

January 1, 2023

Viewpoint from the **Valley Grove Church Of Christ**

To Trade A Feeling

By Adam Delk

Have you ever heard someone say —“I wouldn’t trade this feeling I have in my heart for a stack of Bibles” or something like that? Many may use expressions like this to explain the depth of their personal assurance of salvation. This assurance is based upon feeling. With an expression like this, a feeling is superseding all other things and making them secondary. The Bible should be the sole source of our assurance of salvation. I wouldn’t trade that assurance for any feeling. The Bible contains promises of God, of which there is nothing more sure. God cannot lie (Heb. 6:18). Furthermore, he is completely capable of keeping all the promises that He has made (Rom. 4:21). God’s word and power are absolutely dependable. God makes a promise in relation to our salvation that is recorded in Mark 16:16, and this promise too cannot fail.

What about feelings? Feelings as we can all observe through the mere living of life can deceive. The Bible also shows us areas in which good, conscientious people were deceived by their feelings. It is also worth note that the Bible clearly indicates that these people would not have been saved due to good intentions, consciences, or feelings but rather through obedience and righteousness. Saul of Tarsus felt that he was doing the right thing (Jn. 16:2 and Acts 26:9-11) as he persecuted Christians and compelled them to blaspheme. He was fervent about what he saw as his duty to God saying in Acts 26 that he “was exceedingly enraged against them” speaking of followers of Christ. Saul must have felt quite good since he was a leader among his contemporaries in advancing what he felt was right (Gal. 1:14). We can also see that the people of Matthew 7:22 had feelings that deceived even though they felt everything was alright because they prophesied and did many wonderful works.

Today we have to be careful to distinguish what is truth and what is just a feeling. Many people in today’s religious world promulgate the idea that each individual’s feelings are truth for that individual. We first have to understand that truth is an absolute in any realm of life. If we base truth on different individuals, it is no longer absolute.

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In our day, as in many times in the past, preachers have a forum in which they can influence many people. Unfortunately, that influence is not always for good. Preachers and other seemingly righteous people can pervert the word of God (Matt. 7:15) and often times lead others astray. Truth and error cannot be determined on the basis of a person's wonderfully worded prayer, attractive personality, or ability to quote scripture. These things may very well be sheep's clothing. Be sure to never rest your assurance or faith on people or feelings. They can disappoint. The rock that will never disappoint is Jesus and the inspired message and deliverance of the Good News that is provided for us. It is ultimately our own responsibility to hold up our faith against the truth that God has revealed in His word and confirm that our life conforms to His will. The assurance of the Bible is even greater than the word of angels (Gal. 1:8).

Feelings are wonderful things that God has given us. It is our duty to allow them to prevail in the right situations and allow them to be overridden at the proper time. A feeling will never get you to heaven. Obedience to God's will give you access to the grace of God that saves souls. This is the only way.

The Bible is the word of God. Its commands are to be obeyed, its promises believed, and its assurance accepted. This is faith. The Bible is the standard and all other standards will fail. Live your life in daily confirmation that your faith rests on the rock that will forever stand and don't trade that for a feeling.

Lame Excuses

By Adam Delk

Jesus relays a story in the first century of a great banquet that was being held and those who were invited in Luke 14:15-24. In this parable the three original guests explained that they could not attend for various reasons. The first told of a field he bought, the second of some oxen. These men felt the need to see about their recent acquisitions instead of attending this great feast. The third man had a new wife and ask to be excused as was the custom of the day for soldiers and business men alike (Deuteronomy 24:5). The Master of the house was angry and made it clear that while others would fill their spots these three men were no longer welcomed in his house. He was angry because frankly these men offered as their reason to be excused, lame excuses. In the parable the word "alike" or the phrase "in one accord" is translated "by previous design". They considered what might excuse them and had a plan when asked to attend. Two of the men came up with earthly possessions as their excuse and showed clearly that they were absorbed in their own interests. The third showed

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that his earthly ties consumed him and that his family and home were the top priority in his life (Luke 14:26). As we know this feast represents the Master's invitation to Heaven and therefore any reason to turn down such a marvelous invitation should be viewed as shortsighted and ridiculous.

As clearly as we can see this parable that our Lord delivers and specifically the downfall of these men with skewed priorities, many people in the 21st century still cling to lame excuses. For themselves or for someone they feel they are trying to "protect" they will come up with lame excuses of which we are all familiar. "No one talked to me or even checked on me when I wasn't there...." "If I miss one service people call me and check on me and just seem to pester me to death....." "If my brethren would just do this....." or "If they would just stop that.....then I would be fine". Whatever that excuse might be or whoever you might blame for your or someone else's unfaithfulness and unwillingness to live as you should, it's really just a lame excuse. Moreover, please understand that everyone sees through such excuses and most importantly, as in the parable, the Lord is not mocked.

Are you in this situation? Don't try to fix the things around you. Don't look to other Christians as your justification. Don't find the most vulnerable Christian and critique them and when they are torn down sufficiently compare yourself to them. Don't try to blame one for not handling a situation just how you would like or maybe even how they should. Fix your heart, critique your own soul, and blame yourself for choosing not to do what God asks of you. If it is someone you care about that is doing wrong that is hard for you to accept (often times a spouse or a child), don't put your back to them and scan until you find a plausible reason why they are not what they should be.

We all determine who or what we will serve. The blame rests fully on our own shoulders. I serve God; you can blame me for that. It is not because my parents told me to or some preacher brainwashed me. While I am thankful for my parents and all the other great influences through my life, I serve God because I submitted my will to Him and I volunteered to become a slave to righteousness (Romans 6:16). Likewise, you or someone you love may serve self or sin and you can blame that individual for that. It's not because some false teacher or pushy preacher turned them off. It could be that something like that happened and pushed them along, but ultimately it is because that individual submitted their will to Satan and that individual volunteered to become a slave to sin. As long as we try to explain and justify sin we will continue down the path to destruction. It is only at the point of acknowledgement of sin in our lives or in the lives of loved ones that we can begin to correct it. Don't build your life on or try to shore up the lives of others with lame excuses.

It's Always Needed

I heard a story of a man in the mid 1950's entering school to study engineering. A professor told the entering freshmen class to buy the best slide rule they could afford. The reason: "You will be dependent on it all your 'professional life.'" Well, of course, it wasn't too long before the slide rule was replaced by the calculator. We've seen those same sorts of things in fairly recent years: 8 tracks, cassette tapes (almost), & even VHS tapes! Things that today we consider essential may quickly become obsolete. Tomorrow they may be discarded as antiques that cannot provide the help we need.

At least one thing from the past, however, will always be needed and never become obsolete. It is the Bible, God's Holy Word. No matter how much technological change and progress takes place, the Book will remain the one sure means for getting the right answers to the complicated questions: our origin, our purpose, our needs, and our final destination.

— *Author Unknown*

*Visitors — We pray that you
benefit spiritually from our
worship together and hope to
see you again.*

January Birthdays: The 22nd Jennifer Collins; The 23rd Paula Brown; The 25th Jacqueline Pryor; The 25th David Justice; The 27th Johnny Little; The 29th James Brown.

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Sunday

Bible Study . . . 9:30 A.M.

Worship 10:30 A.M.

Worship 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday

Bible Study . . . 7:00 P.M.

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