

Fact Faith Feeling

In his book “The secret of Guidance”, late 19th century pastor and author F B Meyer wrote about the importance of reordering our worldview around what he termed as fact, faith and feeling.

“We repeat here our constant mistake about the things of God. We try to feel them. If we feel them, we believe them; otherwise, we take no account of them. We reverse the divine order. We say feeling, FAITH, FACT. God says FACT, FAITH, feeling. With Him feeling is of small account—He only asks us to be willing to accept His own Word, and to cling to it because He has spoken it, in entire disregard of what we may feel.” F B Meyer, The secret of guidance.

Meyer saw these three elements as influencing factors in our quest to discern the will of God for our lives. He challenged the prevalent practice of believers prioritising their feelings when it came to believing what God says in His Word. Instead of giving precedence to the promises of God in Scriptures, believers tend to pay more attention to their feelings which almost always are determined by circumstances and surroundings.

In my opinion, this “constant mistake” of prioritising our feelings above all else is a symptom of a more dysfunctional chaos that is going on in the believer’s life. Most of us would probably agree with the understanding that human beings are basically tripartite beings – body, soul and spirit. The chaos I speak of lies in the incompatibility of the Christian life with the dominant influence of the body and soul over the spirit. Before I elaborate on this let me first briefly revisit the concept of the tripartite being.

Body, soul and spirit

At the risk of oversimplifying this complex idea, the body is the recipient of knowledge mainly from our five senses. The information we receive from these senses interact with our existing experiential knowledge to make up what an individual would perceive as fact or “truth”. Based on the inner processing of this information the body responds accordingly to the outer world with actions that effect ourselves and our surroundings.

The soul on the other hand is that inner “part” of a person which processes the information received from the body at any given moment. We speak of the mind and intellect, feelings and emotions, will and choices – these are all active cogs in the inner processing of a human being that ultimately expresses itself through the body in the way we think, speak and act.

The spirit of a person has been vastly ignored for centuries as it neither can be observed or proved. In recent years however there has been an awakening to the

spirit component of a person and many seek after spiritual experiences. So what is this third element we refer to as the spirit? I tend to liken the spirit of a person to the operating system in a computer. You may have a computer that runs on the Windows operating system, the Mac OS or maybe an open source Linux system. What software or applications you use is very dependent on the operating system your device is on. The operating system is the ecosystem of your digital device. The spirit of a person is the ecosystem where the soul and body function in. It is the core of a person. A way of being which governs the person.

The spirit as an ecosystem

The spirit of a person has three possible “operating systems”. The “ego” or self-directed worldview, is an ecosystem where everything revolves around a person or a people group and culture that the person has an affiliation with. The “ego” is the most popular “operating system” in the world we live in. People in this ecosystem pledge allegiance, are committed to, embrace a particular belief system and adhere to a way of life because it nourishes their self-indulgent needs. Words like self-esteem, self-image, self-made, self-worth are all familiar language in this ecosystem. Ideologies, institutional religion, economic and political systems – these systems thrive in the “ego” environment. The “ego” worldview is only about me, myself and I.

The second “operating system” that can dominate a person’s spirit is the demonic realm. Not many Christians, let alone church leaders, would be comfortable talking about the demonic realm but Biblical writers did not shy away from their obligation to warn believers of the dangers of this controlling environment. The apostle Paul spoke plainly about such things. In his letter to the Corinthian church he instructs them to receive back a person who had been disciplined and excluded from fellowship due to his harmful behaviour. In his exhortation to forgive and receive back to fellowship he highlights one of the reasons being the hostile and evil environment the man could be susceptible to outside the Kingdom of God.

2 Corinthians 2:7, 10-11 (NKJV) ...so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow...Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

The context teaches us to be vigilant and not ignorant of the devices of Satan and the demonic realm to take advantage of people in their pain and misery. Again to the Ephesian church Paul instructs vigilance in keeping their defenses up against the evil ecosystem.

Ephesians 6:12 (NKJV) For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

I don't think anyone chooses to allow their spirit to be dominated by this ecosystem but it is a present danger to all who are outside Divine protection. Everyone who is not living in the safety of the Kingdom of God is susceptible to the evil that is ever present to "steal, kill and destroy". The demonic realm as an "operating system" is all darkness, all wicked and all evil.

The final ecosystem that can dominate a spirit of a person should they choose it is The Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is the original "operating system". This ecosystem was best described as a garden in Genesis 1 and 2. Everything that exists in this environment functions under God's Divine authority. Nothing can exist within this ecosystem unless it is subject to the will and rule of God. The Kingdom of God is the manifestation of the goodness of God. The Kingdom of God is good and only good.

James 1:16-17 (NKJV) Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

God is good and only good. God is light and no darkness exists within Him. As such there is no evil that can survive in the Kingdom of God.

John 1:3-5 (NRSV) All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

The Kingdom of God is the way of life believers are called into. We are called to be born again into the Kingdom of God. In keeping with my digital world analogy, the invitation is to have our spirits reformatted to this new operating system called the Kingdom of God. That is the very gist of the Lord's Prayer. When we pray the Lord's prayer we are praying for our spirit to be reformatted to the Kingdom of God "operating system". We are availing ourselves to be subject to God's ecosystem.

When God dominates our entire worldview (*Your kingdom come, Your will be done*), then our entire lives are influenced by this. Our cares and concerns (*our daily bread*), our relationships with God and others (*forgive us...as we forgive those*), and the everyday moment by moment decisions (*lead us...deliver us*) – are all dominated by God, His rule and His will. This optimal place of being, where God is be all and end all, is what Paul refers to in his letter to the Colossians.

Colossians 3:15 (NKJV) And let the peace of God rule (arbitrate, umpire, direct) in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Paul speaks of a place we can come to in our Christian walk where there is peace in our entire person. Our body, soul and spirit at peace – "set at one". The wholesome me, the tripartite being, is in harmony and not living in contradiction. This state Paul calls "the peace of God" is where Divine direction, wisdom and discernment occur. Our spirit, functioning in God's ecosystem, creates a conducive environment for the soul to find it's balance. Our mind, will and emotions functioning in perfect harmony – being led by God the Holy Spirit.

Submitting our spirit to the Divine environment of the Kingdom of God is the only way we will see ourselves functioning under the divine order F B Meyer speaks of : FACT → FAITH → FEELING.

Philippians 4:8 -9 (NKJV) Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

FACT – Submitting ourselves to the truth of the Word of God and what the word of God says about us and our situation. Don't start your day with the diagnosis. Don't fill your mind with your surroundings or your circumstances. Let the Word of God be the beginning and the end of your day. Look up promises of god in Scriptures that are relevant to your circumstance and pray those scriptures repeatedly through the day.

FAITH – When your mind is full of the word of God and the promises of God, faith automatically rises within you. A supernatural confidence and hope that can only come from the Holy Spirit fills your spirit. Confidence and hope are the 2 natural ingredients of faith (Hebrews 11:1).

FEELING – When your spirit is full of faith (Divine confidence and hope), your soul and body respond accordingly. Everything in you moves in the same direction, “set at one” – that peace of God – dominates your entire being.

Renovation of the heart

It is time for a spiritual make over. Reformat your inner being today.

- **Recommit your life to God afresh.**

Surrender your life in full to Him. That simple prayer “Your kingdom come, Your will be done” – that is all that you need to pray. Pray that daily. Pray that until it becomes a reality in your life. Until your spirit operates solely on the Kingdom of God.

- **Reorder your life everyday**

Start everyday with this Divine order FACT → FAITH → FEELING

FACT – Make God's Word your truth. When fear or doubt creep in, return to the fact – what did God say in His Word?

FAITH – keep filling your mind with the Word of God. As you meditate and pray His promises daily, you will be filled by the Holy Spirit with confidence and hope.

FEELING – that Divine confidence and faith will permeate your entire being and govern your feelings and your actions.