

MarketFaith Ministries is an equipping ministry which is focused on helping Christians become more effective in living out their faith in the midst of the increasingly diverse worldview environment of modern society.

Introduction

Today we want to focus a little on our own faith. There is an awful lot of evidence that our faith in the Biblical worldview is justified. As with all faith issues, this evidence does not represent empirical proof. There is no such thing as empirical proof when it comes to matters of faith.

That being said, legitimate faith is not blind faith. There are definite reasons to put our faith in some things and not to put it in others. Today's article deals with one important aspect of that evidence. As you read it, you should experience an internal affirmation that there is a correspondence between our life experience and our Christian faith.

The material which is freely available at the MarketFaith Ministries website is full of great information which can strengthen your personal faith and witness. But there is nothing like having the opportunity to interact live. MarketFaith Ministries is able to come to your church or Christian organization and share worldview training in an easy to understand format, and with the opportunity to ask clarifying questions. Check out the website at <http://www.marketfaith.org> and see what kinds of training seminars are available. Then contact us to see how we might work with one another.

Freddy

How Our Faith Matches up with Our Experience of Life

At times, faith is a difficult thing to analyze. There is no way to empirically verify a belief that is accepted by faith. But at the same time, there is a foundational basis that we depend on to determine whether or not our faith is reasonable.

For instance, if you walk into a room and see an ordinary chair, you probably would not have any hesitation about walking over and sitting in it, unless there was something about it that looked particularly out of place. Typically you would not go over and pick it up to look at all of its parts, push on it or kick it around. You would simply go over and sit in it. What is it that would make you trust that ordinary chair with your weight?

Even though you may not have ever seen that chair before, you have had a great deal of personal experience with other chairs. You have personally plopped down in chairs like that one, and you generally trust the people who own the

chair and don't believe that they would have one sitting out which would collapse and hurt someone. Walking over and sitting down in it is an act of faith because you do not know anything about that particular chair. But the faith is justified because of your past experience with chairs.

But suppose someone told you that they believed there was a unicorn in the woods behind their house. Would you believe that? Probably not. Even though the person who told you may have been trustworthy in the past, you would not believe it because there is no viable evidence that unicorns exist. Faith in the existence of a unicorn is not the same as the faith you might have in a chair.

So, what about our faith in Christ? Is it reasonable to put our faith in him? The answer is yes, because there is much evidence which points to it being a reasonable faith position. *(Continued on page 2)*

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tion. There is a lot of evidence that the Bible, itself, is accurate. There is also the eyewitness evidence of those who lived with Jesus, the archeological evidence, and many other things which point to its viability.

Today, we want to look at just one facet of the evidence in a bit more detail. Every belief system has some way of expressing the nature of humanity. The problem is, different worldviews express very different beliefs about the nature of a human being. They simply can't all be right. So, how can we arbitrate between them?

There actually is a way to evaluate this issue. As we live out our daily lives, we actually experience life in a certain way. All we need to do is to put a belief system's teachings side by side with our actual experience and see how they match up.

As it turns out, the teachings of the Bible give us a one to one correlation with the way we experience life. This, by itself, is not empirical proof that the Christian faith is the Truth. But it is one more piece of strong evidence which can give us confidence about our faith. This, along with the other pieces of evidence that are available, give us a strong foundation upon which to establish our faith in Christ. Let's take a moment to look at some of the teachings of the Bible and see how they match up with how we actually experience life.

How Humanity Experiences Life, and How Our Christian Beliefs Match up to the Experience

1. We experience life as personal, self-aware beings.

There are belief systems which say that humans are nothing more than an impersonal life force and that our sense of individual personhood is an illusion. We cannot get away, though, from the fact that we don't experience life that way. We experience it as personal, self-aware beings. This matches up perfectly with the Biblical teaching. In the Bible, God, himself, is understood to be a personal, self-aware being and we are taught that humans are created in his image.

2. We have a sense of transcendence.

There are belief systems which say that material reality is all that exists – there is no spiritual reality and no life after death. However, human beings in virtually every society throughout the ages have had a sense that there is an afterlife and that there is a God – even non-Christian societies. Based on the Biblical revelation, God is understood to be transcendent. And we, as humans, are eternal, spiritual beings in the sense that upon our physical death, our spirit will dwell eternally – either inside or outside of his presence.

3. We experience life in relationships.

There are belief systems which view humanity as completely autonomous beings. They believe that while we may organize ourselves into relationship groups, that is not a necessary part of our existence. But when we look at the big picture, the very structure of the human psyche, as well as our social organization, is based on human relationships. In our Biblical faith, God is understood to interact with mankind in a personal relationship. This is the very source of our own need to live life in relationship.

4. We experience life based in spiritual qualities.

Some belief systems totally deny that humans are essentially spiritual beings – that everything can be accounted for by natural mechanisms. However, mankind operates in this world as a spiritual being. We see this in the existence of such characteristics as self-consciousness, personality, intelligence, our sense of morality, creativity, self-conscious communication, etc. There is, literally, no scientific proof to indicate that these things have natural origins. On the other hand, the Bible reveals that God, himself, is a spiritual being and that man is created in his image.

5. We experience life based on natural laws.

Other belief systems exist which either deny the objective existence of natural law by saying it is illusory, or assert that natural law is subservient to the operation of gods and other spiritual forces. However, we do experience life in this world based on the firm operation of natural law. This is not to discount the possibility that God can perform miracles and cause happenings which supercede natural law. The fact is, there are naturally unexplainable events which occur in this world. The Christian faith affirms that material reality is based on a fixed set of natural laws, while also acknowledging that God can intervene in the material world in ways which do not hinder its operation.

6. We are capable of knowledge.

There are belief systems which either do not recognize knowledge as an objective reality, or which give it a completely natural explanation. Neither of these approaches allow any confidence that the knowledge that we seem to have is actual. To have confidence in knowledge, it must have some transcendent foundation that it is built upon. In the Bible, God is understood to be a being who has knowledge and who gave that capability to mankind.

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7. We have a sense of morality.

Some belief systems assert that morality has no objective basis – that it is simply a human construct designed to promote the survival of the species. However, there is no empirical basis for this conclusion. It is simply the logical outworking of a certain set of philosophical presuppositions. The fact is, human beings all have an inner sense of morality. In our Biblical faith, this is accounted for because God is revealed as a being with a particular character which defines the boundaries of morality. It is also acknowledged because God has created mankind in his own image, which includes a sense of morality as an innate part of our being.

8. We experience time as linear.

There are belief systems which affirm that our sense of time as a linear progression of events is nothing more than an illusion. This view asserts that everything actually exists in a state of eternity, and our sense of time is a delusion. The truth is, we do have a sense of eternity, yet we experience this life as operating in linear time. Time only has meaning within the context of a temporal physical structure, and our Biblical faith accounts for both eternity and time. The Bible teaches that God has established the material universe as a time based, temporary reality, but that it exists in the context of an eternal reality.

9. We experience the world as objective.

There are belief systems which view material reality as nothing more than a grand illusion. However, we experience our lives as objective reality. This matches up nicely with the Biblical revelation which teaches that God, himself, is an objective person, and that he has created individual human beings as objective personal beings.

What this All Means

As we live life in this world, it is evident that we experience it a certain way. As we look at the various belief systems, we also see that each one has its own way of explaining how the world operates. What we find is that in virtually all belief systems there are conflicts and contradictions between what is taught in the system and how we experience life – that is, all except for our Christian faith. There is a correspondence between our faith and our experience because Biblical faith corresponds with how reality actually operates.

This evidence alone does not prove that our Christian faith is the Truth. It does, though, stand as strong evidence for that claim. And along with all of the other evidence, we can be very confident that our Biblical understanding of reality corresponds with the way things actually are.

Coming in May - Worldview and Pornography

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