understand the message an author wishes to communicate to his audience. The context in which I use the word “depression” is one in which a person is severely discouraged, even to an advanced point of depression. Such is not a chemical imbalance, and can often be over-

come with a heavy dose of God’s word and a change in attitude. To sustain my point, I suggest the following examination of terms. Wikipedia provides the following interesting definition of “depression.”

Depression is a state of low mood and aversion to activity that can affect a person’s thoughts, behavior, feelings and sense of well-being. Depressed people feel sad, anxious, empty, hopeless, worried, helpless, worthless, guilty, irritable, hurt, or restless. They may lose interest in activities that once were pleasurable, experience loss of appetite or overeating, have problems concentrating, remembering details, or making decisions, and may contemplate, attempt, or commit suicide. Insomnia, excessive sleeping, fatigue, loss of energy, or aches, pains, or digestive problems that are resistant to treatment may also be present.

Depressed mood is *not always a psychiatric disorder*. It may also be a *normal reaction to certain life events*, a symptom of some medical conditions, or a side effect of some drugs or medical treatments. Depressed mood is also a primary or associated feature of certain psychiatric syndromes such as clinical depression. A *depressed mood may not require any professional treatment*” (Wikipedia on line; all emphasis mine, TW).

Medline Plus defines depression as such: “Depression may be described as feeling sad, blue, unhappy, miserable, or down in the dumps. Most of us feel this way at one time or another for short periods...Clinical depression is a mood disorder in which feelings of sadness, loss, anger, or frustration interfere with everyday life for a longer period of time” (<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/003213.htm>).

Miriam Webster online defined it like this: “depression: a state of feeling sad; a psychoneurotic or psychot-

ic disorder marked especially by sadness, inactivity, difficulty in thinking and concentration, a significant increase or decrease in appetite and time spent sleeping, feelings of dejection and hopelessness, and sometimes suicidal tendencies.”

I looked at no less than ten similar sources and not a single one EXCLUDED the sense in which I used the word in my article. While it is true that there is such a state as “clinical depression,” the exact cause of such is not clearly defined, nor is there any agreement regarding the cause.

To suggest that “depression” is caused solely by chemical imbalance and that it is irresponsible for me to use the word otherwise, is simply not true. Health.com pointed out “There are many well-known depression triggers: Trauma, grief, financial troubles, and unemployment are just a few...But if you are depressed and none of these apply to you, it can be hard to pinpoint a specific cause” (<http://www.health.com/health/gallery/0,,20515167,00.html>). Some things that bring on depression, according to the same website, include “summertime,” “smoking,” “poor sleep habits,” “Facebook overload,” “End of a TV show or movie,” and “poor sibling relationships,” to name but a few. In fact, it is rather interesting how many “factors” that are well within our control.

I would not suggest for a moment that there is no such thing as depression brought on by chemical imbalance. What has been labeled as “clinical depression” is real; but it is not the only form of depression. I stand by my previous article and have determined that I will not get depressed because someone happens to disagree with me. I hope they will do the same.

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THE BIBLE: OUR FINAL AUTHORITY

Stephen Wiggins

Luke begins his Gospel account by referring to “those things which are most surely believed among us” (Luke 1:1). Of “those things” believed by God’s people today is the fact that **the Bible is God’s word.**

Churches of Christ possess a high view of Scripture. We believe the Bible is God’s word. When the apostle stated that “*all scripture is given by the inspiration of God*” (2 Tim 3:16), he was affirming the divine origin of Scripture. When Jesus stated that one is to live “*by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God*” (Matt. 4:4), he was portraying Scripture as the very words God speaks. If God were to relate his will to humanity today by speaking directly from heaven, it would not be any different than what he has already revealed in the Scriptures. God speaks to us today through Scripture. And, while human instrumentality was used to compose Scripture, these writers were superintended by the Holy Spirit to such an extent that they wrote only the words God revealed to them by inspiration. The Bible is the word of God and not the word of man.

Churches of Christ believe **the Bible is the authoritative standard for religion and conduct.** By virtue of the fact that the Bible is inspired of God, it follows that Scripture is to be the final court of appeals in all things which pertain to godliness (cf. 2 Peter 1:3). Ultimately, all people will be judged by the standard of God’s word (John 12:48). We believe that to be right with the Bible is to be right with God. We further maintain that the only way for one to know God’s will today is from the Bible. It teaches one how to be saved in obedience to the Gospel (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). It teaches us how to approach God in worship which “must” be offered “in truth,” i.e., according to and in harmony with revealed truth (John 4:24). It teaches us how to faithfully live the Christian life (Titus 2:11-12; Acts 20:32). In short, the Bible teaches us how to go to heaven. Churches of Christ believe the church of today should “*continue steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine*” (Acts 2:42) just as

the early church was commended for doing. A failure to reside within the perimeters of divine truth results in apostasy — “*Whosoever goes onward and abides not in the doctrine of Christ has not God; he that abides in the doctrine has both the Father and the Son*” (2 John 9). This “doctrine” that the church of today must adhere to, is embodied in written form upon the pages of the Bible.

Churches of Christ believe **the Bible is the final and complete revelation from God to humanity.** We believe it is sinful to add to, subtract from, substitute, or modify God’s word in any way whatsoever. We believe if one presumptuously engages in such manipulations of God’s word, they do so to their own spiritual ruin (Rev. 22:18-19; 2 Peter 3:16). When the apostle taught that if anyone “preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8); he was relating the condemnation that awaits those who arrogantly teach contrary to what God has revealed in Scripture. The *New English Translation (NET)* translates the phrase “let him be accursed” as “let him be condemned to hell!” One thing is certain — God is serious about people remaining true to his word whether anyone else is or not.

Our belief in the finality of Scripture has some other practical implications as well which results in our rejection of any and all claims of “modern day” revelations. For example, churches of Christ do not accept the *Koran* as inspired revelation as Muslims do. We do not believe Joseph Smith was a prophet who allegedly received the *Book of Mormon* from God. We do not believe Mary Baker Eddy was a prophetess who supposedly received revelation for the *Christian Science* religion. We do not believe Ellen G. White received an inspired message about keeping the Sabbath for *Seventh Day Adventists*. We do not believe the Pope speaks infallibly or *ex cathedra* as is claimed by Catholicism. Nor do we believe that any revelations are being given through “Holiness” preachers today who claim to be

inspired as the first century apostles.

Churches of Christ believe God revealed everything in the Bible that one needs to know and obey in order to be saved, live faithfully as a Christian, and go to heaven when this life is over. We believe God made known His will upon the pages of the Bible — from Genesis to Revelation. No further information is necessary. There is *not one thing* anyone can think of that is necessary to know and obey in order to please God that has not already been revealed in the Bible.

May we all be encouraged to heed its precepts and principles.

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enjoy the paper so much. You ran a note recently from a prisoner at Huntsville, TX and mentioned the preacher who was teaching in the prison system. We got in contact with him and met him. We later gave him some books we had to give to the prisoners. You never know where God will send your message. We pray for the Robinson family every day and all the good work you all have done for the Lord for so many, many years" ...**Jon & Becky McVey, Madisonville, TX.** "Recently, we were in a waiting room at a local hospital. Some faithful servant of God was kind to leave a small stack of your publication. My husband and I are so impressed with this good work. Please add our name to your mailing list and if you have back copies, we would be so pleased to get them. May God bless this great work" ...**Glenda & Floyd Moore, Killen, AL.** "Please discontinue sending STOP through the mail since I am able to and prefer to access it online. Doubtless printing costs and postage expenses would be better applied toward those who do not opt to view STOP online" ...**MS.** "We would like to receive your monthly publication. I just finished reading *An Abstract On The NIV* (June 2012) by Wayne Coats, can you send me several copies? Excellent article that is needed very badly where we are. Thank You so much for your publication" ...**Donnie & Tamra McGhee, Grandy NC.** "I would like to receive *Seek The Old Paths* via email. Great work" ...**Kim Young.** [NOTE: Several have opted to read *Seek The Old Paths* online. I'll be glad to add anyone to the email list if you will let me know. I'll send you an email each month when the latest issue has been posted. —editor] "My name is Michael Shank. I am an evangelist, and the author of a book called *Muscle and a Shovel*. I used to receive *Seek The Old Paths* and have not received it in years. I think we might have moved and didn't submit our new address. Please forgive me. Brother James Berry in Montgomery, AL, recently spoke to me by phone and recommended STOP. So glad he brought your publication back into my mind. I would love to receive it again. If you send it via email, that's great! We'll be sending a donation toward your work and God be with you" ...**Michael Shank, Metropolis, IL.** "I would like to receive your publication if possible" ...**Elvin Barger, Buhl, ID.** "Thank you so much for your hard work" ...**Aaron Dodson, Anniston, AL.** "I always appreciate the excellent articles in STOP since I know they will be based upon the word of God. I salute the eldership of the Leoni Church of Christ for their willingness to support this godly work" ...**D. Paul Gartman, Columbus, OH.** "Please mail *Seek The Old Paths* monthly publication to some friends. Thanks" ...**Elsie Weatherford, Saltillo, MO.** "Would you please put me on your mailing list? I would also like for you to put this couple on your list. They are new Christians here and I feel they will profit from reading these issues" ...**Bettye Lane, Beebe, AR.** "*Seek The Old Paths* has really been a blessing to me. My desire is to always be faithful to the truth of God's word. Our congregation is very small, about 17 on Sunday morning. Please pray for us" ...**Harold Langley, Powhatan, VA.** "Brother Garland, you've had a lot of good reading. I enjoy it very much. Thank you" ...**Leona Thomas, Cookeville, TN.** "Always anxious to get my STOP. There is so much helpful and good articles in it. May God bless you and your work in the Gospel. How old is STOP?" ...**name withheld by request, OH.** [*Seek The Old Paths* is in its 25th year of publication, editor]. "Charles Fant is deceased. Please discontinue" ...**Rimrock, AZ.** "Enjoy very much your great monthly. Thanks for having my articles

"Would you please send a copy each month of STOP to me? I dearly love it, it is so truthful. Thanks" ...**Majorie McCoy, Metropolis, IL.** "Just a little bit to help your good work" ...**Johnny & Barbara Morris, Lampe, MO.** "We appreciate so much you sending us STOP. We

about the **ESV** (English Standard Version) in recent issues. Two brethren really took me to task — one in Tennessee and one in Georgia. At least they read them, although they strongly disagreed. Hello to your family and keep up the good work" ...**Robert R. Taylor, Jr., Ripley, TN.** "Would like to be added to your mailing list for *Seek The Old Paths*. Thank you" ...**Dortha Johnson, West Plains, MO.** "You would be surprised at the people in the Lord's church that have never heard of STOP paper. I have a few more names I want to add to the list as soon as I can talk with them. It is so sad to see how the Lord's church is falling apart in some places. Or, they are adding and taking away from the word of God and his church. I have seen men take coffee into the assembly of the church where there should only be the Lord's supper in the assembly. I have seen hand clapping in the assembly. I see women doing head counting in the assembly that men should be doing. This is adding to and taking from the Lord's word and church, period. When someone speaks out about this, they are called a trouble maker. Well, I will always speak out about things being done in the Lord's church that is adding to or taking from his word. People, you are in sin when you do this. There is no 'ifs' or 'buts' about it. We have not run short of men in the church of Christ. Men in the leadership of the church that allows this to go on are playing with fire. Women are not to fulfill men's roles in the church in the assemblies. I'm sending a check to help with the word of God and his church. Brother Garland, you are a great Christian man to do all you have done for the Lord's church. Keep up the great work you do and I take my hat off to you for what you do for the church. You are really a man that loves the Lord" ...**Tommy Muirhead, Flora, MS.** [1 Tim. 2:8-15; 1 Cor. 14:33-35]

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